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Breaking free of the binary:
Gender habitus, heteronormative domination, and classificatory struggles

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Key words: Gender identity, gender habitus, Global South, sexual orientation, LGBTI, Nepal, LGBTI movement

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नमो तस्स भगवतो अरहतो सम्मासम्बुद्धस्स ।

[Homage to the blessed One, the Perfected One, the Fully Awakened One]

मातृदेवो भव: । पितृदेवो भव: ।

आचार्यदेवो भव: । अतिथिदेवो भव: ।

[Let thy father be unto thee as thy God, and thy mother as thy Goddess whom thou adorest. Be one to whom an Acharya is as God, and as a God the stranger within thy dwelling]. – *Taittirĩya Upanishad*, I.11.2

This work is dedicated to:

My parents, Baba and Aama, who have sacrificed a lot for me.

My *Acharyas*:

–*Guruji* Satya Narayan Goenka for the gift of Dharma

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The strangers within my dwelling — my ever-supporting wife Laxmi and my daughter Arya—for their warm light of love.

All my well-wishers and relatives — namely Anil, Bidur, Sameer, Jivan, Rajkumar, Khyam, Saraswati, Nirmala, Nisha, Tulsi Uncle, Hari Thuliama, Pitaji, Aama, Sunita, Anita, Ram dai, and Surya dai (you know who you are) — for being there for me.

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–To all those individuals, who are victims of an unjust system and are doomed to suffer silently, for they do not belong to the majority. Let us break free of the binary! Let us be revolutionary!

भवतु सब्ब मंगलं ।

[May all beings be happy.]

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1 INTRODUCTION AND MOTIVATIONS

1.1 Preamble

Many members of various societies face social discrimination and inequality due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Sexual and gender minorities are collectively referred to as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) individuals. In some societies, there have been collective efforts aimed at achieving equal rights and acceptance, whereas in others, there is minimal awareness related to LGBTI issues. Nevertheless, LGBTI movements are one of the key social movements occurring across societies, although their contemporary goals may differ (Gay Rights, 2010).

Historically, the issues promoted by LGBTI movements have shifted progressively from decriminalizing homosexual relations, combatting the HIV/AIDS epidemic, lobbying for non-discriminatory policies in various aspects of civil society, and securing marriage rights around the turn of the 21st century. The crucial issue for the contemporary LGBTI movements has been to legalize same-sex partnerships, and there have been some successes. For instance, same-sex partnerships started being recognized first in Northern Europe, followed by other European Countries before gradually spreading to Israel (mid-1990s), New Zealand (2004), Brazil (2004), Mexico City (2006), and Uruguay (2007). What is more, the number of nations recognizing same-sex unions is still on the rise (Gay Rights, 2010).

In some societies, movements focus on obtaining rights on various fronts that are on par with those of the heteronormative population, while in others, the focus is more on simply gaining social acceptance (Bernstein, 1997). The collective efforts of LGBTI movements have therefore resulted in disparate gains across various fronts. In some societies, LGBTI individuals enjoy equal citizenship rights, such as marriage equality, while in other more repressive societies, any

deviation from the prevalent heteronormative ideals is considered a punishable offence.

In the context of Nepal, there is no documented history of LGBTI organizations or movements prior to 2001. Since 2001, however, the LGBTI rights movement has been continually active in Nepal through the initiative of an organization called *Neel Heera Samaj* (hereafter NHS), which is also known internationally as the Blue Diamond Society (hereafter BDS). NHS/BDS has already made several landmark legal and social achievements along with other LGBTI activist organizations. Some noteworthy achievements include the Supreme Court Ruling allowing the legal recognition of LGBTI individuals and the abolishment of discriminatory laws (2007), the election of the first openly gay federal-level official (2008), the addition of LGBTI categories to the national census (2011), and legal recognition for LGBTI individuals in national citizenship certificates (2013) and passports (2015) (Lesnikowski, 2012; UNDP, USAID, 2014).

Despite the abovementioned successes on the legal frontier, social inequalities for LGBTI individuals still persist in reality, and in some situations, they have even deteriorated/worsened. Looking at both the global situation and the specific context of Nepal, it seems apparent that the existing material and cultural structures are highly resistant to advancing the social positions of sexual and gender minorities despite the number of collective actions (UNDP, USAID, 2014; Knight, 2015; Tadié, 2016). These issues point to a need to understand why the social inequalities faced by sexual and gender minorities have persisted despite several initiatives aimed at improving their social positions. Hence, it is important to understand which social inequalities are faced by LGBTI communities, what the strategies and achievements of LGBTI movements are more generally, and what is the nature of the material and cultural conditions' influence on social inequalities and social change.

Within this context, the broad aim of this current study is to understand social inequality and social change in the case of LGBTI minorities. The ongoing LGBTI movement in Nepal, which started around the year 2001, is used as a case study. More specifically, this study seeks to understand:

(1) *Which social inequalities do LGBTI individuals face in Nepal, and how are these inequalities reproduced?*

(2) *How, and to what effect, has collective action subverted these individuals' experience of oppression that results from heteronormative domination?*

1.2 Social inequality and change in the case of LGBTI individuals

Social inequality and social change are important areas of study for the social sciences. An increasing discourse surrounding social inequality for emancipatory reasons is one of the main theoretical objectives of critical sociology. Within this paradigm, social inequality resulting from gender identity is one of the key issues in feminist research and movements (Nagoshi, Nagoshi, & Brzuzy, 2014). Similarly, social inequalities faced due to sexual identity is a key issue in queer sociology and movements (Jagose, 2009). However, several commentators (Monro S. , 2007; Nagoshi, Nagoshi, & Brzuzy, 2014) suggest that the feminist perspective is somewhat limited for understanding inequalities faced due to sexual identity. In fact, the development of queer theory may be considered a response to this limitation of the feminist approach. Commentators (Nagoshi, Nagoshi, & Brzuzy, 2014) also suggest that queer theory takes an excessively deconstructive and disembodied approach toward conceptualizing sexual and gender identities, making it ineffective for organizing around a collective identity. Hence, an ideal theoretical approach for understanding the oppression faced by LGBTI minorities should account for the material

and cultural antecedents to forming sexual and gender identities, the material and corporeal nature of sexual and gender identities, and the establishment of collective LGBTI movements (Nagoshi, Nagoshi, & Brzuzy, 2014).

The persistent inequalities faced by LGBTI individuals, despite occasional advances and gains, points to a theoretical perspective that gives equal significance to social structure and agency in both the formation of identities and collective action. We need to understand the mechanisms that link the structural constraints faced by sexual and gender minorities during their everyday lived experiences with their bodily and mental dispositions (Benzecry, 2018; Wacquant, 2018). Although LGBTI movements are generally considered "identity" movements (Bernstein, 1997), a coalescing force for sexual and gender minorities is their shared experience of oppression rather than their socially represented collective identities (Crossley, 2002; Nagoshi & Brzuzy, 2010). Hence, it may be necessary to precisely understand how these gender dispositions give rise to a communal sense of oppression.

Additionally, there is a need to place greater emphasis on symbolic forms and processes to explain social inequalities (Bourdieu, 1985). The inequalities faced by sexual and gender minorities are principally sustained by gender taxonomies that exemplify symbolic order. These inequalities manifest in the form of physical violence and other subtler discriminatory practices. Unintendedly, sexual and gender minorities have been complicit in this domination through the arbitrary acceptance of existing social-categorization principles. We therefore need to understand that domination that results from mistaking such classificatory schemes as being natural is actually a form of "symbolic violence" (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991). One of the major assumptions of this study is that LGBTI movements are primarily waged as symbolic struggles, across various social fields, against the dominant gender taxonomy by mobilizing symbolic capital and resources.

1.3 The research problem and the expected contributions

The main aim of this study is to understand the social inequalities faced by LGBTI minorities within the context of the ongoing LGBTI movement in Nepal, which began around the year 2001. One of the most important contributions this study makes is to discuss the LGBTI experience in the "Global South," although, as elaborated in Chapter 3, there is no consensus for understanding the "Global South" as a coherent context. It cannot be denied, however, that there is limited research focusing on this area and that there is limited documentation about the current LGBTI experience in this geopolitical and cultural context (Connell R. , 2014). Against this background, this study offers rich empirical material and contributes to the theory for gender and sexual diversity and narratives about social change and justice. In brief, it concerns a study of the Global South that has not been undertaken in depth before. This study's overall focus is to document and analyze the current situation of oppression and resistance in the Nepalese context.

This study also aims to extend sociological frameworks for understanding gender relations, particularly from the perspective of LGBTI minorities in a society that is culturally different from the Global North. In doing so, it aims to address five relatively underexplored areas in the following ways: First, gender symbolism, in terms of binary classificatory schemes, reduces all forms of gender relations to masculine domination or feminine subordination (Mottier, 2002). However, one may question whether such a binary categorical scheme can explain the diverse forms of oppression faced by LGBTI minorities. Second, masculinity and femininity are viewed in a uniform, totalitarian, and monolithic manner. Several studies show that the understanding of masculinity and femininity can be heterogeneous and culturally dependent (Reeser & Seifert, 2003) (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). In particular, intersections between sexual and gender identities, along with other social-identity variables, should not be neglected (Fowler,

2010). The problems emanating from binary gender symbolism, as it is employed in the current analyses of gender, will therefore be addressed in this study.

Third, research has made considerable advances in explaining the formation of gender subjectivities, but there is a need to consider further how these interact with the social arenas in which they operate (McNay, 1999; Chodos & Curtis, 2002). Hence, several questions remain unanswered: What specific social arena is most important for the forming of gender dispositions (McNay, 2004; Chambers, 2005)? Should gender be considered a structuring variable or a type of resource that enables or inhibits the accumulation of various other resources in different social arenas? Finally, how can gendered practices transform (Huppatz, 2012)? This study intends to address these issues through the empirical case of Nepal's ongoing LGBTI movement.

Fourth, this study aims to explain social change through collective movements in the context of Nepal's LGBTI minorities. It is important to understand the process of subverting gender order, because a gendered disposition is thought to be a deeply entrenched and bodily anchored attribute of an individual, having been shaped by the material and cultural conditions that helped to form it in the first place (Bourdieu, 2001). It is not always obvious how subconscious dispositions can become sources of collective identity and political action, so this study attempts to identify how gendered dispositions devoid of discursive instrumental rationality (Haugaard, 2002; Haugaard, 2011) can be a potential source of social action.

Fifth, beyond the theoretical considerations, this study aims to contribute to our understanding of contemporary LGBTI movements by considering a sociocultural context that differs from those that are usually studied in the Global North. This is also important, because a different sociocultural context may shed light on a distinct formation

process for LGBTI identity, one that differs from those that are conventionally considered. Finally, providing a detailed account of the ongoing LGBTI movement in Nepal is a contribution in its own right, because at the time of writing, there are no academically informed analyses available.

1.4 Research design/approach

This study empirically adopts a multi-level field analysis. This necessitates the identification of contextual social structures and conditions for social change, the formation of social groups, and the subjectivities and practices of the social actors. Data sources were therefore chosen based on whether they provide population metrics of sexual and gender minorities, narratives and recounts of their everyday experiences, information about important fields where gender taxonomies are contested, the relevant actors and their power relations, and the overall collective process for organizing the LGBTI movement in Nepal.

A major source of data that was used is a survey of sexual and gender minorities (N=1,178) that was conducted by the UNDP, NHS, and Williams Institute in October 2014 (UNDP, Williams Institute, 2014). Correspondence analysis was performed on this dataset to construct various clusters of sexual and gender minorities and identify the corresponding sociodemographic characteristics and social inequalities that they faced in their everyday lives. Biographical account narratives, which were broadcast daily during the period from 11.6.2014 to 26.9.2014 and were available from the archives of the *Pahichan* radio station—were used to identify how LGBTI individuals construct their own identities and make sense of the social discrimination they face in their day-to-day lives.

To identify dominant actors in different social fields, as well as to understand how gender taxonomies are established and contested, in-

depth interviews (N=49) with influential actors in several different fields were drawn from the same archive. The archived interviews were then complemented with televised debates and panel discussions during the same period (2014–2015). Qualitative analysis was then performed for this dataset to develop a chronological history of the LGBTI movement in Nepal and map the classificatory struggles occurring across various fields. This dataset was further complemented by a corpus of some 1953 media items of various lengths that were retrieved from Nepal's only LGBTI news-aggregator portal, pahichan.com. The earliest article retrieved was from 5.8.2014, while the latest article was dated 1.6.2021. Text-mining procedures were performed on this media corpus to identify significant clusters of media discourse related to the LGBTI movement in Nepal.

Overall, the data analysis involved a sequential mixed-methods approach that involved sequential qualitative and quantitative analyses. The analytical goal of the data-analysis procedures was to conduct a hierarchical field-level analysis by constructing the social space, identifying the locations of social actors in this constructed social space, and generally pointing out the correspondences between individuals, social groups, and sociocultural conditions. Further steps were taken to provide a chronological account, identify significant clusters of media discourse, and map the symbolic mobilization strategies across various social fields that pertain to the LGBTI movement in Nepal.

1.5 Expected contributions of the study

This study extends our understanding of LGBTI movement organization in several different ways. First, it elaborates on the concept of heteronormative domination. Second, this study proposes that masculinity and femininity are not monolithic concepts but rather culturally mediated ones, such that they intersect with other forms of social categorization. This study also analytically categorizes several

sexual and gender identity labels into four distinguishable social groups based on the empirical data available. It shows that the common experience of heteronormative oppression that LGBTI minorities face is mediated by masculine domination, thus demonstrating how the various sexual and gender minority categories face heteronormative oppression in a non-uniform manner. In other words, the social inequalities faced by LGBTI minorities are indeed mediated by masculine domination. Third, this study proposes that the material and symbolic conditions for the formation of gendered habitus should be complemented with an understanding of LGBTI minorities' lived experiences and identity negotiation in everyday practices. This study shows that sexual and gender identities are understood and negotiated in everyday gendered practices. Some examples of such practices include bodily modifications and personal empowerment strategies, such as business entrepreneurship.

Fourth, this study shows that the symbolic order of gender is sustained primarily through three sets of categorical dichotomies—natural/unnatural, human/non-human, and citizen/non-citizen—all of which are pervasive in social domains such as the juridical, educational, familial, social, and other domains. Fifth, and most importantly, it proposes that ideas from various streams of research—such as lived experiences, narratives, reflexivity, and identity ambiguity—can be used to explain the process of social change as it relates to LGBTI individuals.

Finally, beyond its theoretical contributions, this study provides a detailed account of the LGBTI movement in Nepal since 2001, which is a contribution in itself. This study supplies an analytically rich description of the LGBTI movement in Nepal, which is rare compared to the several anecdotal recounts of the movement (Knight, 2015; Pant, 2015). In doing so, the classificatory struggles that LGBTI minorities have waged across various social arenas against the heteronormative

gender order are also charted, and an empirical account of the symbolic struggles against an oppressive gender order in a novel sociocultural context is provided. The analysis also identifies strategies that have proven to be successful in this empirical case, and this may be pertinent for organizing LGBTI movements in other similar sociocultural contexts.

1.6 Structure of this thesis

This chapter identified a knowledge problem and used it to drive two main research questions. It explained what this study is about, why it is relevant, and the approach it takes to answer the research questions. This chapter also explained how this study relates to the recent history of LGBTI struggles in Nepal and pointed out how it will help elucidate and resolve some problems in theorizing sexuality and gender. In particular, it indicated how this study focusses on understanding the social inequalities faced by sexual and gender minorities and the activism for achieving social justice in the context of LGBTI movement in Nepal since 2001. This research case will help to understand some potentially unique issues when organizing LGBTI movements in the Global South.

Chapter 2 elaborates on the applicable theoretical approaches and introduces various theoretical perspectives about sexuality and gender that focus on the feminist and queer theoretical approaches. This chapter also establishes why certain identity categories destabilize the traditional notions of sexuality and gender. In addition, it suggests that issues relating to the embodiment and intersectionalities of social categories are important for understanding these identity categories. It then argues that the bases of social discrimination faced by sexual and gender minorities are existing discriminatory social attitudes, ambiguities associated with subjectively positioning oneself in an institutionalized social category, and an internalized

form of oppression. It also emphasizes the role of social categorization schemes in producing and perpetuating social inequalities. It goes on to suggest several ways of initiating social changes, primarily focusing on engaging in personal empowerment measures, finding intersectional bases for coalition building, and engaging in social activism. Regarding social activism, this chapter focuses on the importance of engaging in classificatory struggles in various social arenas to destabilize the existing social categorization schemes, which can be identified as the fundamental basis of the social inequalities faced by sexual and gender minorities.

Chapter 3 presents the results of the bibliometric literature review that was conducted based on co-citation analysis of highly cited articles that pertain to sexuality and gender-related issues in the Global South. It first introduces the ambiguous notion of the “Global South.” Thereafter, based on the bibliometric survey of the top-hundred cited articles in this area, ten unique research streams are identified. The content analysis process led to identifying the following research streams: (1) gender-based violence, (2) MSM and sexual health, (3) indigenous masculinities and sexualities, (4) intersectional analysis, (5) ethnocentric universalism, (6) minority stress and stigma, (7) decolonial analysis, (8) transnational activism, (9) institutional differences and queer organization, and (10) gender equity and development. Certain identified issues are common across all nations, but there are also other issues that are somewhat difficult to understand from the perspective of the theoretical approaches, institutions, scholars, and cases that are common in the Global North. In the end, a broad conceptual framework is suggested that considers several different issues that contribute toward the inequalities faced by sexual and gender minorities in the Global South. These categories are later used to contextualize the LGBTI movement in Nepal, as part of the Global South, in Section 4.4.

Chapter 4 then introduces the research case, starting with a brief

synopsis of the chronological development of Nepal's LGBTI movement since 2001. Since it argues that LGBTI movement in Nepal is essentially a classificatory struggle to institutionalize and legitimize an alternate gender category called "*tesro-lingi*," the basis for the formation of this collective identity label is also discussed in this section. A textual analysis of some 1,920 movement-related media articles from an LGBTI news portal is then presented. The text-mining operations conducted for this corpus identified ten separate clusters of the most important issues raised by the LGBTI movement in Nepal. The central issues for the LGBTI movement in the Nepalese context include the community organization conducted by the activist organization *Neel Heera Samaj* (NHS), HIV and the mental health of sexual and gender minorities, and the violence and discrimination faced by the *Méti* (to be elaborated later) community in Nepal. Based on these identified issues and the bibliometric review of studies in the Global South, an attempt is made to contextualize the LGBTI movement in the Global South. The underlying idea is to start a discussion about how this LGBTI movement is unique or different from other similar movements across the Global South.

Chapter 5 elaborates on the research methods of this study. The research tenets adopted in this study are elaborated at the beginning, including relational epistemology, the importance of researcher reflexivity, and the construction of the "research object," among others. Thereafter, the various archival and secondary sources of data used in this study are then described. The main sources of data include a secondary survey of 1,178 sexual and gender minority individuals in Nepal in 2014, archived interviews with individuals from sexual and gender minorities (available from the *Pahichan* radio portal), televised discussion panels with influential stakeholders, and another corpus of texts based on the media items. Furthermore, the qualitative and quantitative approaches to analyzing the collected data are discussed in the light of the research questions and the adopted theoretical framework. The main impetus

of the data analysis process was to conduct a hierarchical analysis for understanding how individuals construct sexuality and gender categories, what the objective discriminatory conditions faced by sexual and gender minorities are, and how the classificatory struggle is waged by the overall movement in various social "fields." This chapter also establishes that methodological and analytical eclecticism is the most relevant approach for answering the research questions.

Chapter 6 interprets the quantitative data, with the main purpose of this being to construct various groups of sexual and gender minorities and identify the corresponding inequalities faced by each group in terms of objective conditions. Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) was therefore applied to fulfill these objectives. First, various analytical groups of sexual and gender minorities were constructed, and then "correspondences" between each of these categories and objective measures of social inequality and other sociodemographic measures were identified. Ultimately, the chapter indicates which sexual and gender minority groups face the most discrimination and what sort of sociodemographic characteristics can be associated with each of these categories.

In Chapter 7, the results from the analysis of the qualitative data are presented. The main idea behind this is to help understand the personal construction of sexual and gender categories and the inequalities faced by the research participants. Firstly, the analysis revealed some interesting dispositions that are common among all the sexual and gender minorities. The analysis also showed that the several problems faced by sexual and gender minorities include (1) constraints in the expression of gender and/or sexual identity, (2) constraints on bodily dispositions, (3) constraints on freedom of expression for sexual and gender roles, (4) invisibilization from social life, (5) body stigma, (6) constant societal gaze, and (7) self-denigration. Next, the chapter establishes that the conditions faced by various categories of

sexual and gender minorities are hierarchical and nested in nature. It also suggests that masculinity and femininity are fragmented rather than dichotomous poles. In Section 7.3, a detailed evaluation of the classificatory struggles in various social fields, in terms of destabilizing the persistent binary categorical schemes, are mapped historically for the research case. This shows that activists who are primarily engaged in destabilizing the three key binary distinctions associated with sexual and gender minorities in various social arenas tend to question the prevalent gender taxonomies.

Chapter 8 then presents some key discussions based on the major findings. It primarily establishes that both social construction and self-construction are necessary to understand sexual and gender categories. For some identity categories, embodiment and intersectionality play a bigger role. The chapter later suggests that gender relations should not just be seen as the dichotomy of masculine domination and feminine subordination but rather be extended to understand the heteronormative domination faced by sexual and gender minorities. Furthermore, the chapter discusses how the social discrimination faced by sexual and gender minorities is mediated by the extent to which masculine domination is legitimized in society.

The chapter then moves onto a discourse about how gendered reflexivity arises due to the ambiguities in the social construction of categories and the subjective identification of those categories. Gender reflexivity is often articulated as narratives of personal empowerment, and these narratives, combined with the commonly experienced oppression faced by various intersectional categories, give rise to a collective identity that can be further mobilized through collective organization and symbolic representation to achieve social justice. It is also suggested that power differentials and gender scripts in various social fields differ, thus enabling the destabilization of gender categories by problematizing the fundamental social categorization schemes from various sources.

The chapter finally argues the importance of the historic and cultural antecedents to the formation of social categorization schemes and gendered scripts, and it discusses how the spaces for resisting oppression that are available to sexual and gender minorities will be determined by such a cultural horizon.

Chapter 9 concludes the study. Firstly, the key findings of the study are summarized in light of the stated research aims and objectives. The theoretical contributions of the study are then supplied based on the extensive discussion presented in Chapter 8. This study has limitations, however, due to the explicit choice to prioritize one theoretical perspective or methodological orientation over the alternatives. In particular, the omission of the social movement literature is problematic. Based on the limitations, some avenues for further research are suggested to address them. In particular, it seems promising to assimilate ideas from the sociological approaches of Pierre Bourdieu and other authors in the social movement literature. Emphasis should be placed on the cultural and historical antecedents to LGBTI organization. This chapter also discusses where further research is required to understand sexuality and gender-related issues in the Global South. The chapter then generalizes the implications of its findings beyond the confines of the research case by assessing Nepal's LGBTI movement in terms of theoretical prescriptions. The chapter and the study as a whole then end with a metaphysical Buddhist story where it is suggested not just that the social categories pertaining to sexuality and gender do not have an ontological basis—there may in fact be no ontological "self."

2 GENDER IDENTITY, OPPRESSION AND SOCIAL ACTIVISM

The aim of this chapter is to lay out the theoretical groundwork for this thesis through several steps. Section 2.1 defines the concept of gender identity from various theoretical perspectives, arguing that embodiment, intersectionality, and disposition are necessary concepts for understanding gendered subjectivities. Section 2.2 then explores the various antecedents to the social discrimination faced by LGBTI individuals. This section focuses on social attitudes, embodiments, symbolic violence, and internalized forms of oppression. Next, Section 2.3 elaborates on the issues related to achieving social change through personal empowerment, forming coalitions of intersectional identities, and initiating social activism based on symbolic mobilization.

2.1 Gender identity

Gender is one of the most fundamental categories for human beings. It is conventionally assumed that gender is fixed for a particular body, so social identity is attributed to sexual anatomy (Hausman, 2001). In this way, a "male" or "female" gender is assigned to an individual at birth based on that person's genitals (Bornstein, My gender workbook, 1998). Based on this gender assignment, the individual is expected to perform a gender role, namely "masculine" or "feminine" (Preves, 2003).

An approach that assumes social identity to be fixed within the person is an essentialist approach, so gender identity is assumed to be consistent with an individual's biological sex (Green J. , 2004). The problems with such an essentialist approach are manifold. First, there are individuals—such as transgender individuals—who typically express their gender identities outside the traditional dichotomy. Second, people can be born with sexually ambiguous anatomies—such

as intersexed individuals—that do not perfectly fit with the binary genders (Preves, 2003). Third, and more significantly, essentialist approaches to identity validate the use of social categories—such as sex, race, class, and so on—as being "natural," thus justifying social oppression based upon such categories. For all these reasons, it is more sensible to define gender identity as:

> "...an individual's internal sense of self as being male, female, or an identity between or outside these two categories" (Wilchins, 2002).

This definition indicates a need for theoretical orientations that position gender identities as a result of conflicts between internal and social determinants. The general consensus is that feminists conceptualize gender identity as something innate, whereas queer theorists conceptualize it as something performative (Stryker S. , 2004).

2.1.1 Feminism and gender identity

The conventionally assumed essentialism has been challenged by feminism. Although it is extremely difficult to reduce such a rich and diverse approach as "feminism," its initial, and arguably still, main preoccupation is to challenge the hierarchical subordination of women by men (Hird, 2000). It does so, for example, by questioning the taken-for-granted nature of the "sexed body" and the associated gender roles. Gender is seen more as a power relationship than an essentialism (Bordo, 1993). In other words, feminism argues that masculinity and femininity are social constructs, and traditional gender roles have been artificially maintained to justify masculine domination (Wilchins, 2002).

While feminism questions the essentialist nature of gender roles, there is no unanimity about whether the embodied male–female gender binary itself should be questioned (Hesse-Biber, 2007). At one end of the spectrum, some view that it is important to conceptualize embodied

"maleness" as being essentially different to embodied "femaleness" in order to understand female subordination (Cixous, 1986; Kristeva, 1986; Irigaray, 1991) . At the other end of the spectrum, Butler (1993) and others suggest that even the anatomical basis of the gender binary itself is socially constructed.

Some further argue that maintaining the essential nature of the gender binary can be counterproductive, because it universalizes masculine domination and female subordination. While this clearly highlights the differentiation between the dominated and the dominant, it also unintendedly reifies the system of oppression (Zita, 1998). Others (Anzaldua, 1987; Shotwell & Sangrey, 2009) further suggest that even the essential female body should be understood in terms of an intersection of multiple social identities—such as race, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation—leading to different experiences of being a "woman" and the nature of the social oppression faced, so female subordination is not uniform.

On the other hand, hegemonic and critical masculinity approaches (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2019) suggest that masculine domination is not uniform either. They propose that there are multiple masculinities and power relations. In addition to a uniform, monolithic patriarchal domination, there are multiple hierarchies that exist within each gender, leading us to question whether it is appropriate to homogenize and universalize masculine domination and female subordination. Thus, the degree to which the embodied nature of the gender is socially constructed is a matter of deep contention among feminist theorists, and this distinguishes it entirely from another theoretical perspective that seeks to eliminate the conventionally assumed essentialism in gender identity, namely queer theory (Jagose, 2009).

2.1.2 Queer theory and gender (and sexual) identities

The move away from the essentialist gender categories toward a socially constructed view of gender and sexual categorization is the realm of queer theory. Queer theory challenges feminist ideas in claiming that as long as feminism assumes internally consistent gender identity, gender roles, and sexual orientation, it is reductionist. Furthermore, such a strong consistency of gender identity and sexual orientation inhibits any dissociation of gender identity and sexuality and therefore any effort to understand not only gender but also sexual oppression properly (Rubin G. , 1993)

According to queer theory, both gender and sexual identity are social constructs that can be subverted and self-constructed (Halperin, 1995), such that there is nothing essential about gender identity. It is instead the repeated performances of gender roles, as expected of one's sex, that creates the illusion of an innate gender identity (Butler J. , 1990). In turn, these expected gender performances are defined by existing interpretations of the accepted sociocultural conventions (Nagoshi & Brzuzy, 2010). Gender identity develops when individuals learn to cognitively categorize their own experiences into binary-gendered schemas (Martin, Ruble, & Szkrybalo, 2002). The self-perception of a gender identity is also inculcated as part of a social learning process in which gender-stereotyped behaviors are reinforced (Gilligan, 2016; Kohlberg, 1966). Thus, self-perceptions of gender identity are formed by learning emotions, cognitions, and behaviors that are associated with being "male" or "female."

What is more, both gender and sexuality are mutually constituting constructions, with each elaborating the other (Norton, 1997). Hence, neither gender nor sexual category are monolithic (Sedgwick, 1998). The advantage of the queer perspective is that it highlights and problematizes how differences due to gender and sexuality often play out together.

Considering the two categories together rather than as "gender" alone is an improvement, but it remains a reductionist framework. Taken to its extreme, reducing all forms of subjectivities into a possibly never-ending series of identity categories is self-defeating, because it ends up seeing everyone as unique and thus "erases" itself.

"Queer" is also understood as an amalgam of identity labels without any essence and a positionality that is opposed to whatever the legitimatized dominant order is (Halperin, 1995). Whereas "queer" is helpful as an umbrella term for defining a collective identity, it universalizes a very diverse range of individual lived experiences (Sullivan N. , 2003). As an identity label without any "essence," the term "queer" makes it difficult to determine a fixed site of engagement and contestation (Jagose A. , 1996). Indeed, queer approaches focus on the fluidity of identity categories at the expense of understanding the basis for an integration that could be mobilized against social oppression, which is hardly helpful for social mobilization.

Hence, queer theory also cannot fully resolve the dilemma of sliding over essentialism or relativism when it comes to identity categories (Shields, 2008). More importantly, queer theory as a positionality also reinforces a different binary divide, namely "us" versus "them," with heteronormativity being positioned as the dominant party (Diamond & Butterworth, 2008). Heteronormativity reflects the institutional practices that maintain the normative assumption of the gender binary, thus equating gender with sexuality, and it considers that only sexual attraction between opposite genders is normal and acceptable (Schilt & Westbrook, 2009).

2.1.3 Embodiment

The previous discussions point to the importance of embodiment in defining the nature of gender identity. In the mainstream feminist interpretation of gender identity, the embodied aspect is essentialized

as the gender binary, whereas the mainstream queer theoretical perspective renders the concept of the body somewhat less important. If we consider transgender individuals, however, their gender roles can easily be viewed as being socially constructed, so there is no denying that gender identity is largely defined by the nature of embodiment (Monro S. , 2000; Green J. , 2005). Some transgender individuals may even feel a strong need to transform their bodies to conform to their gender identities (Rubin H. , 2003).

Masculinity as a social performance is unrelated to the embodied identity that defines “maleness.” The same applies to femininity and “femaleness” (Rubin H. , 2003). For transgender individuals, the corporeal body is central to understanding gender identity, as well as a medium for modification according to social expectations (Hines, 2007). The embodied nature of their identity agrees with the feminist conception of one’s identity being anchored in the body, but it is much closer to the queer theory when one regards gender identities as being fluid rather than being based purely on the gender binary (Monro S. , 2000). Transgenderism thus destabilizes the notion of the gender binary by conceptualizing that gender identities can be as fluid as “either/or,” but it goes even further by asserting that they need not be confined to the gender binary by adding “both/neither” classifications. Gender fluidity does not signify that it must always ultimately result in one side of the gender binary but rather that it can transcend the dichotomy altogether (Roen, 2001).

For cisgender gay and lesbian individuals, compared to transgender individuals, the embodied component of gender identity is less important than the socially constructed experiences. For lesbian and gay identities, sexual identities are based on who they relate to, whereas the transgender identity is about relating to one’s own bodily experiences (Bornstein, 1994). For transgender individuals, the difficulty of being perceived socially as “both/neither” emphasizes the

need for the body to also match the gender identity. In addition, it also conforms to the self-perception of their own gender identities and helps them to operate in mainstream society more easily. A simple example is the need to conform to unquestionably binary-gendered spaces, such as public washroom facilities.

In this sense, negotiating the socially inscribed gender norms and their own embodied experiences is a continuous process for transgender individuals. For cisgender straight, gay, or lesbian individuals, however, the lack of conflict between the embodied experience and the constructed gender role allows more room for the self-construction of social identities. Queer theoretical approaches are adequate for understanding lesbian and gay identities, but to understand transgender identities, such a perspective does not allow an understanding of their dynamic negotiation of the embodied experiences and socially constructed social categories.

Embodiment can therefore also be defined through social expectations, but the need to conform to these social expectations should not be considered totalitarian and overtly deterministic. The socially expected embodiment and an individual's lived subjectivity are constantly dialectic and mutually constitutive (Alcoff, 2006). Embodied experiences are only understandable in terms of their social constructions, and they are neither entirely determined nor are they entirely independent, so the experience of embodiment is neither totally subjective nor totally social (Butler J. , 2004).

In addition to the embodiment of gender identities, it is also necessary to consider additional body markers (Alcoff, 2006) of social identities, such as race and sex. Among these embodied social categories, one can differentiate them based on whether they are considered to be more "essential" or biological, such as gender, or more socially defined, such as race. Depending upon the nature of the embodiment and how

it is objectified in various ways in a particular culture, it can act as a target for oppression in that society. Moreover, not only can embodied markers act as targets for oppression, an individual may be forced to embody a certain ideal to fit in with social expectations through bodily modifications (Adair, 2002).

2.1.4 The role of narratives

At this stage, it has been established that akin to feminist perspectives, gender roles are socially determined and enforced through various social mechanisms. In queer theoretical approaches, gender identity is formed based on the internal identification of a repeated performance of expected gendered behavior and appearances, although there is nothing innate about gender identity. Despite the transitory nature of the identity experience, embodiment is still its central component. However, it is quite clear that embodiment is also a matter of a dialectic concerning the internal experience and social expectations, with neither being entirely subjective nor entirely determined. Yet all of us function with a sense of identity coherence, which in turn helps us to define our "self" and position ourselves as a part of various collective identities. But what produces this sense of identity coherence?

The first source of identities is repeated performances to meet the socially sanctioned expectations of social categories (Shotwell & Sangrey, 2009). The second source of identity are self-constructed elements, including personal interpretations, subversions, and performances of social categories in everyday practice (Butler J. , 1990). The third source of identity are bodily experiences (Nagoshi & Brzuzy, 2010). Once again, the embodied experiences are partially understood in relation to societal expectations. In addition to these components, it is also necessary to consider that there must be an autonomous self that engages in a dialogue between the self and society, with these three identity aspects being forever in the process of "becoming" (Nagoshi &

Brzuzy, 2010).

Despite the destabilization of socially determined, self-constructed, or embodied identities, as well as dynamic changes in each of these entities in some cases, the articulation of lived experiences helps produce a coherent notion of one's own identity (Monro S. , 2007). The self-constructed aspect of identity is a largely narrative process, and this autonomous aspect of the self is in constant negotiation with societal expectations (Shotwell & Sangrey, 2009). It is the narratives of the lived experiences that help to maintain a sense of coherent identity for sexual and gender minorities. These narratives are also used to articulate the lived experiences and agency of sexual and gender minorities (Stryker S. , 2004). Such narratives also in turn become narratives for both intersectional identities and empowerment (Davidson, 2009).

2.1.5 Intersectional identities

Heteronormative belief assumes that there is a strong consistency among an individual's gender identity, gender role, and sexuality. Hence, a male gender identity should correspond with masculine gender roles and exhibit sexual attraction toward "females" (Bornstein, 1998). In addition to lumping gender roles and sexuality together, such a view also associates greater power with the possession of a male identity (Segal, 1997).

When considering other forms of gender identity, such as those of transgender individuals, simply understanding the gender binary, as well as the dissociation of gender roles and sexuality, is not enough. For cisgender gays and lesbians, sexuality can be regarded as a social construct that is differentiated from their gender identity, thus conforming to the queer theoretical approaches. For transgender individuals, it is necessary to dynamically balance their embodied experiences and socially constructed categories. Similarly, their gender identities may also manifest as several intersectional combinations of

their gender identities and sexualities. In addition, while sexual identity is fluid for bisexuals, transgender individuals exhibit greater fluidity in their gender identities (Meyer, 2004). Hence, an intersectional approach of sexual and gender identities is needed.

Sexual orientation and gender identity are separate issues. However, gender role deviations are associated with homosexuality (Blashill & Powlishta, 2009; Sandfort, 2005). Assigned males with an unspecified sexual orientation are considered "gay" when they display feminine characteristics. Indeed, the demonstration of masculinity or femininity may not in itself be neutral, because society elevates the masculine over the feminine, so men transgressing into femininity is perceived more negatively than women transgressing into masculinity (Sandfort, 2005). Effeminate behavior by straight men is therefore associated with less-than-masculine ideals (Davidson, 2009), so the association between gender identity and sexual orientation is complex and dynamic.

In a heteronormative society, gender identities and sexual orientations are dissociated. Hence, same-sex desires in normative gendered individuals is referred to as homosexuality. When we consider, however, the possibility of a fluid sexual orientation within transgendered individuals, this destabilizes the existing sexual categories, such as heterosexual and homosexual, in society. For examples, transgender individuals express gender identities outside the heteronormative norms, but they may not be interested in sex reassignment surgery. Transsexuals, however, have, or intend to, change their sex rather than just their gender (Valentine, 2004). Transsexualism therefore further destabilizes the social categories, not just for gender but also for sex at the same time (Hird, 2000). For example a male-to-female (MtF) transgender individual who is attracted to men challenges not just the homo–hetero binary but also the gender binary (Norton, 1997). Transgenderism and transsexualism, therefore, further demand a finer consideration of the intersectional nature of gender and sexual identity.

In addition to their sexual and gender identities, sexual and gender minorities also possesses multiple other social characteristics, such as social class, ethnicity, race, and so on. Scholars (Alcoff, 2006) suggest that the more that social identities operate through their bodily markers, such as sex and race, the more they will work as a basis for identity objectification by the dominant groups. Visible identities could also be demarcated based on whether they are considered more natural, such as gender, or more socially constructed, such as race (Alcoff, 2006). Depending upon the nature of the embodiment, as well as how it is objectified in a particular culture in various way, it can act as a target for oppression in society. The confluence of all the possible intersecting identities can lead to a unique experience of oppression, one that is not only additive but also interactional and dynamic (Shields, 2008).

2.1.6 Gender as a habitus

The discussion until this point has focused on how gender acts as the source of someone's identity. Taking a different perspective, some scholars (Bourdieu, 2001) consider gender as "habitus" or a set of dispositions. Habitus is defined as a socio-symbolic structure of society that is sedimented as a lasting disposition in actors, and this in turn guides social practices (Wacquant, 2018). Viewed in this way, gender, when understood as habitus, comprises largely unconscious dispositions that are acquired through experiences of social interactions (Reeser & Seifert, 2003). It is a deeply entrenched and bodily anchored attribute of an individual that is structurally homologous to the material and cultural conditions that helped to form that person in the first place (Krais, 2006). In turn, they generate gender-specific practices. Hence, gendered practices are not entirely the result of conscious choices, nor are they entirely the result of strict adherence to societal norms and rules. They are merely a set of dispositional frames which are inculcated through socialization, but they are liable to transformation due to everyday practices.

Development of a gender identity requires early socialization and an internalization of societal values and norms. The internalization of societal values in relation to sexuality and gender can be both cognitive and corporeal in the form of a bodily *hexis*. The cognitive aspect of gender as a habitus is constituted by individuals internalizing the existing social taxonomies for sexuality and gender. Gender as a habitus also includes normative dimensions as gendered values, and these are internalized due to other individuals guiding them about whether certain behaviors are permissible in various social contexts. It also includes corporeal acts by incorporating internalized values about how the physical body is borne in society (Lovell, 2000). Thus, gender as a set of dispositions (or habitus) incorporates the structurally derived and embodied nature of gender identity (McNay, 1999).

Additionally, gender as dispositions that are largely habitual operate below the level of discourse and are largely embodied. Gender conceptualized as habitus is a deeply embedded and embodied set of bodily and mental dispositions that reflect the gender taxonomy patterns in social practices. The symbolic order of gender, as defined by the established gender taxonomies, affects all aspects of bodily disposition, such as gestures, posture, legitimate use of the body, sexuality, and reproduction. It also affects cognitive perceptions about bodily ideals, weakness and strength, honor and shame, and so on. The corporeal dispositions and cognitive perceptions resulting from the symbolic gender order eventually determines all patterns of subordination and domination (Bourdieu, 2001). It is ultimately through the habitus that gender taxonomies are carried out in practice, thus reinforcing the existing gender order (Adkins, 2003).

2.2 Gender identity and social marginalization

At this stage, we arrive at the idea of an identity that is socially embedded, self-constructed, embodied, and intersectional. This conceptualization

of identity also further enables an understanding of oppression due to the various facets of identity. Oppression is a consequence of socially constructed discrimination based on lived or perceived statuses. It can be institutionalized in terms of policies, legal frameworks, and attitudinal biases in society. Oppression can also be internalized, such that oppression can be felt individually due to social norms (Moore P. , 2001). This section will discuss the social marginalization faced by sexual and gender minorities based on the prevailing social attitudes and gender taxonomies, as well as the acceptance of prevailing attitudes and taxonomies as being legitimate.

2.2.1 Social attitudes

There are several forms of attitudinal biases acting against sexual and gender minorities. For example transphobia is defined as an emotional disgust toward individuals who do not conform to traditional norms for sex and gender (Hill, 2002). This is closely related to the notion of homophobia, which indicates irrational fear, hatred, and intolerance toward homosexual individuals (Weinberg, 1972). Transphobia is a more encompassing concept because it marginalizes the incongruity of both gender roles and sexual orientation. Some other related forms of attitudinal bias toward LGBTI individuals include genderism, which refers to negatively perceiving gender non-conformity, and gender-bashing, which involves assaulting individuals of a non-confirming gender (Hill & Willoughby, 2005).

The root cause of social discrimination against sexual and gender minorities is related to their violation of the general essentialist assumption that there are close-knit correspondences among gender role, gender identity, and biological sex (Nagoshi, Johnson, & Honbo, 1993). The pathologizing of individuals who deviate from their natural gender identity is a source for “gender corrective” procedures and gender identity dysphoria (GID) as a mental disorder (Ault &

Brzuzy, 2009). It may even be possible to separate prejudices due to the perceived violation of gender role, gender identity, or sexual orientation. For example, it has been suggested that homophobia is associated with a prejudice related to sexual orientation, whereas transphobia is associated with a prejudice related to gender identity (Nagoshi & Brzuzy, 2010). Additionally, homophobia may be triggered more by the homosexuality of the target person rather than the gender role inversion (Schope & Eliason, 2004).

Several prior studies have identified antecedents to transphobia and homophobia, including a lower level of education (Wright, Adams, & Bernat, 1999), right-wing authoritarianism (Sullivan, Shamir, Walsh, & Roberts, 1985), less openness to experiences (Cullen, Wright, & Alessandri, 2002), and religious fundamentalism (Glock & Stark, 1966). These predictors suggest that some individuals socialize in a "conservative" society that perceives deviation from normality as a threat, and such people are therefore more prone to exhibit gender-related prejudices. Past research has also suggested that men score higher than women in various homophobia scales (Cullen, Wright, & Alessandri, 2002), possibly because men perceive homosexuality as a threat to their own masculine identity (Parrott, Adams, & Zeichner, 2002). Homophobic aggression also relates to a desire to validate the social system of heterosexual male privilege (Tomsen & Mason, 2001). In cultures where heterosexuality is assumed to be the natural state, there is an inevitable resistance towards penetration and the emasculation of desire, resulting in greater homophobia.

When transphobia is exhibited by women, it has been suggested that it is an attempt to preserve the traditional gender roles. Women are inculcated in traditional societies to perceive that their role is reproductive and subordinate to men, so they tend to be prejudiced towards lesbians, because they do not fulfill the reproductive role, and transgender people, because they challenge the traditional "female"

gender identity (Nagoshi, et al., 2008). Strict adherence to the socially sanctioned gender roles is also largely thought to be predictive of homophobic attitudes (Parrott & Gallagher, 2008).

Even in supposedly more-tolerant societies, prejudice against LGBTI individuals are well established (Rankin, 2005). Most societies also exhibit religion-based homophobia, where homosexual behavior is framed as being sinful. Several studies point out that the social marginalization of transgendered individuals may be more serious (Lombardi, Wilchins, & Malouf, 2001). LGBTI minorities are repeatedly subjected to violence and harassment, and many also report some form of economic discrimination. In addition to the marginalization and discrimination, LGBTI individuals also face difficulties in various social arenas, such as education, healthcare, and public spaces (Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005).

2.2.2 Symbolic violence

Symbolic systems—such as the myths, languages, and art that exist in society—establish differences between social categories through binary-division principles (e.g., male/female, masculine/feminine) (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991; Bourdieu, Masculine domination, 2001). The symbolic order is always built on the logic of differences, thus generating the possibility of including or excluding different social groups from various arenas of social life. Such categorization schemes further shape both the cognition of social agents, by becoming part of the dispositions, and the objectification in social institutions. When these conditions are fulfilled, an acceptable vision of the society is established where the marginalization of a certain social category is legitimized (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991).

If the principles of social categorization shape the cognitive schemes of individuals, such that they can explain the structuring principles of social institutions, it would fundamentally explain how social

inequalities are sustained and reproduced. A symbolic order built on the logic of differences and domination could also explain the core social inequalities faced by sexual and gender minorities. Social inequalities are sustained through three different means: arbitrary social classification schemes, naturalizing such classification systems to privilege the dominant classes, and the dominated perceiving this legitimacy and hence becoming complicit in the system (Järvinen, 2010).

The dominated remain dominated and the dominant sustain their domination principally through symbolic systems. Social inequality is sustained in two possible ways: First, the dominated may simply be unaware, such that they misrecognize or tacitly accept the dominant symbolic order. Indeed, due to imposition of the symbolic order, the dominated are liable to exhibit unquestioned, or *doxici,* acceptance of the dominant class's perception of categories, so the dominated are complicit in their own domination (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Second, the dominant social groups may actively produce "symbolic systems," either on their own or with the aid of specialists like academics, to impose their own vision of the given social order (Bourdieu, 1987).

Both the misrecognition of dominant classificatory schemes by the dominated and the active production of symbolic systems by the dominant to preserve classificatory schemes are instances of "symbolic violence." Symbolic violence is acted out in everyday society in various ways, such as through the use of derogatory terms and cultural expressions that disparage members of a social group, rituals that marginalize members of a certain social group, and institutions that directly privilege one social group over the others (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991). All of these acts of symbolic violence also have different degrees of "symbolic efficacy." While verbal disparagements can be easily resisted, any state-authorized symbolic violence, such as the imposition of an authorized categorical scheme, is deemed

to be more legitimate and consensual and therefore harder to resist (Bourdieu, 1985). It is through symbolic violence that social inequalities are produced and reproduced.

2.2.3 Embodiment (and intersectionality) as the source of marginalization

Even within sexual and gender minorities, any number of identities can be intersectional (Josselson & Harway, 2012). Indeed, there can be various forms of oppression associated with having multiple social identities (Adair, 2002), the cumulative effect of which is both dynamic and interactive (Shields, 2008). The visibility of these identities, such as sex and race, also make them prone to supporting marginalization based on those very same markers. The more that visible identity markers are considered natural, such as gender, the more the bearers of such markers will be subjected to discrimination. Even with the bodily markers that are considered more natural, there can be significant differences in the way they can serve as targets of oppression (Alcoff, 2006). For example, markers signifying age can be qualitatively different from those signifying a particular culture or ethnicity. The biological and visibility basis of stigmatized identities and their intersections can have very different implications for the social prejudices faced by an individual.

People use visible identity cues to categorize other members of society and infer their characteristics, possibly leading to stereotyping (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). For bisexuals, embodied aspects of sexual and gender identities are largely concealed. In the case of gay and lesbians, they are assumed to express their sexual identities through gender role inversion, although this is considered more to be a heteronormative stereotype than the actual case. For transgender individuals, they exhibit visible identities that are therefore also likely targets of aggressive transphobia. Even when considering the known predictors

of homophobia and transphobia, such as right-wing authoritarianism, the effect is higher when the potential target possesses a visible identity (Nagoshi, et al., 2008). Furthermore, there is conflicting evidence about whether prejudices toward concealed sexual identities are due to a perceived violation of sexuality or gender identity. Nonetheless, it is fairly established that possessing visible, stigmatized body markers makes a person an easy target for social oppression.

2.2.4 Internalized oppression

Although sexual orientation and gender identity are not mutually constitutive for most of the LGBTI population, individuals are pressurized to align their sexual and gender identities according to heteronormative expectations. This can lead to the empowerment of some aspects of the identity and the repression of others. Reconciling with heteronormative expectations while developing one's own gender identity is challenging for most LGBTI individuals (Striepe & Tolman, 2003).

Whereas cisgender gays and lesbians may not need to question their gender identity, such questioning is a major part of the identity-formation process for transgender individuals (Green J. , 2005). This assumption has been questioned in the context of "butch" lesbians, where the identity-formation process involves struggle to not just fit into a gender role but also create a gender identity (Hiestand & Levitt, 2005). In the case of transgender individuals, it has also been shown that sexuality is important for defining gender identity (Dozier, 2005). For example, for FtM, pre-transition transgender persons, they may perceive themselves to be "straight" in terms of sexual orientation, but they would also continue to see themselves as "straight" post-transition (Rubin H. , 2003).

Most sexual and gender minorities also believe that the definition of masculine and feminine gender roles has been largely socially

constructed and enforced. This inevitably means that gender behaviors are tightly bound to gender identity. Such social construction of gender roles tends to pressurize non-heteronormative individuals to “fit in” with a range of expectations. Furthermore, for transgender individuals, the behavioral aspects of gender roles may sharply contrast with the embodied aspects of gender roles, so defining sexual and gender identities involves both self-construction and embodiment (Green J. , 2005). The social expectation of masculinity versus the actual embodiment of that identity can therefore be a conflicting experience (Rubin H. , 2003), because embodiment mediates the socially constructed and self-constructed parts of sexuality and gender.

For the non-heteronormative population, the negotiation of sexual and gender identities also affects the power differentials in the gender order. For transgender individuals, adopting a female gender identity may lead to a loss of social power and privilege. A transition from a male to a female identity may be perceived as a voluntary rejection of masculinity. Similarly, the attributes associated with a particular gender identity may be perceived as negative and weak and vice versa (Nagoshi J. L., Brzuzy, Terrell, & Nagoshi, 2012). Such negotiations of sexual and gender identities are generally conflicting experiences for sexual and gender minorities, and they can be a source of internalized oppression.

2.3 Social change

By this stage, we have established that gender and sexual identities are socially embedded, self-constructed, embodied, and intersectional. We have also discussed how sexual and gender minorities face social marginalization due to the prevailing social attitudes and gender taxonomies, as well as the acceptance of these attitudes and taxonomies as being legitimate. Given the nature of gender identities and the social marginalization that the LGBTI population faces, how does it initiate

social change?

This section discusses four types of initiatives for achieving social change, with these working at different levels ranging from the personal to the societal. LGBTI individuals can seek personal empowerment to help resist or come to terms with the prevalent societal discrimination. Alternatively, they may seek to build coalitions with other actors who may differ in terms of social identity but experience a shared sense of oppression. LGBTI movements can be a collective and political option for combatting discrimination. Ultimately, this section argues that in order to subvert the gender order, all initiatives should question the established social classification schemes.

2.3.1 Personal empowerment

Despite the gains achieved on several different fronts, the fact is that due to existing stereotyping and prejudices, non-heteronormative populations are still marginalized across societies. Marginalization can occur in various forms, such as discrimination, harassment, and bullying. These discriminatory practices have been shown to result in psychological distress and suicide (Mustanski, Garofalo, & Emerson, 2010), more prevalent drug use (Simon, Reback, & & Bemis, 2000), forced sex work (Xavier, Robbin, Singer, & Budd, 2005), sexual violence, physical abuse, and other forms of hate crime against the marginalized population.

A personal understanding of the complex negotiations between social categories, self-identity, and embodiment can only result from self-reflexivity. This personal understanding facilitates personal empowerment, and many transgender and transsexual individuals choose a physical form that conforms to their sense of the self. This helps these individuals in their daily societal functioning by enabling them to fit into conventional gender identity boxes for various social purposes (Green J. , 2004). However, sex reassignment surgery

(SRS) and hormone replacement therapy (HRT) may not always be desirable or even feasible due to cost, medical, religious, and other societal reasons. Personal empowerment for the non-heteronormative population should therefore include both the self-constructed and embodied aspects of identity (McPhail, 2004).

Within the amalgam of sexual and gender minorities, a multitude of identities may be persecuted by the heteronormative population for very different reasons. Cisgender gays and lesbians may be condemned for their sexual identities, whereas transgender individuals may be persecuted for violating the gender binary norms. While there are hierarchies of oppression within sexual and gender minorities, there is also the sense of having a common goal in challenging the stable-but-oppressive traditional gender system. Such a common sense of shared expression and the resulting narratives can also serve as a source of personal empowerment. Such reflexive narratives, as a source of personal empowerment, can subsequently be leveraged in collective movements.

2.3.2 Intersectional identities and the formation of a collective identity

This section discusses some issues about forming a collective identity for social activism aimed at opposing oppression. Admittedly, the complex intersectionality that exists even within sexual and gender minorities makes organizing such efforts challenging. While individuals have formed coalitions primarily because of their gender identities, they may not have any other traits in common. An actor with a particular identity label, for example, may be uninterested in other actors' motivations for joining a coalition. However, this can also act as a source of empowerment for sexual and gender minorities. Being exposed to the intersectional nature of multiple oppressed identities helps members of a coalition to understand the socially constructed

nature of social categorization and use this knowledge as a source of community resilience (Sonn & Fisher, 2008). A resilient community is one that tolerates internal differences and maintains diversity.

As previously discussed, there is tension between emphasizing the self and the socially constructed aspects of sexual and gender identities. Overemphasizing the self-constructed aspect of identity-making, as is the case in queer theoretical approaches, may hinder any identification of common leverage points for social change, thus reducing the strength of any coalition.

For example, with regards to transgender identities, if the essentialist explanation were correct, transgenderism would be seen as superseding the boundaries of gender roles and identities (Green J. , 2004). The experience of transgender individuals is unique, because they do not conform to the traditional gender binaries. This means that they may not belong in a coalition with cisgender females, for example. FtMs (Female-to-Males) may be considered traitors to the female-empowerment agenda, whereas MtFs (Male-to-Females) may be considered incapable of understanding the oppression of “real” women (Nagoshi & Brzuzy, 2010).

There are differences among transgender individuals in relation to their understanding of the malleability of gender identity, specifically as to whether it is an “either/or” choice between the essentialist gender categories or whether it is somewhat fluid (Shotwell & Sangrey, 2009). Additionally, the development of a transgender identity can occur throughout an individual’s lifetime (Hird, 2002). To further complicate matters, many transgender activists may aim to embody a certain identity, one prescribed by social constructs, and settle on that identity for life out of safety concerns. The goal for some transgender individuals may therefore be assimilation. This may involve not transitioning and continuing to live as the sex assigned at birth or transitioning to a self-

constructed identity. Hence the goals of a coalition's members can differ (Nagoshi & Brzuzy, 2010). Assimilation may be an acceptable goal, but it is still important to assess the impact of this goal on the overall coalition.

The dilemma with transgender identities presents a double-edged problem for forming collective identities. Imposing an external social identity on members of a coalition is a form of oppression in itself, and asserting one form of identity in a coalition may not be convincing enough to those who do not understand the nature of that identity's lived experience (Shotwell & Sangrey, 2009). A compromise between the essentialist binary categories and the openly interpreted social categories is therefore necessary (McPhail, 2004). This should ultimately enable the obliteration of the rigid gender binary or at least an expansion of its interpretation to include more gender possibilities (Burdge, 2007).

Thus, rather than focus on the self-constructed aspect of individual identities, the formation of collective identities should focus on shared experiences of oppression (Butler J. , 2004). All members of a coalition may struggle with, for example, harassment, victimization, violence, substance abuse, or homelessness. An oppression-prevention approach has been successful in building coalitions and activism. Multiple minority groups can form coalitions based on their minority status to campaign for political and economic justice (Stryker & Whittle, 2006). In a coalition of sexual and gender minorities, this inevitably means that individuals are coerced into fitting in with the dominant social categories. For instance, for gay/lesbian individuals, embodiment plays less of a role in defining their sexual and gender identities, yet all groups are socially oppressed due to their inability to conform to heteronormative gender and sexual identity categories (Cashore & Tuason, 2009).

However, this approach can be risky, because it emphasizes oppression at the cost of empowerment. It may even lead to comparisons of the oppression faced by different members of a coalition. For example, for transgender individuals, their identity is visible, so their experience may be more oppressive than if they were simply, for example, "male" and gay. This strategy may even backfire by reinforcing the minority status of a certain identity, even within a coalition.

Mobilizing the coalition members' narratives of lived experiences can present a more positive approach. The narratives of many sexual and gender minorities with regards to their oppression in the face of heteronormative ideals are also stories of self-construction and negotiations between sexual and gender identity labels. An emphasis on empowering narratives can reinforce the intrinsic motivations of all members of a coalition and help the activism to transform from an individual project to collective action with a single group consciousness. However, the formation of collective identities does not necessarily mean compromising one's own identity or even building positive relationships with other members of the coalition—it is simply a strategic activity to accomplish a certain task through effective leadership.

2.3.3 Social activism

Social activism may be understood as endeavoring to bring about change. Such change can be enacted at the macro-level through public policies, the meso-level through organizational change, or at the micro-level through individual interactions related to sexual and gender minorities.

Among oppressed groups like transgender individuals, it is natural to assume that cisgender people are the cause of the oppression. Among the cisgender populations, however, not everyone will exhibit transphobia, although it is very likely that a majority will. However,

from a purely strategic point of view, social isolationism based on the “othering” process will most likely stunt the message of societal acceptance. Additionally, a divisive and confrontational approach may further reinforce the historically antagonistic nature of the conversation and impede social change.

An important component of social activism is cultural competency (Cross, 1995). This enables social activists to tailor their messages to the members of the coalition. Much of the theoretical understanding of the nature of identity and identity formation is important for improving cultural competencies while working with marginalized populations. Overemphasizing how members should define their identities and their goals can itself be a subtle form of linguistic oppression (Nagoshi & Brzuzy, 2010).

Setting a target audience for activism efforts, in terms of non-essentialist identities, can help ensure greater involvement by potential allies. Beyond specifying a target audience, it is also helpful to focus on shared issues around common oppression, such as for healthcare access, substance abuse, gender violence, and such like. It is also vital to utilize broad, collective identity terms rather than determine specific identity labels, because there is always a risk of alienating potential allies who either do not prescribe to that particular identity label or do not understand it in the same way.

It is also suggested that it is important in gender activism to assess the degree to which the target audience is exposed to individuals who do not necessarily confirm to gender norms (Bornstein, 1994). Indeed, the body should be strategically utilized in social conversations (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). However, while the controversial and shocking use of the body during activism may be attention grabbing, if the society is generally not already sufficiently exposed, it may be counterproductive. For example, when transgender activists focus on

the “both/neither” stance in relation to the gender binary, it fails to connect to the context and experience of either transgender individuals or the heteronormative society (Roen, 2001). In such cases, it may be fruitful to use a spokesperson for the cause, one who can be perceived by the audience as more assimilated into the gender binary. While this runs contrary to the ultimate objective, it helps form solidarity with vacillating gatekeepers.

Activism should also focus on engaging the cisgender population, because it is vital to build positive relationships with communities (McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Newbrough, 1995). The activism message should focus on the humanity of the lived experiences of transgender individuals, because this is more effective than focusing on the biological or performative nature of the identity. However, the message should not reinforce gender-role stereotyping or dilute the message of either transcending or expanding the conventional gender binary (Hausman, 2001).

Not all social activists participating in a cause need to necessarily be sexual and gender minorities. Some individuals may participate in social activism due to perceived deprivation or inequality for others in relation to their own expectations (Gurr, 1970). Shared perceived grievances or inequalities may also motivate individuals to form a collective identity for initiating social change. Individuals also make rational decisions to engage and become active in issues where they believe they can effect change (Olson, 1965). Individuals also participate in activism for several other reasons that may not be obvious at the outset. It is better to understand such varied motivations for engaging in social activism in order to help the various members of the coalition to mobilize effectively.

2.3.4 Symbolic mobilization

Symbolic systems represent both a form of structural constraint

faced by individuals and a political tool for resisting and challenging domination (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991). Individuals can resist the symbolic order in various ways, such as by valorizing the classificatory terms assigned to them (e.g., "black is beautiful"). Additionally, the dominated can try to create an alternate classificatory scheme, one that elevates their status, such as how American feminists advocated the "natural look" to resist the masculine ideal of beauty (Bourdieu, 1984). To act politically, however, is to seek legitimate authority to preserve a particular vision and/or address division in the social world. This also means obtaining power to ensure that the various dispositions associated with a particular social group are represented (Bourdieu, 1987).

While social actors engage in minor struggles in their everyday lives, social change can only occur through collective action in a relevant social field. Classificatory principles may be preserved or contested wherever cultural production occurs or where specialists who have a stake in engaging in the struggle operate (Bourdieu, 1985). Ultimately, however, the monopoly for legitimizing principles and addressing social divisions resides in the state (Bourdieu, 1987). What this means is that the right field to engage in a symbolic struggle is contextually dependent. If sexual and gender minorities are to engage in classificatory struggles, the right social field to do this is wherever gender taxonomies are sustained but can be challenged, whether it be at the state, political, or other autonomous levels where cultural production occurs.

The naturalization of a symbolic gender order occurs because gender taxonomies are misrecognized as natural and legitimate. To question the *doxa* of a gender order, it is necessary to historicize the principles that sustain gender domination and identify the constructed nature of the existing social taxonomies. In fact, understanding gender taxonomies as a historical product is *conditio sine qua non* for understanding and challenging gender relations (Krais, 1993).

The representation process and collective organization is a precondition for enhancing the social visibility of a marginalized group (Bourdieu, 1987). A spokesperson, a delegate party, or an organization is required to conduct the appropriate symbolic labor of forging and representing a collective identity for subordinate groups in the gender order. A leader or an organization representing sexual and gender minorities should also ensure that the communications directed at the group should be attuned to the dispositions of the group members.

Since the monopoly for establishing legitimate social taxonomies is held by those with the dominant symbolic capital, or a legitimate authority, it is suggested that the success of subversion strategies depends upon the degree of symbolic capital held (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991; Swartz, 1997; Neveu, 2018), because this denotes political power (Haugaard, 2002). Several strategies are suggested to improve the legitimate authority for establishing or challenging established social taxonomies, such as accumulating various forms of capital that can be converted to symbolic capital across social fields, networking with other social groups in structurally homologous positions in the social space but with access to symbolic resources, and electing dominant groups that are sympathetic to the cause through democratic election processes.

3 EXPERIENCES OF THE LGBTI POPULATION IN THE "GLOBAL SOUTH"

This study deals with the social marginalization faced by the LGBTI population and the resulting initiatives to counteract these discriminatory practices. This study takes the ongoing LGBTI movement in Nepal, a context in the Global South (hereafter GS), as a case study to further explore the theoretical issues mentioned in Chapter 2. It is therefore necessary to first establish some issues that this chapter will tackle.

First, it has been suggested that the mainstream theoretical perspectives and category labels for sexuality and gender are products of scholarship in the Global North (hereafter GN), so they may not be fully transferable, or applicable, to the GS context (Connell R. , 2015), but it is important to explore the validity of such a claim. Second, it is widely argued that discrimination and LGBTI movements in the GN operate with a different logic than those in the GS (Connell R. , 2014), most likely because of differences in the geopolitical, economic, institutional, and cultural environments. It is therefore valuable to identify crucial differences in sexuality and gender between the GS and GN. Third, since the case used in this study is illustrative of a GS context, it may be valuable for identifying commonalities in sexuality and gender in the GS in order to engage in a common dialogue. Fourth, another intended contribution of this study is to identify the unique issues faced by LGBTI populations in the GS, so to make this contribution clear, it is necessary to first identify the issues that are already commonly raised. Lastly, reviewing past research into the issues faced by LGBTI populations in the GS will help to identify key research themes and problems that need to be addressed. The purpose of this chapter is to fulfil these five objectives in order to systematically address the overall research aim.

This chapter contributes to this general aim by conducting a systematic bibliometric survey of the studies into sexuality and gender in the GS. The Bibexcel software (Persson, Danell, & Schneider, 2009) was used to conduct a bibliometric citation meta-analysis of a sample of 1,107 articles that were obtained from the ISI Web of Science database. Furthermore, an additional factor analysis of the articles complemented with content analysis of the hundred most-frequently co-cited articles helped to identify ten underlying research streams, namely (1) gender-based violence, (2) MSM and sexual health, (3) indigenous masculinity and sexuality, (4) intersectionality, (5) ethnocentric universalism, (6) minority stress and stigma, (7) de-colonial feminism, (8) transnational activism, (9) institutional differences and transnational gender politics, and (10) gender equity and development. A knowledge synthesis approach was used to further develop a conceptual framework and suggest areas for future research. In Chapter 4, these issues will be related to the LGBTI movement in Nepal.

3.1 Global South and Southern theory

There is no unanimous definition of the “Global South.” It is used variously to denote a geopolitical boundary, a subaltern approach to inquiry, an oppositional nexus of knowledge to the “global metropole,” an alternate “lived experience” of oppression in the neo-colonial economic order, or quite simply a metaphor (Brewster, Macdonald, & Kossew, 2019). Commonly, the “Global South” expression is used to denote a geopolitical territory that incorporates Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America. Critics argue that using the term to denote a geopolitical boundary is imprecise, because it concerns collective subjectivities that are somewhat ahistorical, decontextualized, or detrimentally universalized. Moreover, it is also entirely possible that “oppositional subaltern cultures” can exist within GN countries.

Despite being a highly ambiguous and contentious term, GS is mostly

used as an alternative analytical framework, primarily as a position that is adopted in contrast to GN issues, theoretical perspectives, or scholarship. When it concerns sexuality and gender, this framework helps to understand how the history and geopolitical context in the GS shapes a different understanding of the sexual and gender order. It also helps to counteract the negative portrayal of the GS as comprising downtrodden economic systems and regressive cultures. Indeed, some notable scholars (Connell R. , 2014; Morrell, 2016) have proposed indigenous theories of sexuality and gender in the GS, because existing theories from the global metropole are not always applicable in these contexts. The unique issues relating to gender identity, sexuality, and equality that are faced by ordinary citizens of the GS are often deemphasized, or they remain in the "blind spot" of studies pursued in the GN.

Recently, there have been calls for more studies to understand the impact of global processes on the sex/gender order (Desai & Rinaldo, 2016). Some scholars (Connell R. , 2014; Morrell, 2016; Milani & Lazar, 2017) have already taken steps in this direction. For example, Raewyn Connell proposed an alternative sociology of gender for the Southern perspective that remarkably identifies several of the themes derived in this chapter, such as gender violence, sexual health, alternative masculinities, universalism, and the coloniality of Northern gender theory (Connell R. , 2014; Connell R. , 2015). Nevertheless, despite being a pioneering, noteworthy, and comprehensive study, the analysis relies heavily upon cherry-picked classical sources to highlight a pre-formed analytical framework. Similarly, other works focus only on a particular sector of influence, such as education (Epstein & Morrell, 2012), or perhaps a specific geographical territory within the GS, such as South Africa (Morrell, 2016).

In this context, it may prove valuable to synthesize some contemporary works from researchers across the GS who study issues of sexuality

and gender. Doing this would help to firstly understand the intellectual origins of these works in terms of the most impactful bibliographic sources. Second, synthesizing the overall work may help to delineate existing pockets of research streams. Third, it may be possible to align several research streams into one comprehensive framework that highlights the overall impetus of this body of work. Lastly, by conducting all these steps, it may become possible to relate the results to LGBTI issues in Nepal and suggest where further research is most needed.

The remainder of this chapter is organized as follows: Section 3.2 presents the methodology applied in this study and the results of bibliometric citation analysis. Section 3.3 then depicts the citation map of the sampled body of literature and discusses the underlying research streams that were identified. A comprehensive conceptual framework is developed and presented in Section 3.4, while Section 3.5 offers some conclusions and suggestions for future research avenues.

3.2 Bibliometric method

The methodology used in this chapter features a combination of bibliometric citation analysis and content analysis techniques to analyze the literature relating to sexuality- and gender-related issues in the GS. Figure 1 illustrates the research methodology adopted in this study.

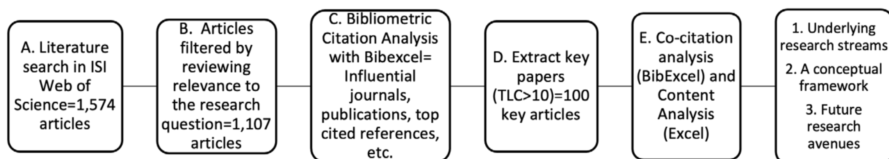

Figure 1 Steps followed in the bibliometric study

First, a Boolean search[1] for articles related to sexuality and gender issues in the GS was performed through the ISI Web of Science. The sources were not only limited to journal articles—they were also filtered by skimming through the abstracts, resulting in an initial set of 1,574 articles. After reviewing the titles, abstracts, and keywords to judge the relevance of the articles in detail, a final set of 1,107 articles was extracted for bibliometric analysis.

A basic descriptive analysis of the aggregated yearly levels of publications and citations of the 1,107 articles until the end of 2020 is shown in Figure 2. The annual production of articles is depicted by the line graph, while the number of total citations for the published articles in each year is shown through the bar graph. There has generally been an increasing trend in the number of publications related to sexuality and gender in the GS since 1989, and there has been a sharp increase since 2014.

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[1] ((“asia*” OR “africa*” Or “latin” OR “latin america*” OR “latin-america*” OR “global south”) AND (“lgbt*” OR “gender* identity” OR “sex* orientation” OR “gay” OR “homo*” OR “lesbian*” OR “trans*” OR “queer” OR “femin*” OR “masculine*” OR “bisex*” or “intersex*” OR “heterosex*” OR “heteronorm*” or “gender equal*” OR “gender inequl*” OR “SGM” OR “SOGI” OR “intersection*”) AND (“discrimination” OR “domination” OR “oppression” OR “violence” OR “minor*” OR “margin*”) AND (“rights” OR “empowerment” OR “politics” OR “movement” or “social movement” OR “citizenship” or “activism”))

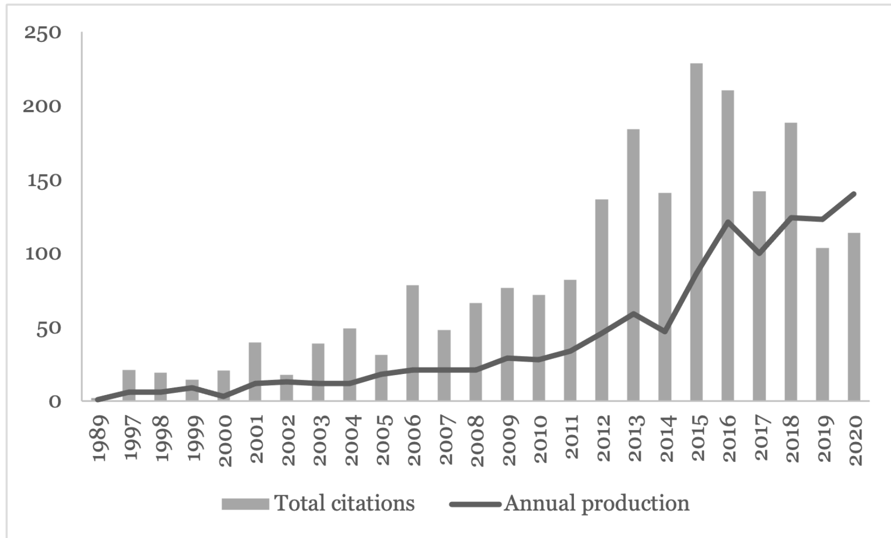

Figure 2 **Number of publications and citations**

In the broad area of sexuality and gender, various journals focus on niche aspects of the topic. Figure 3 shows the most relevant journal titles in terms of number of publications concerning sexuality and gender issues in the GS.

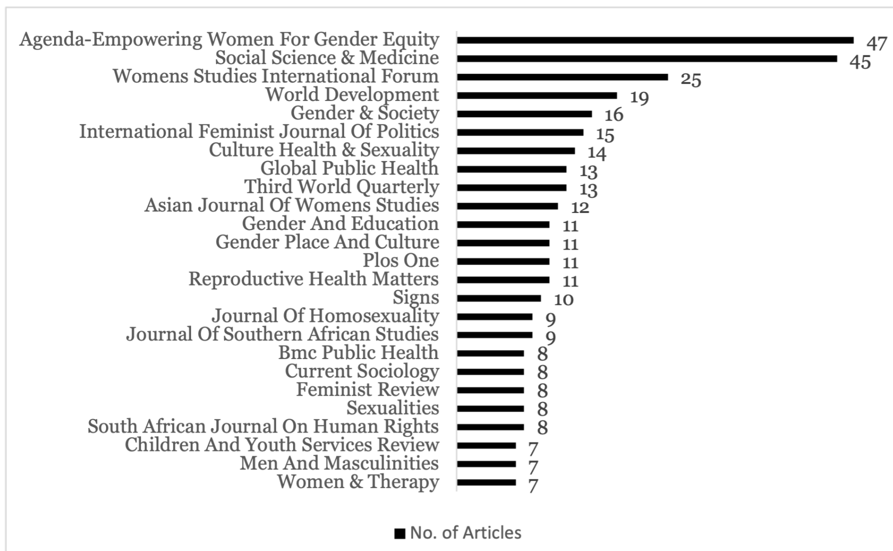

Figure 3 **Top 25 most-relevant sources focusing on sexuality and gender in the Global South**

3.3 Citation mapping and content analysis

Co-citation analysis reflects the frequency at which two articles are cited together by other articles (Zupic & Čater, 2014). Based on the co-cited links, Figure 4 presents a citation map that was created in the Pajek software (Batagelj & Mrvar, 1998) based on the co-occurrence network map created in the BibExcel software (Persson, Danell, & Schneider, 2009). Although further cited references could have been included in the map, for the sake of clarity, only 100 articles (TLC>10)[2] were used to create the co-occurrence network.

Each node (1-100) in the co-citation map indicates a cited reference. The 100 cited references presented in Figure 4 are the top 100 locally cited references by the authors of the 1,107 articles selected from the ISI Web of Science database. Appendix 1 provides a detailed list of references corresponding to the numbers (1-100) in Figure 4. The size of the nodes represent the citation frequency–the larger and darker, the more it is locally cited in the database. The citation map from Pajek (Figure 4) allows the representation of linkages between articles, clustered along the y-axis, meaning that each horizontal layer—such as 54, 55, 74, 81, and 99—in Figure 4 represents a cluster.

The specific procedure used in this study to identify research clusters was document co-citation analysis (DCA) (Chen, Ibekwe-SanJuan, & Hou, 2010). In this procedure, the authors of the chosen 1,107 articles from the ISI Web of Science database jointly cite each of the documents shown in Figure 4, where the nodes (1-100) represent the top-100 jointly cited documents in terms of frequency. The weight of the edges/lines represent the number of times that two documents were jointly cited. For the sake of clarity, all edges with a weight less than 10 were removed from the co-citation map in Figure 4. Removing the edges below a certain threshold helps to better visualize distinct

[2] Total Local Citations

communities of highly co-cited documents. In Figure 4, for example, the edge connecting node 99 to its cluster is not visible because the connecting edge has a weight less than 10.

The fundamental assumption of DCA is that highly co-cited clusters of documents reveal intellectual structures or research streams. This is because when a group of authors cite a common set of documents, they engage with common "concept symbols" (i.e., terms, ideas, methods) that have received some degree of peer recognition (Chen, Ibekwe-SanJuan, & Hou, 2010). Studying clusters in a co-cited network usually reveals important, related, and peer-recognized clusters of contributions, which are often indicative of a latent conceptual structure in the field. The focus of DCA is therefore on mapping relations between cited references (Persson, Danell, & Schneider, 2009).

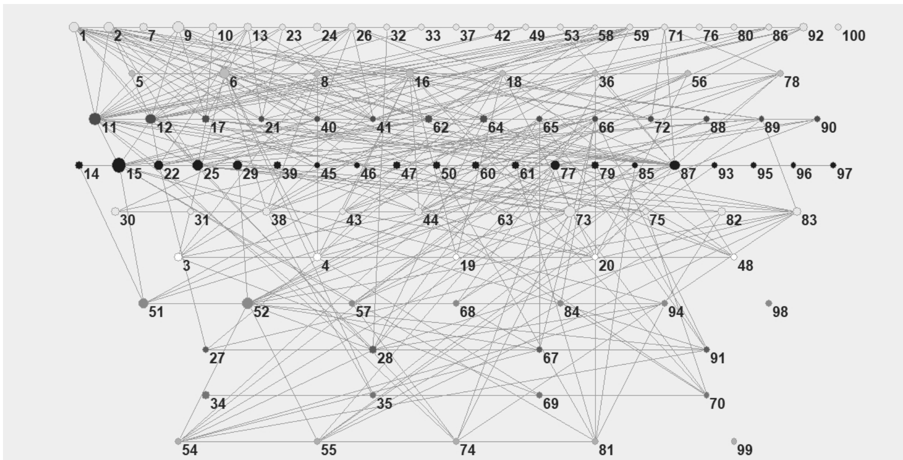

Figure 4 Co-citation mapping for the 100 most-cited references

As shown in Figure 4, there are 10 research clusters (referred to as "partitions" in Pajek) represented in the co-citation map. The input file for this network visualization was the co-occurrence network file created in BibExcel, which itself was based on the same cited documents. BibExcel uses the Olle Persson algorithm by default to identify cluster

pairs from the co-occurrence file (Persson, Danell, & Schneider, 2009).

To identify the robustness of the partitions, the co-citation matrix was first created in BibExcel. This file was then converted into a correlation matrix in SPSS 24 (IBM Corp, Released 2016). Factor analysis was then performed on this correlation matrix to identify latent components. The results of the factor analysis of the co-citation matrix shown in Figure 5 further confirm the robustness of the partitions identified in the initial network map produced by Pajek. It also shows the relative contribution of each of the ten identified components in explaining the total variance in the dataset of the 100 cited references/documents. Put simply, the component scoring the highest for total variance explained criteria (i.e., component 1, 35.8% in Figure 5) help differentiate the most among the 100 cited references. Altogether, all 10 components explained about 92% of the differences in the 100 cited documents.

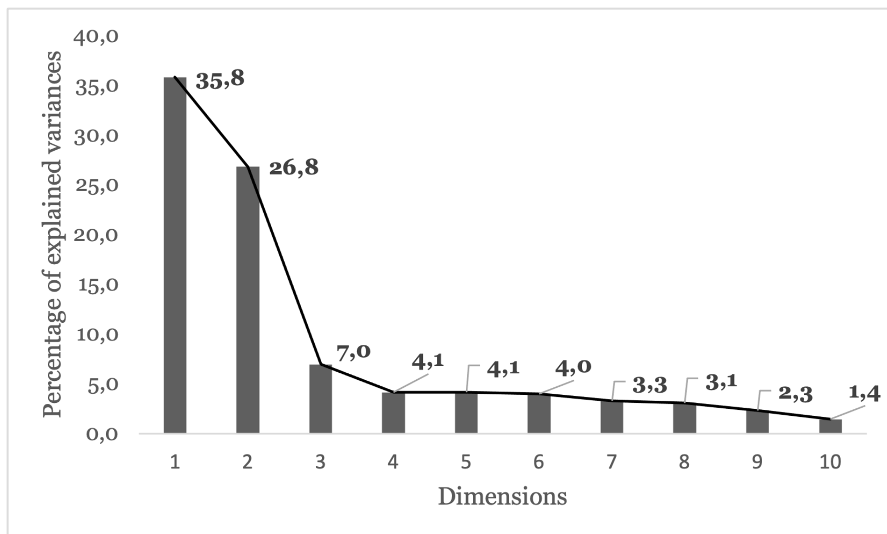

Figure 5 **Results of the factor analysis of the co-citation matrix**

Each of the components also helped to further identify research clusters in the area of sexuality and gender in the GS. Although bibliometric software like BibExcel and network visualization tools like Pajek help to identify clusters in a co-citation analysis, interpreting the nature and interrelationships among clusters is largely an inductive process. For this reason, it is necessary to read through the top co-cited references and understand the nature and interrelationship among the articles within each cluster.

Content analysis was performed to identify the nature of the clusters and the interrelationships among them. For this purpose, an Excel file was created with 100 rows, one for each of the top co-cited references. One column included abstracts and other relevant notes about each of the articles. The top three or four most-cited articles within each cluster were analyzed in depth to understand the main issues in each of the research clusters. After carefully reading through the articles, the single most-key issue was identified for each of the articles, such as “sexual violence” for node 28 and “intimate partner violence (IPV)” for node 22. Thereafter, an aggregate dimension was identified that relates each of the cited documents to a cluster. For example, article 28 and article 22 both deal with “gender-based violence,” so this was identified as an aggregate theme. Altogether, 23% of the articles were focused on the issue of gender-based violence, thus comprising cluster 1. Likewise, the other nine clusters were interpreted, where different cited references were put together based on the fundamental issues that each of the 100 highly co-cited articles focused on. The final results of this content analysis process—including the number of articles, corresponding clusters, the main theme, article sources, citations, and the main issues underlying each theme—are presented in Appendix 1.

The content analysis process led to identifying the following research streams: (1) gender -based violence, (2) MSMs and sexual health, (3) indigenous masculinities and sexualities, (4) intersectional analysis,

(5) ethnocentric universalism, (6) minority stress and stigma, (7) de-colonial analysis, (8) transnational activism, (9) institutional differences and queer organization, and (10) gender equity and development. In the following sub-sections, the key issues for each of the ten themes are briefly discussed in relation to not only the cited references that were used to identify the clusters but also the 1,107 original articles about sexual and gender minority issues in the GS, as extracted from the ISI Web of Science.

3.3.1 Gender-based violence

Women, men who have sex with men (MSMs), and transgender women are disproportionately affected by gender-based violence (GBV) in the GS (Evens, 2019). The forms of GBV are numerous and include, but are not limited to, intimate partner violence (IPV), intersex genital mutilation (IGM), and sexual harassment. Most research into GBV in the GS builds on rights-based approaches. It has been suggested (Jakobsen, 2014), however, that it is important to understand the structural factors that perpetuate gendered hierarchies and their susceptibility to experiencing violence in order to develop effective intervention policies for the GS. For example, a study conducted for twelve countries in Africa showed that some of the structural factors include a history of masculine domination, the presence of domestic violence laws, disparities in education and income levels, female empowerment, and the ownership of land, among others (Iyanda, 2019).

More so than in the GN, existing gender norms are a significant factor in perpetuating GBV in the GS. Almost universally, the patriarchal code of respect and women's subordinate status in society are normalized. Kin group affiliation and the power dynamic within patriarchal family structures also normalize GBV, such as marital violence. The highest global incidences of IPV are found in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia,

and Andean Latin America. In place such as Tanzania, “wife-beating” practices could be considered prescribed performances of masculinity and femininity (Jakobsen, 2014).

Several studies also suggest that unique, deep-rooted cultural norms influence GBV. Dowry inflation and violence due to “bride-price” are common across South Asia, where arranged marriages are the norm (White, 2016). Women across most of the GS are pressured to “have” sons and face abuse if they are not able, and this is due to the major sociocultural roots of son preference, which also explains the practice of female feticide (Puri, Adams, Ivey, & Nachtigall, 2011). Negative attitudes toward widowhood are sustained by discriminatory customary laws and cultural practices. In brief, factors such as the sociocultural norm of patriarchy, structural inequalities along gender lines, collectivism, familialism, and a culture of silence support GBV and help explain why the vulnerable are hesitant to seek help. For this reason, many studies propose culturally and ethically sensitive intervention policies to combat GBV in the GS.

Thus, this particular cluster of literature combines two broad foci relating to GBV: a) a rights-based approach that seeks to prevent GBV from occurring and b) the identification of structural factors that causally explain the occurrence of GBV in the GS. Due to the heterogeneity of cultural and institutional factors in the GS, rights-based approaches to counter GBV are less likely to be resisted. On the other hand, without an awareness of the ex ante structural factors that are conducive to GBV, formulaic rights-based approaches may be too universal and context blind. However, there is no room for doubt in the literature about the frequent incidence of GBV in the GS.

3.3.2 Men who have sex with men (MSM) and sexual health

MSM and trans (transgender and transsexual) populations face heavy stigmatization and marginalization across the GS (Ross, 2015). They

are also the group most vulnerable to HIV, and this is reflected in higher HIV prevalence than the national average among the overall population (Logie, Abramovich, Schott, Levermore, & Jones, 2018).

A hetrosexist social system and the criminalization of same-sex relationships are common across the GS. The literature shows that disparities in the prevalence of HIV infection are greater in African and Caribbean countries that criminalize homosexual activities (Millett, et al., 2012). Laws criminalizing homosexuality discourage these vulnerable populations from seeking treatment and prevent healthcare providers from offering such services (Hagopian, Rao, Katz, Sanford, & Barnhart, 2017).

Social stigma is common among MSMs, and this increases the spread of HIV due to unsafe and secretive practices. The fear of transmission and the burden of caring in kin group societies also increases the stigma of HIV. There are also masculinity-related barriers to seeking care because it is viewed as being vulnerable and incurs the stigma of engaging in same-sex practices (Maman, et al., 2009).

What is more, HIV is seen as a product of several structural inequalities—such as poor education, unemployment, discrimination, violence, and crime (Kalichman, et al., 2006; Watkins-Hayes, 2014). A large proportion of HIV infections are seen in women who have a uniformly subordinate status to men, so they often do not have much choice in the spread of the infection. Improving the health of vulnerable populations in this area is closely associated with structural improvements.

This cluster of the literature focuses on the social inequalities and stigma faced by the MSM population. This population is identified as being the most vulnerable population in terms of exposure to sexual health risks and disease transmission. The major reasons identified for this situation occurring are the existing social stigma associated with, if not the criminalization of, same-sex practices and the structural

inequalities faced by the MSM population (Logie, Abramovich, Schott, Levermore, & Jones, 2018).

3.3.3 Indigenous masculinity and sexuality

Across the GS, masculine domination is considered legitimate, and researchers frequently invoke the concept of hegemonic masculinity. This is sustained by a traditional patriarchal societal structure that is characterized by a preference for sons. An ideal masculinity is portrayed as both “virile” and “violent” (Mindry, 2010). Being “unmasculine” and “gay” are understood as grounds for denigration and marginalization. All sexual and gender minorities need to negotiate their gender identities and sexual practices along heteronormative cultural scripts, where idealized notions of masculinity are centered on the appropriation of cultural practices that preserve the heterosexual male privilege (Lynch & Clayton, 2016).

Most researchers from the GS also document a history of diversity in sexualities and masculinities. Three major issues that dominate this theme are: i) the existence of traditional forms of masculinity and sexuality prior to colonial interventions, ii) the transformation of social relations due to neoliberal forces since the 1980s, and iii) the shift in the loci of constitutions and debates surrounding masculinity and sexuality, as well as the transformative effects of hybridizing ideas of masculinity and sexuality from the GN. This theme primarily consists of issues at the nexus of modernity, sexuality, and masculinity in societies in transition in the GS (Besnier, Guinness, Hann, & Kovač, 2018).

There is a consensus about the limitations of western epistemologies in accounting for various traditional forms of masculinity and sexuality in the GS. For example, native conceptions of personhood are suggested as being better frameworks for understanding African masculinities (Mfecane, 2018). Framing research questions and fieldwork based on western gender theories offers limited understanding of the Xhosa

constructions of masculinity, for example, because they are embodied in the concept of *Inoda* (traditional circumcision). Hierarchies of masculinity, with heterosexual men at the top and gay men at the bottom, may not apply when other cultural scripts, in this case *Inoda*, define the hierarchy of masculinity (Lynch & Clayton, 2016).

Some scholars focus on a different concept of "normativity," predominantly in the "Asian societies" of the GS. This include secretive bisexuality, where homo-desiring individuals satisfy their same-sex desires from alternate sources while also living a hetero married life (Epprecht M. , 2012). Thinking in the essential dichotomy of homo/ hetero and "coming out" causes more problems than emancipation, because there is a greater emphasis on familial and social harmony rather than an exclusive announcement of "gay rights." Asian gays have to negotiate their identities in an environment of heterosexism rather than homophobia. Sexuality often plays less of a role in identity construction. One can fulfill the procreative duty in a heterosexual marriage while also engaging in homosexual relationships. Thus, in contrast to categories in the GN, Asian gays may exhibit sexual fluidity, and Asian societies remain tolerant of homosexuality as long as it remains invisible (Laurent, 2005).

Conflicts among traditional and transitioning notions of sexuality and masculinity have been used as rhetorical tools to argue for and against societal changes in the GS. On the one hand, in the Northern discourses, media representations and fashion culture inspire sexual minorities across the GS. On the other hand, sexual dissidence is also portrayed as a neo-colonial conspiracy to subvert the indigenous values of sexuality and masculinity (McAllister, 2013). Dissident sexuality is presented as compromising masculine identities and eroding the traditional norms of sexuality (i.e., it is regard as un-African or un-Indian), and it is used to justify violence against, and the exclusion of, sexual and gender minorities. Various forms of cultural logic reveal tensions

in "traditional" and "modern" notions of sexuality and masculinity (Cheney, 2012).

3.3.4 Intersectional analysis

Researchers across the GS agree that the popular discourse on feminism with its notion of the hyper-masculine patriarchy tends to universalize the nuances that are present in people's identities across the GS. Several of these identity markers may not be isolated forms of oppression by themselves, but such universalization hides potentially intersecting identities and the resulting oppression. If someone's politics demands a more radical approach, it may be either subsumed or excluded (Haldar, 2019).

It has been argued that mainstream feminism subsumes several marginalization issues that result from religious practices in established patriarchal norms. For example, mainstream feminism in the Indian subcontinent has subsumed Dalit feminists in their politics (Haldar, 2019). While gender inequality in developing countries has been widely studied, the obstacles facing women in Muslim countries and the efficacy of the various strategies to overcome them are less well understood (Cherif, 2010). More interdisciplinary and intersectional scholarship is required to analyze religion from a gendered perspective in the GS (Avishai, Jafar, & Rinaldo, 2015).

Moreover, the intersection between gender and class in the formation of sexual and gender identities in postcolonial societies is much less understood. For example, transgender women actively differentiate their identities from indigenous *hijra* identities in South Asian societies, because *hijras* are often associated with working class backgrounds (Mount, 2020). Studies in Latin America have also shown how ethnicity influences educational attainment, even among minority populations (Taş, Reimão, & & Orlando, 2014). Furthermore, other studies in Latin American contexts have shown how upward class

mobility for women destabilizes the established notions of gender roles (Villares-Varela, 2017). These examples highlight the importance of understanding the nexus between class and sexual/gender identity in postcolonial societies.

Ultimately, the queer population and their intersecting ethnic, linguistic, and religious identities have been somewhat limitedly explored in existing studies of the GS (Tan, 2015). Some studies have explored how a sexual minority status raises the risk of distancing from a racial group (Moore M. R., 2010). Multiple forms of oppression in the guise of racism and sexism can intersect to impact body image and overall wellbeing among ethno-racialized queer populations. Even within the queer population, there is a consensus that transgender individuals experience comparatively greater discrimination in various contexts. Intersexuality in the GS, however, still remains an under-researched field of study (Das, 2020).

3.3.5 Ethnocentric universalism

Northern frameworks have been criticized for their lack of attention to the experiences of diverse groups of women (Kallivayalil, 2007) and the ethno-nationalist homogenization of marginalized populations (Ho, 2015). Unflattering comparative terms are associated with women from the GS (Simon-Kumar, MacBride-Stewart, Baker, & Saxena, 2017)—such as first/third world, rich/poor, and oppressor/victim—in contemporary portrayal. Narratives of violence, extreme poverty, substantial inequality, and daily experiences of terror dominate representations of third-world women. Similarly, homophobia is discursively constructed as a primal, religious, and savage phenomenon in the GS, contrasting it to the civilized, liberal evolution of gay rights in the secular GN. The gist of the argument is that Eurocentric ideas of gender equality are imposed on traditional societies without adequately considering the context (Debusscher, 2015).

In several studies of the GS, participants articulate that their gender and sexual identities are incongruent with the established categories in significant ways (Sigogo, et al., 2004). Western hegemonic notions of LGBTI identity are significantly applied in queer mobilization and sexual identity politics (Kole, 2007), even in the more traditional societies of the GS, without assessing their relevance (Huang & Souleymanov, 2014). Indeed, the globalization of Northern medical epistemologies and texts can marginalize certain identities and constrain their agency (Borba, 2017), because analytical categories of the North may not conform to the cultural experience of the GS.

For example, homosexuality may be conceptualized as being merely an "act" rather than an identity. In a large part of the GS, structural constraints may hinder identity construction, such that sexual agency can be constrained by material circumstances (Bumet, 2012). Latino youths explore sexual identity not as an essence to be discovered in a "coming out" process but rather as a dynamic, interactive process in which the subjects construct their sexual identities through dialogue with existing cultural possibilities within the context of their social relations (Yon-Leau & Muñoz-Laboy, 2010). In Asian societies, "coming out" may be less important than negotiating societal obligations harmoniously while also practicing sexual fluidity (Epprecht M. , 2012).

Groups appear across the Global South that seem to transgress the established sexual and gender categories. For example, across South East Asia, the *hijra* occupy a conceptual space outside of typical western constructs because they engage with varied notions of transsexuality, transgenderism, intersexuality, cross-dressing, eunuchs, and sexual fluidity (Émon & Garlough, 2015). Transgender women who self-identify as *travesti* in Peru have until recently been grouped together with gay and bisexual men in the MSM (men who have sex with men) category, with there being little consideration for their unique situation and needs (Pollock, Silva-Santisteban, Sevelius,

& Salazar, 2016). Similarly, Western ethnocentric terminology lacks the precision to describe “homosexuals” in Vietnam. Contact between Vietnamese society and Western cultures has changed not just patterns of homosexuality but also the social status of homosexuals (Blanc, 2005).

Rather than universalizing theories across cultural differences, it is necessary to understand the applicability of various identity categories across cultural divides, because these categories have considerable influence on public policies, care relationships, advocacies, and multiple stakeholder collaborations (Rios, 2006). A significant number of studies have also looked at how the positive aspects of ingrained cultures can be leveraged to support social activism for sexual and gender identities (Venganai, 2015)(Dreier, Long, & Winkler, 2019). There are therefore opportunities to tactfully address the discrimination and stigmatization of sexual minorities within the confines of the prevailing value systems in various cultures of the GS.

In addition, a human rights framework is often invoked for social justice and political recognition for sexual and gender minorities in the GS. There is a perpetual competition between the universalism and cultural relativism of human rights when reviewing how global LGBT politics interact with local societies (Lee, 2016). The mainstream human rights discourse has tended to present traditional societies in the GS as more violent, backward, racialized, and patriarchal than societies in the GN. In retaliation to this, homosexuality and gay rights have been equated with Western decadence and an imposed Western artifice (McNamara, 2014), thus provoking patriotic defensiveness (Epprecht M. , 2012). Homosexuality is therefore disparagingly conflated with Western decadence, and this often means that concepts of gay and human rights are viewed with suspicion. For example, there is constant tension between the universal human rights approach and moral sentiments that assert that “homosexuality is not in African

culture" (Engelke, 1999).

3.3.6 Minority stress and stigma

There is a growing recognition of the social stigma faced by sexual and gender minorities and the critical role it plays in amplifying their vulnerability in the GS. Service providers often discriminate by limiting their access to health and legal services. State-sanctioned human rights violations are committed against marginalized populations who lack effective mechanisms for legal protection, thus enabling the widespread harassment of such communities (Ibragimov & Wong, 2018). Several studies have also revealed that police frequently engage in blackmail and perpetrate sexual and physical violence. Numerous studies have also revealed that LGBTI children and youths experience abuse from peers, parents, and other adults (Alessi, Kahn, & Chatterji, 2016).

Fear of disclosure, low social cohesion, and the absence of prominent opinion leaders and activists reduces the resilience of this community to stigma. Exposure to stigma results in chronic stress that affects the mental health of LGBTI individuals (Ibragimov & Wong, 2018). Stigma based on sexual orientation has been linked to compromised mental health and HIV status (Winskell & Sabben, 2016). LGBTI individuals often link their abuse to depression, anxiety, and traumatic stress, as well as suicidal ideation and suicide attempts.

Researchers point to a need to develop culturally tailored multilevel structural interventions, including broad legal and policy reforms to reduce the vulnerability of sexual minorities to social stigma (Ibragimov & Wong, 2018). Destigmatization involves defining new constructions that are credible and backed by the status and visibility of actors who signify these constructions. Expert opinions about stigmatized groups should be presented as conclusive. It is also important to understand how newly destigmatized categories interact with existing cultural

ideologies, especially as to how they are perceived and resisted by the dominant groups (Clair, Daniel, & Lamont, 2016).

3.3.7 De-colonial analysis

This research cluster deals with the vestiges of colonial power—as well as contemporary Northern political, economic, and religious influences—in both formerly colonized and non-colonized territories in the GS and how it limits institutions in terms of sexuality and gender. The imposition of imperial authority in colonized territories, surveillance, and the propagation of Christo-normative family values and neoliberal policies, as well as how they influence attitudes toward gender and sexuality, are among the major issues explored in this theme (Rao & Tiessen, 2020).

Several anti-homosexuality bills, such as Penal code 355, are colonial legacies that have been revoked or are in the process of being revoked. These colonial legacies have consistently contributed to state-led violence against sexual and gender minorities in many GS countries (Cheney, 2012). For example, the longstanding section 377 of the penal code in India criminalized private consensual sex between same-sex adults. This law led to discrimination against people engaging in homosexual acts, with them being subjected to frequent oppressive acts, such as police blackmail and other forms of stigmatization. Gendered violence and homophobic attitudes toward gender and sexual minorities are a colonial inheritance in this respect.

The interaction between colonial laws and indigenous ideas of masculinity and sexuality in the GS have been frequently analyzed. This interaction may be influential in shaping religious, sociological, and socio-legal frameworks. For example, Nigerian customary law contradicts common law for terms such as “illegitimacy” and “polygamy,” which in turn spills over to socio-legal frameworks that pertain to marriage and children’s rights (Chinwuba, 2015). Similarly,

some countries in the GS are experiencing an ongoing postcolonial democratic process, resulting in hybrid political systems. Some scholars have shown interest in understanding the postcolonial democratization of institutions and the frameworks that influence their approaches to sexuality and gender (Ng & Ng, 2002).

Conventional approaches to female empowerment and achieving rights for gender and sexual minorities are framed by the patriarchal system. However, some de-colonial feminist scholars go further by conceptualizing such marginalization as a result of access to limited resources and the resulting structural inequalities caused by appropriating a country's wealth for colonial interests, such as by multinational corporations, and lending agency to members of the ruling elite. Viewed that way, the empowerment of women and sexual and gender minorities is not a struggle of women against male privilege or the non-heteronormative population against the heteronormative one but rather a struggle of all members of society against colonial influence (Ryan, 2017).

3.3.8 Transnational activism

Activism for sexual and gender minority issues requires collaboration across the GN and the GS (Norsworthy & Kaschak, 2011; Al-Ali, 2020). This can include various women's transnational networks, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) (Hughes, Paxton, Quinsaat, & Reith, 2018), feminist NGOs operating in the GS, public–private partnerships (PPPs), and even door-to-door initiatives to empower marginalized people in the GS (Sato, 2016).

Transnational activism is often presented as an emancipatory movement originating from the North (Chigudu, 2016; Teivainen, 2019). Such a view arguably essentializes "underprivileged" groups and comes over as being paternalistic or ethnocentric, even if it is an attempt to mitigate inequalities (Rajan & Thornhill, 2019). The dichotomy of the

"savior" and the "saved" also inevitably preserves the distinctions and reproduces them further (Bandyopadhyay & Patil, 2017).

In some cases, it has even led to resistance from women in the GS (Roy, 2017), with it being labelled with terms like "white savior complex" (Bandyopadhyay & Patil, 2017), "Barbie savior," "colonial logic," "civilizing mission," and so on. Whether customary "gender mainstreaming" policies are an act of emancipation or neo-colonization is a major issue being taken up by researchers across the GS in various countries, including Laos (Silfver, 2010), India (Roy, 2017), Nicaragua (Hayhurst, Sundstrom, & Arksey, 2017), Thailand, Burma (Norsworthy K. L., 2017), Kenya (Oronje, 2013), Uganda, and Malawi (Seckinelgin, 2012).

The impetus of transnational (feminist) activism for instilling universal equity and dignity sometimes makes it context-blind (Rajan & Thornhill, 2019). The struggles of marginalized women in the GS involves contextual negotiations within the milieu of their own social and moral worlds. For transnational activism to be a vehicle for social transformation, it needs to be re-signified using an appropriate sociocultural logic for the local setting (Silfver, 2010).

For instance, breastfeeding campaigns across Africa, Asia, and Latin America are accused of misrepresenting women in the developing world as being uneducated about infant health, childcare, and child rearing and lacking agency and empowerment. In addition, an INGO-funded initiative against gender-based violence (GBV) in Nicaragua involved a "conflict in norms" where some degree of accommodation for the contextual circumstances was required (Hughes, Paxton, Quinsaat, & Reith, 2018). In the case of South Africa, a gender-empowerment project funded by a foreign NGO gained little traction with the women, because their main priority was fighting poverty, and they showed little interest in directly challenging male power (Campbell & Nair, 2014).

All these issues have led to the risk of activists and humanitarian organizations from the North imposing ethnocentric values on the GS. Transnational activism and research need to be practiced ethically. Studies have shown that Northern activists and humanitarian organizations should distance themselves from values that could prove problematic in the local context. Where possible, transnational activism should not be a pretext for ulterior motives. Effective activism involves discovering and mobilizing common perspectives without coercing or vilifying the "underprivileged" communities (Rajan, 2017).

There are some issues in transnational feminist activism that warrant further investigation. For example, it is important to understand how transnational activism can support women's rights and counter gender violence in Asian Muslim-majority countries (Fulu & Miedema, 2015). It has also been observed that there is limited inclusion of sexual and gender minority policies in the various policy documents of domestic and international development partners (Francis, et al., 2018). Some researchers also challenge the assumption that ideas for the emancipation of sexual and gender minorities only travel from the GN to the GS. Indeed, both emancipatory and oppositional discourses could travel in the reverse direction to challenge or support sexual and gender minority rights in the GN (Browne & Nash, 2014).

3.3.9 Institutional differences and queer organization

Scholars in this stream of research argue that a unique development trajectory is common to the GS in terms of queer organization being distinct from that of the GN. Existing concepts of sexuality from the GN are very often indiscriminately applied in organizing social movements in a way that glosses over the complexities, differences, and diversities in activism in the GS (Moussawi, 2015). The definition of collective identities and strategic choices for queer organization in the GS often engages with the dominant models of the GN, but it may also contest

them, because effective organization must always be rooted in the embedded contextual factors (Shefer, 2019). The various transnational frameworks for queer mobilization are also assumed to emanate from the GN, but the GS's contributions to the evolution of these frameworks has been less explored (Basu, 2016).

Across the GS, rather than focusing on human rights or homosexual rights in activism, prioritizing health activism while simultaneously but discreetly promoting sexual rights has proven to be more effective. One of the main reasons for this is that campaigns for sexual identity and the accompanying "coming out" process is largely perceived as a form of Western cultural imperialism, so it triggers patriotic and cultural defensiveness. In most cultures across the GS, secretive practices of homosexual and bisexual relationships are perceived to be a much more harmonious means of integrating into the collectivist forms of societies rather than disrupting the status quo through radical announcements of sexual identity and choice (Epprecht M. , 2012).

Most countries in the GS are also transitioning democracies (Holdt, 2002). Descriptions of queer organization across the GS are rife with strategies that leverage discourses that become available during democratization. Most of the time, the option to leverage such discourses is dependent upon a movement's strength in terms of political demands and access to political platforms, as well as the existing gender norms that are prevalent in the society (Okeke–Ihejirika & Franceschet, 2002). Simultaneously, citizenship based on sexuality and gender is also very tightly knit with the egalitarian discourse of a country's constitution, which is also a result of the democratization process.

The power vacuum resulting from democratization and the constitution-building process has led to coalitions forming based on multiple intersectional lines, depending upon perceptions of collective efficacy and shared historical grievances (Holdt, 2002). It is possible to

observe across the GS how minority coalitions are shaping democratic reforms and bringing social change to specific regions. Black and Latinx communities have engaged in coalition politics to advocate for educational equity based on gender (Sampson, Demps, & Rodiguez-Martinez, 2019). The origins of the “gay rights clause” in the South African constitution is itself largely the result of the collective struggle by the male-dominated gay rights movement and the anti-apartheid movement through the rhetoric of equality during the constitution-building process (Moore M. R., 2010). The movement against penal code 377 in India came from a coalition of LGBT organizations along with children’s rights and feminist activists (Mishra, 2009).

Using human rights discourse or a rights-based framework in the GS has proven to be somewhat of a double-edged sword (Waites, 2019). When there are diverse cultural scripts and rhetorical strategies for and against queer mobilization, a human rights framework has proven to be an effective tool for fostering communication and collaboration between multiple stakeholders. However, the universalizing effect of a human rights framework has also made it difficult to ensure that an approach is locally tailored enough to achieve the expected local ownership and accountability. It has even led to the marginalization and pathologizing of transgenderism. In some cases, the local or customary laws can be somewhat incompatible with the international human rights framework (Arrubia, 2019). A human rights framework, by design or otherwise, also tends to reinforce the “heterosexual–homosexual” dualism. Even when the political objectives are met, sexual and gender minorities do not automatically experience the freedoms enshrined in such human rights frameworks (Wet, Rothmann, & Simmonds, 2016).

Invoking human rights discourses in most parts of the African continent has proven to be counterproductive. First, due to the visibility and fixity of identity categories based on sexuality, they tend to be characterized opponents as un-African or a “Western” imposition, possibly even

presented as a neo-colonial encroachment. Since human rights frameworks are based on legal frameworks from the GN and invoked by corresponding governments and agencies, invoking such a discourse is seen by association as protecting the vested interests of the "West." Human rights, when portrayed as an emancipatory and progressive ideal, can also classify some areas where it is imposed as being primitive and backward, which can be counterproductive. Similarly, when sexual rights are equated with human rights, it often creates a human–non-human dichotomy and provides a rhetorical tool for opponents to cast sexual minorities as non-human (Vos, 2015).

One common motif that is apparent in queer mobilization across the GS is the ultimate inefficacy of legal victories. Despite legal victories in many areas, implementations have been far from ideal due to the questionable legitimacy of the state apparatus and the high concentration of political power in countries across the GS (Neumann, 2018). Legal victories also do not necessarily coincide or conform with changes in social attitudes toward sexual and gender minorities. Despite the advancement in legal rights, sexual minorities in the GS still live in societies that are intolerant and even violent toward non-heteronormative populations (Breshears & Beer, 2016).

Another common characteristic of queer organization in the GS is the bigger role played by international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and international civil society organizations (ICSOs) in lobbying governments for legal changes in line with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Nyoh, 2019). It also involves collaborating with multiple stakeholders at various levels. Activism to achieve sexual and gender rights has been successful where the activists have been able to leverage pivotal incidents to generate public empathy and find a common basis for forming coalitions with actors who have common values and needs (Capell & Elgebeily, 2019).

3.3.10 Gender equity and development

Women and marginalized communities in the GS are targeted for interventions with a developmental logic, so this research cluster comprises sources that critically review such intervention practices and their effects on empowerment.

Most development projects focus on increasing vulnerable populations' access to, and control of, productive resources. These include access to micro-credits, financial markets, land rights, agricultural cooperatives, knowledge, social relations, legal rights, social identity, and forms of social authority. These practices are also referred to as "gender mainstreaming" and include various participatory rural-development strategies to enhance women's and other vulnerable groups' economic and social empowerment.

Scholars frequently analyze how access to productive resources leads to the transformation of households and consequently gender roles. For example, access to digital finance and money can affect the control of household finances and subsequently gender roles (Kusimba, 2018; Chigbu, 2019; Rangan & Gilmartin, 2002). An emphasis is placed on understanding how different forms of neoliberal capitalist development agendas interact with specific socio-historical contexts and lead to reconfigurations in the gender and power relations within the emerging economies of the GS.

International labor migration, a widespread phenomenon in the GS, has had subsequent effects on societal gender norms and the incidence of gender-based violence. International labor migration is an increasingly regionalized phenomenon (Piper, 2003), especially in East and South East Asia and Africa. Not only can female migration destabilize the conventional gender roles as housebound husbands take up conventionally "feminine" roles—male migration and the increased participation of housebound wives in decision-making also

destabilizes gender identities and roles (Lukasiewicz, 2011).

Gender-empowerment strategies are also undertaken collaboratively by corporations, INGOs like the World Bank, and other local grassroots non-government organizations (NGOs) across the GS. These are primarily aimed at investing in the skills and labor of young women to stimulate economic growth and reduce poverty in the GS, and this is sometimes referred to as the "girl effect." Such "Cinderella projects" sometimes have the unintended consequence of homogenizing and essentializing third-world women as impoverished victims (Tornhill, 2016).

Critiques also portray "feminism development" as a new means for exploiting neoliberalism. Liberal frameworks for female empowerment mask the underlying political, social, and economic objectives. Having presented women as nascent market-oriented actors (Alexeyeff, 2020) and granted them access to micro-credits and financial markets, women in the GS are then targeted for exploitation (Byatt, 2018). In some cases, it has been shown that such activities reinforce the patriarchal agenda and existing gender relations (Tsige, Synnevåg, & Aune, 2019).

Critiques also emphasize how the "one size fits all" approaches of "Cinderella projects" ignore or misunderstand the established gendered social power structures and localized agency, so they are often ineffective and lead to unintended consequences. Mainstream empowerment models often fail to make a real impact on women's lives because their epistemological frameworks push aside any questions of geographical and historical specificity (Worthen, 2012). Transnational policies, the operationalization of development and empowerment indices, and the corresponding recommendations of financial corporations serve to universalize developmental needs. Such a neoliberal corporatization of development policies is seen as apolitical and ahistorical (Roberts & Soederberg, 2012). Women's agency and empowerment is, and should

be, a multidimensional and context-specific construct.

Several projects also shift attention away from substantive structural drivers of poverty and cast the blame for underdevelopment on local “culture” (Hickel, 2014). For example, access to land and other resources is prohibited for many women in the GS through customary laws based on traditional rules of patriarchy and primogeniture (Paradza, Mokwena, & Musakwa, 2020; Kocabicak, 2018). Judicial activism and transformative constitutionalism are more important than development-led policies for empowering women in these kinds of situations.

The North-led development projects also implicitly assume that only men can play crucial roles in community-building processes, so they only include male community members in the empowerment process. Such developmental discourses sustain and reinforce patriarchal cultural codes that exclude women from actively participating in development projects (Rodriguez, 2001). In short, gender mainstreaming or gender equality as a neoliberal project is normalized in the development business as ahistorical, apolitical, decontextualized technical projects that leave the prevailing unequal power relations intact (Mukhopadhyay, 2004).

Being queer can have a profound impact on how low-income residents in the GS experience poverty. There is a dearth of literature exploring the lived experiences of non-normative populations in the GS. Some scholars (Thoreson, 2011) increasingly point to the need to understand how identities intersect in the field of development in the GS.

3.4 Conceptual framework

Through the systematic literature review, several pockets of research dealing with sexuality- and gender-related issues in the GS were identified. Research into gender inequalities in the GS clearly addresses

ten sets of issues: (1) gender-based violence, (2) MSMs and sexual health, (3) indigenous masculinity and sexuality, (4) intersectionality, (5) ethnocentric universalism, (6) minority stress and stigma, (7) de-colonial feminism, (8) transnational activism, (9) institutional differences and transnational gender politics, and (10) gender equity and development. These are summarized in Figure 6 alongside the key themes identified in the most highly co-cited references. The conceptual framework is based on the previous discussions and is rather self-explanatory.

Structural inequalities, Gender norms, Cultural scripts, Cultural barriers in seeking help	Gender-based violence (GBV)
Social stigma, Criminalization, Structural inequalities, Sociocultural barriers to care, Culturally irrelevant intervention, Sexual violence	MSMs and sexual health
Hegemonic masculinity, Heteronormative cultural scripts, Indigenous masculinities/sexualities	Geographies of masculinity and sexuality
Subsumed identities, Social status, Religion, Universalization of "third-world women," Ethno-racialized queer populations, Class, Disability	Intersectional analysis
Northern identity categories, Semiotic symbols and discursive frames, Embodiment, Intervention strategies, Universalizing "human rights frameworks," Structural conditions, Colonial othering and marginalization, Leveraging cultural logic	Ethnocentric universalism
Sexual stigma, State-sanctioned violence, Social discrimination, Psycho-social adjustments, Mental health, Lack of legal protection, HIV stigma, Access to education	Minority stigma and psychological distress

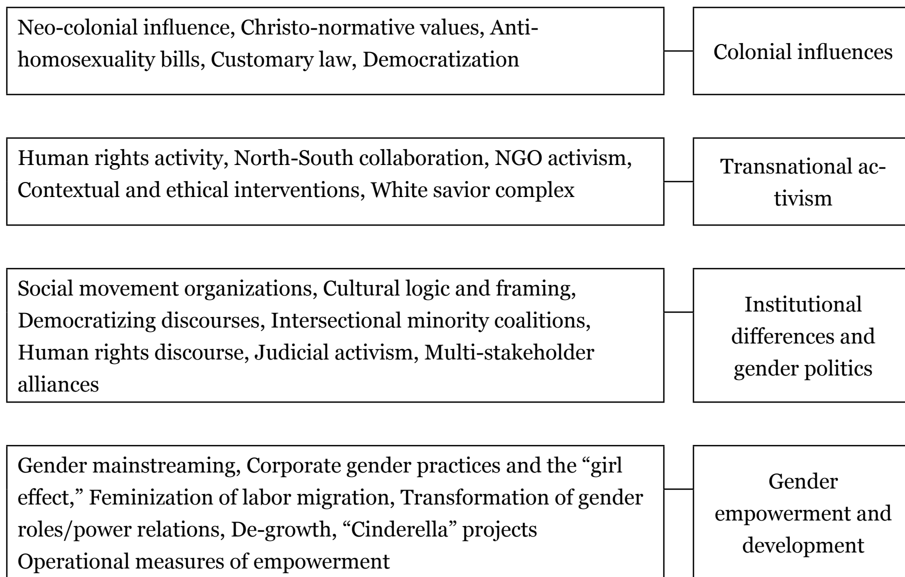

Figure 6 Conceptual framework from the knowledge synthesis

3.5 Conclusions and suggestions for further research

The purpose of this chapter was to conduct a systematic bibliometric survey of sexuality- and gender-related issues in the GS. Although the term "Global South" is in itself an ambiguous and contentious topic, it represents an effective analytical framework for identifying unique perspectives on the topic from the GS. The ten sets of identified issues in Figure 6 also uniquely position the studies of gender relations in the GS in contrast to the GN.

One conclusion certainly stands: Gender inequality in the GS differs in some ways from that in the GN. The key issue that emerges from the bibliometric analysis of studies on sexuality and gender in the GS is that there are a number of issues that are unique to this context. Some of the research themes identified in Figure 6—namely a) contextual intersectional analysis, b) geographies of sexuality and masculinity, and c) gender empowerment and development—are unique to the GS context. These specific themes offer key aspects of the unique

geopolitical and sociocultural dimensions of gender identity in the GS, ones that cannot be dealt with or theorized according to the gender discourses and feminist ideologies of the GN. This analysis forms the core of the conceptual framework presented in Figure 6, which is substantiated by the bibliometric method that was detailed in the initial sections.

Most studies conducted in the GS context agree that the identity categories existing in the GS and their intersecting influences on the occurrence of social inequality and marginalization have been ignored by several variants of feminism and sexuality and gender theories developed in the GN. To omit such a wide variety of experiences in the GS simply because they do not fit with the analytical categories of the GN is to engage in epistemological racism. Most importantly, there are clearly differences in how analytical categories for sexuality and gender are understood and deployed in activism. Whereas analytical categories are developed and employed from theories and practices emanating from the GN, they are not understood in the same way, nor are they as effective as, in the GS context. Hence, there is a need to be both ethically sensitive in applying these concepts and develop contextually relevant programs and policies for social activism.

In addition, the wide variety of indigenous understandings of masculinity and sexuality that are present across GS cultures can only be understood in a limited manner using Northern perspectives. Northern researchers may also have limited understanding of how these concepts are deeply embedded in the socio-historical and cultural context of the GS. Obviously, the case is similar for Southern researchers trying to understand uniquely Northern themes.

The survey of the studies shows that compared to the GN, the issues of sexuality and gender have different significances within the GS. In most of the research conducted in the GS, a common theme is that structural

factors play a huge role in defining sexual and gender identities. In most cases, the real issue is not to proclaim one's identity but rather to challenge the structural inequalities being faced due to a proclaimed or suppressed identity. Since most countries in the GS are economically less developed, issues of emancipation for sexual and gender minorities is closely tied with the issue of economic development.

In addition, since most countries in the GS are former colonies with weak democratic institutions, the issue of colonial and neo-colonial influences remains a key issue that differentiates studies of the GS from those of the GN. When it concerns rights activism for sexual and gender minorities in the GS, the remnants of colonial laws, how they interact with customary laws, and how other developing institutions work as a fostering or inhibiting factor for activism represent key issues.

All of these issues point to the fact that the "Global South" is not simply an oppositional geopolitical territory against the "Global North" but rather a composition of unique issues that includes indigenous ideas of sexuality and gender, intervention strategies, institutions, analytical categories, and contexts. A framework originating from the GN is not always capable of assimilating all these unique issues in the GS. The issues discussed in this theme are common across studies in the GS but sharply contrast with the issues dealt with in the GN. These sorts of clearly distinct research themes point to the need for a "Southern Theory" of sexuality and gender.

There are at least some ideas mentioned in this chapter that have great potential to be developed into future research studies focusing on issues of sexuality and gender in the GS. Studies could contextualize the GS in South Asia and South East Asia, because considering the entire GS may prove a very ambitious task. There could also be a specific focus on those countries with a rich history and culture around heterogeneous gender identities that were criminalized due to the colonial impact but

are now being interpreted/misinterpreted through Northern discourses around LGBTQI+ identities. Similarly, there is potential for conducting country-contextual studies focused on the issue of coalitions formed on multiple intersectional lines based on shared historical grievances. Another rich avenue may be to explore the inadequacy of universalizing the principles of human rights discourse when addressing the issues of gender and sexual minorities in African and Asian contexts. Finally, studying how capitalist development agendas interact with specific socio-historical contexts and lead to reconfigurations in the gender and power relations within the emerging economics of the GS also presents another rich area of research that warrants further exploration.

Ultimately, however, we also need to observe one additional caveat and be circumspect in taking the differentiation between the GN and GS to its logical extreme. There are inherent ambiguities when considering the GN and GS as both distinct and unified. Obviously there is a good degree of differentiation even within the GS. It is quite clear that the GS as an analytical category is valuable and serves an important function in pointing out how perspectives from the GN are, or have been, partial, prejudiced, and often oppressive in their consequences. However, to talk of a "Southern theory," even when mentioned between apostrophes, is to universalize the "South" and neglect the differences within the GS, so such an approach could be equally partial, prejudiced, and oppressive. Focusing on sexuality- and gender-related issues in the GS being distinct from those of the GN, however, leads to recognizing differences between these two contexts, but at the same time, there is a danger of repressing specific diversities within the GS context. The general problem is one of a world in which all entities are distinct yet somehow related, but looking for similarities suppresses the differences, whereas looking for differences suppresses the similarities.

4 THE LGBTI MOVEMENT IN NEPAL IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH

This chapter discusses the political context in which LGBTI issues and the associated movement have emerged. In Section 4.1, the history of the ongoing LGBTI movement in Nepal, which began in 2001, is presented to help familiarize the reader with the research case. This section discusses the political context in which LGBTI issues and the overall movement emerged. Interested readers can also refer to a detailed timeline of the LGBTI movement that is presented in Appendix 8.

In Section 4.2, additional emphasis is placed on explaining the indigenous category of *tesro-lingi* (third sex) to denote all sexual and gender minorities in Nepal. It is important to elaborate on the emic understanding of the term, because the LGBTI movement in Nepal is referred to as the *tesro-lingi* movement. In Section 4.3, the key issues focused on by the movement are discussed based on a corpus of media texts. This was based on identifying significant clusters of media discourse that pertain to the movement. Thereafter, in Section 4.4, some issues are discussed to help contextualize the LGBTI movement in Nepal within the overall Global South.

4.1 Brief outline of the LGBTI movement in Nepal

The development of Nepal's LGBTI movement has been largely influenced by parallel political changes in the country. The existence of the LGBTI community was undocumented prior to 2000, although some awareness of the community may have existed in the public consciousness due to HIV being endemic among MSMs (men who have sex with men) in the early 1990s. However, there were no organizations to represent sexual and gender minorities, and LGBTI issues were a taboo subject for many people (Knight, 2015).

During the 1990s, a popular movement overthrew the autocratic regime that had been headed by the Hindu monarch for 30 years, paving the way for a multi-party democratic system. This political transition led to several major changes that were conducive for the subsequent LGBTI movement. First, the end of propaganda and media control led to an era of free speech and inclusivity. Second, a previously isolated country gradually opened up more to external support and discourse. Third, the nascent democracy exposed the inefficiency of government bureaucracy in developing civil infrastructure, which was increasingly being built by NGOs and INGOs. These three conditions led to the establishment of various donor-supported advocacy organizations, including those representing sexual and gender minorities (Knight, 2015). One of the significant organizations set up in 2001 was *Neel Heera Samaaj* (NHS), which was led by an important figurehead of the subsequent LGBTI movement, Sunil Babu Pant. The organization was initially set up with donor support to provide education and assistance to HIV-infected MSMs (Pant, 2015).

The NHS was established when the political situation in Nepal was still unstable. The armed conflict between the ultra-left Maoist insurgents and the government, which had started in 1998, was at its peak (Pant, 2015). The insurgency started as a response to the waning trust in democratic institutions and political parties after almost a decade of experimental democracy. Having started in rural areas as a revolt against a caste privilege that favored upper-caste urban individuals, the insurgency was also based on an agenda of social inclusion (UNDP, USAID, 2014). The accelerating war increased uncertainty and led to a lack of political accountability for the general populace. Among the war crimes perpetrated was the incarceration of sexual and gender minorities, especially *Métis*, by government security forces. Several abuses of sexual and gender minorities by the security forces were also documented during this period by various human rights organizations (Knight, 2014). Consequently, the NHS started to play a bigger role in

defending the rights of sexual and gender minorities, and this led to a gradual shift in the original mission of the organization (Pant, 2015).

The political uncertainty further increased in 2001 when all the members of the sitting royal family were massacred. The brother of the massacred king was appointed as the new king, and he further mobilized the army under his control against the Maoist insurgents, escalating the threat to sexual and gender minorities from the security forces (Knight, 2015).

In addition, people opposed to the LGBTI movement also started asserting their opinions through various channels. For instance, in 2004, a petition was filed in the Supreme Court of Nepal that sought to disband the NHS and make homosexuality illegal (Bochenek & Knight, 2012). The publicity received by this petition also incited further violence and stigma against the NHS and sexual and gender minorities in general. For instance, several members of the NHS were incarcerated without charge for 13 days in 2004 (UNDP, USAID, 2014). However, all these events also strengthened the role of the NHS as a champion of sexual and gender minority rights. These events also helped to disseminate awareness of LGBTI issues through the broader society. The conditions faced by LGBTI community in Nepal were also exposed to the national and international media (Pant, 2015).

In February 2005, the reigning king decided to dissolve parliament, citing the failure of political leaders to hold general elections on time. To assume total control of the legislature, the king also instituted martial law under the pretext of controlling the Maoist insurgency. With increased power over the security forces, the violence faced by sexual and gender minorities escalated to such an extent that a human rights organization condemned it as a “sexual cleansing drive” (Knight, 2015). The NHS increasingly sought the aid of national and international allies in documenting and defending the rights of sexual and gender

minorities, thus enhancing its international reputation. The NHS also sought to improve its international alliances by participating in the drafting of the Yogyakarta principles, a key document guaranteeing the rights of sexual and gender minorities globally, along with 27 other signatories in 2006. In parallel to the increasing significance of human rights issues in the Nepalese context, due to the loss of several lives in the ongoing armed conflict, the mission of the NHS was gradually shifted toward framing the rights of sexual and gender minorities as basic human rights (Pant, 2015).

In April 2006, a massive rally was held by the general population to express solidarity against the royal coup, the Maoist insurgency, and the resulting disruption of social life. This led to further important political changes. After complex sets of negotiations between important political powers, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was negotiated. As a result, the decade-long Maoist insurgency ended and the powers of the sitting king were stripped, thus making him a "civilian king" and reinstating the multiparty democratic system. The restored parliament was charged with drafting an interim constitution that would act as a basis for a new constitution. Hindu monarchy was abolished in favor of a secular democratic republic with the interim constitution of 2006. In the process, a societal-level dialogue ensued about how best to develop an inclusive constitution through a participatory political process that assimilated all the different extant marginalized voices. (Pant, 2015)

Emboldened by the prevalent discourse of social inclusivity and political participation, sexual and gender minorities also saw possibilities to advance their agenda (Pant, 2015). With this aim, four Nepalese NGOs, headed by the NHS, drafted and submitted a petition to the Supreme Court of Nepal to decriminalize homosexuality and end all discriminatory laws directed at sexual and gender minorities (Bochenek & Knight, 2012). On December 21, 2007, the Supreme Court of Nepal, ruled a) to establish the legal category of *tesro-lingi*, b) to

gradually amend the discriminatory laws directed at sexual and gender minorities, and c) to establish a commission to study the feasibility of same-sex marriage in Nepal (Tadié, 2016). This ruling was perhaps the most significant legal achievement of the LGBTI movement in Nepal.

The subsequent power struggle between the king and members of parliament led to the king's official abdication in April 2008. As a result, the interim constitution of 2006 was dissolved, and a new constituent assembly needed to be elected to draft a new constitution. Political parties sought to expand their support base by appearing to be inclusive and representative before the general elections. The Supreme Court ruling of 2007 had already established sexual and gender minorities as a legitimate social category, so they were an important voter base for political parties. Sexual and gender minorities were finally able to influence the result of a general election.

The first party to include sexual and gender minority issues in their election manifesto was formed by former Maoist insurgents, partly because they wanted to establish themselves as an important power in the multiparty democratic system. Other political parties soon followed suit, and LGBTI issues became increasingly important in the political context. The LGBTI agenda became even more significant as a group of gay men announced their candidacy in Nepal's first parliamentary election after the civil war (Pant, 2015). The results of the general election were announced in April 2008, and they saw Sunil Babu Pant, founder and CEO of the NHS, become the first openly gay federal-level official to be elected in all of Asia, having been awarded a seat in parliament under the proportional representation system. Undoubtedly, the presence of Sunil Babu Pant in parliament until the dissolution of the first Constituent Assembly in 2012 helped to initiate several positive legal changes related to sexual and gender minorities (Knight, 2014).

The LGBTI movement has also continuously managed to win legal victories. For instance, in June 2011, Nepal added the *tesro-lingi* category to its official national census, although its full implementation has yet to be achieved. On January 2013, the Ministry of Home Affairs of Nepal issued a directive to all regional administration offices to distribute citizenship certificates indicating "*anya*/others" in the gender category for all self-identified sexual and gender minorities. In the same year, the Supreme Court of Nepal ruled that the Nepalese Government should issue passports with the "O" for "Others" option. The political participation of sexual and gender minorities increased, as illustrated by the 62 announced candidates for the 2013 parliamentary election for a new constituent assembly. The spokesperson for the LGBTI movement, Sunil Babu Pant, was nominated for the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize along with 278 other nominees (UNDP, USAID, 2014; Knight, 2015).

However, we should be circumspect in evaluating the achievements of the LGBTI movement. The NHS itself has been accused of financial mismanagement by the media and the government a number of times (Knight, 2014). Despite a newly drafted constitution, which came into force in September 2015 guaranteeing rights in line with the 2007 Supreme Court verdict, the progress with the legalization of same-sex marriage stalled. Although the commission established the feasibility of same-sex marriage and recommended its legalization, it has yet to be implemented. The country's Civil and Criminal Codes were amended by the Ministry of Law and Justice to replace the old codes (*Muluki Ain*), but they also insidiously backtracked on the legal achievements that had been already won by the LGBTI movement. More importantly, however, the degree to which the legal victories won in court translated to the day-to-day lives of sexual and gender minorities was questionable. Legal recognition may be achievable in the short term, but social and moral recognition can take much longer. The continuous struggle by LGBTI activists to institutionalize *tesro-*

lingi as an alternate gender category across the various social contexts is analyzed in the next section.

4.2 *Tesro-Lingi* as an alternative gender category

Nepalese LGBTI activists have struggled to make the orthodox gender classification scheme inclusive of sexual and gender minorities by introducing *tesro-lingi* as an alternate gender category, something that is a large part of the symbolic struggle for the establishment of proper gender taxonomy in the Nepalese context. This section discusses what the *tesro-lingi* category represents.

So, what does the *tesro-lingi* category represent? There are several ambiguities as to what it should represent. The most influential LGBTI organization in Nepal, Neel Heera Samaj, defines it literally as the "third gender" or "third-sex" because the word *linga* denotes both sex and gender in the Nepali language (Neel Heera Samaj, 2010). More precisely, *tesro-lingi* refers to "those individuals whose gender identity, expression, personality, and so on are different to conventional expectations based on the physical sex they were born into" (Neel Heera Samaj, 2010: own translation).

In large part, *tesro-lingi* is constructed as a category in opposition to the gender binary. It encompasses various other indigenous labels, such as *Méti, Singaru, Maruni, Maugiya/Kothi, Fulumulu,* and *Hijara.*[3] Most of these local gender-identity labels describe biological males with a "feminine" gender identity or expression and biological females who have a "masculine" gender identity or expression (Bochenek & Knight, 2012).

However, the *tesro-lingi* category is ambiguous, as it does not only include people who do not identify with the gender binary but also those who do not identify as heterosexuals. The category is an amalgam

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[3] All these local terms will be elaborated further in Chapter 5

of all sexual and gender minorities and does not necessarily refer to only transgender individuals. In the petition submitted by the NHS (and other organizations) to the Supreme Court of Nepal in 2007 to establish *tesro-lingi* as a legal category, the *tesro-lingi* category is constructed as follows:

> "We, the petitioners, are involved with organizations which represent the minority people in terms of sexual orientation and gender identity. Expressing our dissenting view with the prevalent social structure or norms, as well as legal provisions adopted by the state based on the interest of majority people (i.e., heterosexual male and female persons), we are demanding an appropriate place in society for recognition of our rights. We further state that female homosexuals (lesbians), male homosexuals (gays), and the people of the third gender are considered as minority people on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Such people introduce themselves as a third type of people…" [Writ No. 917 of the year 2064 BS (2007 AD)]

The way *tesro-lingi* (third type of people) is defined in the petition can easily give the sense that it only represents transgender individuals, particularly if the Nepali term *tesro-lingi* were to be literally translated into English as "third-gendered," as it also appears in the petition. However, *tesro-lingi* signifies more than just transgender individuals. *Tesro-lingi* (third type of people) signifies anyone who does not fall within the traditional gender binary definition or does not engage in heterosexual relationships, so it includes everybody who does not conform to heteronormative expectations. Furthermore, *tesro-lingi* individuals are denoted in the *anya* (others) category in official documents, and the sole criterion for being legally recognized as a *tesro-lingi* is based on self-identification alone, as the Supreme Court verdict of 2007 mentions:

> "When an individual identifies her/his gender identity according to self-feelings, other individuals, society, the state or law are not the appropriate ones to decide as to what type of genitals (s)he should have, what kind of sexual partners (s)he needs to choose, and with whom (s)he should have marital relationship. Rather, it is a matter falling entirely within the ambit

> of the right to self-determination of such an individual" [Writ No. 917 of the year 2064 BS (2007 AD)]

The above verdict clarifies precisely what is represented by the *tesro-lingi* category. *Tesro-lingi* as a social category represents individuals who do not self-identify either as "male" or "female" based on their biological sex (i.e., genitals). What is more, it includes individuals who are not exclusively engaged in heterosexual relationships (i.e., sexual partners). Furthermore, whether somebody belongs to the *tesro-lingi* category is entirely dependent on that individual's self-identification based on self-feelings.

Sunil Babu Pant, the main spokesperson for the LGBTI movement in Nepal, clarifies it elsewhere by stating:

> "Third gender is merely an umbrella term that indicates a rupture in the binary notion of male-female identity. By third gender, we intend to imagine a spectrum of identities that is in no way monolithic or static but rather a range of self-identifications that may not fit within the two traditional options. Some are concerned that introducing a third gender category could undermine LGBTI community members' right to self-identification by including some while excluding others. However, the NHS believes that identification as male or female at birth always confines our notion of self-identification. As such, a third option at least introduces a notion of progressive ambiguity and fluidity to an already enclosed and historically determined legal field" (Pant, 2015)

The *tesro-lingi* category is ambiguous by design, and the concern about the *tesro-lingi* category undermining the expression of all LGBTI community members' identities is genuine. As such, when the *tesro-lingi* category was defined in opposition to the gender binary, it prioritized transgender individuals (in terms of gender) and intersexed individuals (in terms of biological sex) over identities based solely on sexuality, such as gay men and lesbians. Nevertheless, *tesro-lingi* was constructed as an amalgam of identities that do not fit with either the gender binary or the heterosexual norm. It was necessary to elaborate

what the *tesro-lingi* category represents in this section because a significant part of the classificatory struggle in which LGBTI activists in Nepal have engaged concerns the institutionalization of the *tesro-lingi* category across various social fields.

4.3 Key issues raised by the LGBTI movement in Nepal

In order to identify the key issues raised by LGBTI movement in Nepal, a corpus of 1,953 news items was compiled. These news items were retrieved from Nepal's only LGBTI news-aggregator portal, pahichan.com. The earliest article retrieved was dated 5.8.2014, while the latest article was dated 1.6.2021. The pahichan.com website republishes aggregated articles from various national and international media outlets, so on any given day, the portal may republish multiple articles or none at all due to a lack of suitable news items. Since the decision of the aggregator site to republish articles is based on their relevance to LGBTI issues in Nepal, all of the articles that were republished between 5.8.2014 and 1.6.2021 were included, resulting in a corpus of 1,953 articles for analysis.

All these 1,953 news items were stored in a directory as a series of plain text files. This folder was then imported into the R statistical software (R Core Team, 2013) to perform text-mining operations. R Text Mining Solution (version 0.6.1) (Bouchet-Valat & Bastin, 2013), which is a text-mining package in R with a graphical user interface, was used for this purpose. While importing the corpus into R, some relevant pre-processing was conducted to convert the text into an analysable format, such as converting to lower case and removing punctuation, "stop words," and "stemming." These are necessary steps for any text-mining operation (Bouchet-Valat & Bastin, 2013) .

After processing the texts, a document–term matrix was created. A document-term matrix comprises rows of documents and the corresponding processed "terms" in columns (Bouchet-Valat & Bastin,

2013). In this analysis, the number of documents in the corpus was 1,953, with there being 17,754 unique terms identified. Unique terms are derived after removing “sparse” terms, which are terms that occur very infrequently in the document corpus. In the analysis, the terms were also “stemmed,” which results in fewer unique terms by removing superfluous terms. Similarly, in the dialogue box of the text-mining package used in R, the 90% value was chosen, meaning that terms not occurring in 10% of the documents were removed from the analysis. This meant that only terms present in at least 196 documents would be retained in the analysis, resulting in 288 terms in this case.

Hierarchical cluster analysis was performed on the corpus of 1,953 documents and these 288 unique terms through the use of various text-mining packages in the R statistical software (R Core Team, 2013). The fundamental aim of hierarchical cluster analysis is to group documents in a corpus based on the co-occurrences of unique terms in the corresponding columns. The package used in this analysis clustered documents using Ward’s method, which is based on the Chi-squared distance between documents. The package produced the dendrogram plot presented in Figure 7. A careful inspection of the dendrogram plot led to the retention of all 15 clusters, although the choice of the exact number of clusters is obviously a largely subjective and interpretive matter. The program itself also provides options for a maximum of 15 clusters to be created from the corpus, and since the purpose of the analysis was exploratory, all the clusters were retained as is.

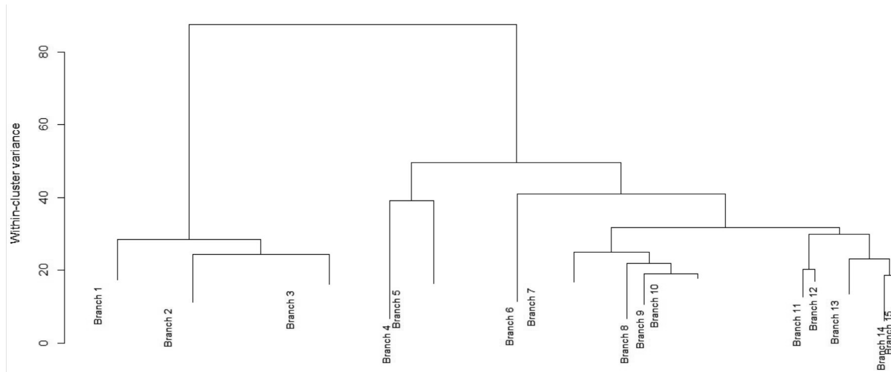

Figure 7 **Dendrogram showing the clusters resulting from the hierarchical clustering analysis performed on the corpus**

After performing hierarchical cluster analysis on the given corpus, fifteen clusters were identified representing unique themes, and these are presented in Table 1. In Table 1, each theme is presented with a corresponding category name. The output of the hierarchical cluster analysis presented key passages from the news items, and category names are given here to help the reader to understand the main theme of each of the identified clusters.

Table 1 Central issues raised by the LGBTI movement in Nepal

Cluster Numbers	Number of documents	% of documents	Within-cluster variance	Category
Cluster 10	348	17.8 %	17.80	LGBTI awareness
Cluster 2	298	15.3 %	11.10	Human rights
Cluster 5	276	14.1 %	16.30	Legal/constitutional activism
Cluster 3	235	12.0 %	16.00	Trans community
Cluster 7	227	11.6 %	16.80	Government/institutional policies
Cluster 1	171	8.8 %	17.30	Marriage equality
Cluster 13	112	5.7 %	13.40	Political participation
Cluster 12	53	2.7 %	17.00	Social marginalization
Cluster 6	52	2.7 %	11.40	Police brutality/Gender violence
Cluster 11	39	2.0 %	12.70	Personal empowerment
Cluster 8	38	1.9 %	6.70	Sex education/ Educational sector
Cluster 9	35	1.8 %	10.60	Sexual and mental health
Cluster 15	27	1.4 %	10.50	NHS activism
Cluser 4	23	1.2 %	6.60	Citizenship rights
Cluster 14	19	1.0 %	6.09	Cultural resources

Although this is quite a sweeping generalization of the overall issues of concern in the LGBTI movement of Nepal, the textual hierarchical cluster analysis clearly shows that they include, in descending order of frequency in the news items, (1) LGBTI awareness, (2) human rights, (3) legal/constitutional activism, (4) the trans community, (5) government/institutional policies, (6) marriage equality, (7) political participation, (8) social marginalization, (9) police brutality/gender violence, (10) personal empowerment, (11) sex education/educational sector, (12) sexual and mental health, (13) NHS activism, (14) citizenship rights, and (15) cultural resources.

The media corpus of 1,953 articles was taken from an LGBTI portal

established and funded by the NHS that has acted as a channel for information dissemination and the mobilization of counter-movement discourse. It is also one of the most important arenas for contesting discriminatory legal and bureaucratic provisions against sexual and gender minorities, as well as providing news about various activities related to LGBTI organization, such as pride festivals and other events. It is therefore little surprise that these issues dominate the media items.

The rhetoric of the LGBTI movement in Nepal is strongly positioned on the human rights framework. The NHS started its activities as a human rights activist organization before starting to prioritize sexual and gender minority rights. The basis for public litigation by various NGOs involved in LGBTI rights was also one of human rights. Furthermore, this portal is also a significant forum for documenting human rights violations against the LGBTI population of Nepal. Considering such an ethnically, racially, and culturally diverse country as Nepal, the human rights discourse has acted as a common ground for forming solidarity among the various stakeholders in marginalized groups. It is therefore unsurprising that this portal frequently emphasizes human rights issues.

Among the general populace, the LGBTI movement is known as the *tesro-lingi* movement. As discussed previously, this identity label has been conflated, both conceptually and practically, with transgender issues. NHS activities originally focused on sexual health among MSMs, but they gradually shifted toward documenting human rights violations among the MtF transgender population, which is indigenously referred to as the *Méti* community. Measured in terms of various sociodemographic metrics, this group of sexual and gender minorities has faced, and continues to face, the greatest social discrimination, both in terms of the number of documented incidences and the intensity of them, due to their highly visible identities, involvement in sex work, the associated social stigma, and structural inequalities. Hence, this group

also became the most incarcerated but also the most visible element of the LGBTI movement. An additional reason for raising the importance of transgender issues is the nature of this identity, because it easily destabilizes all the culturally accepted notions of sexuality and gender. Hence, a large part of the media discourse focusses on the experiences of the *Méti* community in Nepal and the discrimination and violence faced by this group, particularly from the police in the country.

A significant portion of the media items about the LGBTI movement in Nepal focuses on individual and group empowerment among this population. At the behest of the NHS, several cultural activities are organized involving this community, such as the Miss-Pink beauty pageants for MtF transgender individuals, marathons, drama, dance and music competitions, and so on. Some winners of the Miss-Pink beauty pageant have gone on to work professionally for international modelling agencies. Empowerment activities also include various vocational training and skill-building activities that have been initiated by the NHS and other stakeholders. People who were largely unemployed or involved in sexual work became able to start their own businesses, such as through fishing or agriculture, while others have been trained in specific professions, such as journalism and car maintenance. All in all, personal and group empowerment for sexual and gender minorities is an important issue that is highlighted and supported by the LGBTI movement in Nepal, and this is in turn reflected in the large degree of media coverage.

Despite various legal victories in the courts, the LGBTI population of Nepal still faces a high degree of discrimination and violence in various social arenas, such as from the police, in public spaces, and when accessing healthcare and education services. Among these areas, the discrimination faced by the LGBTI population in the education sector is particularly visible and well documented, as reflected in the substantial coverage of such discriminatory practices in this sector. The social

stigma and resulting discrimination faced by the LGBTI population in their everyday lives has also resulted in a high incidence of mental health problems among them. This situation has been confounded by a lack of informed healthcare professional services and support from relatives and friends. The narratives in the media document stories of violence, discrimination, persecution, depression, and suicidal ideation among the LGBTI population.

In the face of courtroom victories but persistent discrimination in various social arenas, the LGBTI movement in Nepal has continued to seek strong political mobilization. Almost all of the prominent figures of the LGBTI movement, like the head of the NHS, have become members of different democratic parties and stood as candidates during elections. Indeed, the LGBTI population is seen to be an important voter base, especially in the Kathmandu Valley, so the LGBTI agenda is incorporated into the election manifestos of various powerful political parties. There is a strong understanding among LGBTI activists that without political representation or direct political power, very few direct changes can be made that will affect the lives of the LGBTI population. This is self-evident from the recent backtracking on the regulatory gains made in the courtroom. Despite a legal mandate and recommendation from the Supreme Court more than a decade ago to provide citizenship rights, citizenship documents, and marriage equality to the LGBTI population, and thus end all forms of gender-based discrimination, such changes have barely materialized in bureaucratic and administrative practices. There is a strong sense of betrayal among LGBTI activists toward the established political powers, because their agenda remains unfulfilled despite helping political parties to secure places in parliament. The LGBTI movement therefore needs to be a political power, so political activism is understandably a major cluster of media items for the LGBTI news portal.

4.4 Contextualizing the LGBTI movement in the context of the Global South

The bibliometric review of studies about sexuality and gender in the Global South revealed ten underlying research streams, namely (1) gender-based violence, (2) MSMs and sexual health, (3) indigenous masculinity and sexuality, (4) intersectionality, (5) ethnocentric universalism, (6) minority stress and stigma, (7) de-colonial feminism, (8) transnational activism, (9) institutional differences and transnational gender politics, and (10) gender equity and development. The LGBTI movement in Nepal should exhibit characteristic features that reflect the issues faced across the Global South if earlier conclusions are to apply in Nepal. Similarly, it is valuable for LGBTI movements across the Global South to engage in a common dialogue, most notably in the South Asian context, based on a common set of issues that they all face. It may also be of value to identify key issues where the LGBTI movement in Nepal differs from that of the generalized Global North, so that the theoretical perspectives, frameworks, and practices that originated there can be identified as not being directly applicable to the Nepalese context.

The main purpose of this section is to explore the commonalities and differences in the issues raised by the LGBTI movement in Nepal compared to other movements across the Global South, so earlier conclusions can be triangulated. This exercise may also help to identify areas where past experiences from other contexts in the Global South can be of value in the Nepalese context. What is more, unique cases in the Nepalese context may be identified as spaces for subsequent investigation. This sub-section presents important clusters of issues that are common to, or different from, the overall context of the Global South. The bibliometric survey of the literature about sexuality and gender in the Global South revealed several research themes that were presented in Section 3.4. Similarly, a hierarchical clustering of

the corpus of news items about the LGBTI movement in Nepal also revealed several different themes that were presented in Section 4.3 (see Table 1). But to what extent are these themes associated? What is similar or different in Nepal compared to the generalized Global South?

Theme 1 (gender-based violence) identified in the bibliometric literature survey of the Global South is highly relevant to the Nepalese context. This was confirmed by the hierarchical clustering of the news items, where 52 of the items (2.7%) of the corpus dealt strictly with this issue (see Table 1), even after considering that terms were only retained in the analysis if they were present in at least 196 (out of 1,953) documents.

Members of the LGBTI community in Nepal face several forms of gender-based violence, including arbitrary arrest and torture by the police. Despite legal guarantees, LGBTI individuals are still denied proper citizenship and property rights. Everyday discrimination and harassment in various social spaces—such as school, workplaces, and public places—are common. LGBTI individuals are denied admission to educational institutions, discriminated against at work, and harassed on public transport. Name-calling and bullying are reportedly common toward LGBTI individuals. There are also several instances of *Méti*s being forced to marry, excluded from family gatherings, and denied their inheritance (Boyce & Pant, 2001). It is safe to assume that the gender-based violence faced by LGBTI individuals in Nepal follows the common pattern that is found across the Global South (Singh, et al., 2012).

Theme 2 identified in the survey of the literature about sexuality and gender issues in the Global South deals with MSMs and sexual health. The news items did not focus on MSM-related issues at all, but the theme identified in the news items pertained more to the “sexual and mental health” category. This was confirmed by the hierarchical

clustering of news items, such that 35 of the items (1.8%) in the corpus dealt strictly with this issue (see Table 1).

The limited discussion of MSM-related issues in the LGBTI-related news items from Nepal is somewhat surprising for several reasons. Even though few studies have been conducted, they already indicate that HIV cases are highly prevalent among MSM and *Méti* individuals in Nepal (Wilson & Pant, 2010). Indeed, sex work among the *Méti* population is frequent in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal. It has been shown that the HIV risk among vulnerable populations in Nepal is also due to structural inequalities, discriminatory legal practices, and the existing social stigma for same-sex practices, similar to the overall situation in the Global South (Deuba, et al., 2013).

It is also worth noting that the main LGBTI activist organization in Nepal, the NHS, initially masqueraded as an organization working for male sexual health, because the awareness of homosexuality was minimal in 2001 when the organization was established. In the Nepalese context, like in India, HIV/AIDS campaigns for safer sexual health proceeded those for LGBTI rights. In both cases, LGBTI activist organizations first seek legitimacy as organizations fighting the growing AIDS pandemic. The only significant documentation of a movement prior to 2001 and the formation of the NHS is the formation of the Nepal Queer Group in 1993, and AIDS played a big role in its creation as well (Boyce & Pant, 2001).

The NHS later gradually came to support sexual and gender minorities in their fight against police harassment and violence. LGBTI-aimed abuse during this stage (ca. 2003) caused INGOs like Human Rights Watch (HRW) to intervene on behalf of the victimized population. Massive homophobic backlashes by the media, the public, and the state against the LGBTI advocacy organizations ushered in the understanding that AIDS activism was not possible without first guaranteeing the rights

of LGBTI individuals (Boyce & Pant, 2001). As in other places in the Global South, such as South Africa, instead of focusing on "gay" rights, focusing on health activism and discreetly promoting sexual health has proven to be an effective strategy (Epprecht M. , 2012). This strategy dominated the history of LGBTI activism in Nepal.

Despite evidence pointing toward the high sexual health risk among the MSM population in Nepal, it is no longer the most important issue raised by the LGBTI movement. One possible reason may be that, as is common across the Global South, the patterns of MSM sexual life in Nepal differ from those of contemporary Northern gay life. South Asian MSMs generally tend to be hesitant about disclosing their HIV status due to the risk of family members and peers discovering their same-sex relationships. The HIV risk is also greater because studies suggest that a large proportion of the *Méti* and MSM populations are also married in a heterosexual relationship (Boyce & Pant, 2001). The alternate concept of normativity and secretive bisexuality that exists across the Global South, particularly in Asian societies like Nepal, makes a distinction between sex for pleasure and procreation, and this may have hidden some issues from public discussion (Epprecht M. , 2012).

Nepal has a historical tradition of different sexualities and gender identities that have been largely accepted in society. *Hijras*, which are variously denoted as intersex or transsexual people for lack of a better definition, have cultural significance within the Indian subcontinent, including Nepal. The indigenous traditions of *hijras* and *Métis* was accepted, and these categories had their own place in Nepalese society. The indigenous *Méti*s of Nepal were considered third genders, somewhat akin to the tradition of the *berdache*, and considered religiously significant as protégés of *Shiva* as *Ardhanarishwara*, somewhat like the *hijras* in India (Kapur, 2013). The tradition of *maruunis* (crossdressing men who display non-heteronormative

behaviors) also existed in Nepal and was accepted. The concepts of *mit* and *mitini* as sexualized "best friends" of the same gender is also well known and widely accepted in Nepali culture (Pant, 2015). Hence, there is ample evidence of indigenous traditions involving queer gender identities and alternative sexualities.

However, *Métis* and other forms of queer identity were defined based on their gender identity rather than their sexuality. It is quite clear that established Northern categories of sexual and gender identity will not suffice to understand such indigenous concepts of masculinity and sexuality. There has therefore been a drive to focus on both traditional and modern expressions of non-heteronormative behaviors in the LGBTI movement of Nepal. For example, the NHS has focused on the rights of not just "gays" and "lesbians" but also the indigenous *hijra* and *Méti*.

Although legal recognition of the supposedly indigenous *tesro-lingi* category is touted as a very progressive achievement for such a minor (and poor) country, this is in itself not a uniquely indigenous category. The category of a third-gender to denote populations who cannot identify themselves within the gender binary—including, but not limited to, the *hijra, kothi,* and *panthi*—is quite common across South Asian societies, most notably India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan. Some scholars (Towle & Morgan, 2002), while exploring the historicity of the term, point to the fact that such terms and ideas have existed in multiple societies over time. What is unique about the Nepalese context is the effectiveness of the judicial activism pursued by LGBTI activists around the *tesro-lingi* category (Kapur, 2013).

In relation to the issues of homosexuality, although it was not completely accepted, it was tolerated in Nepal like most Asian cultures. In a society extremely segregated along gender lines with a high acceptance of homosociality (Tamang, 2003), homosexual encounters

are inevitable. The "act" itself was not, and never has been, the problem (Kapur, 2013). It is rather the construction of a homosexual identity that is seen as problematic. Society did not think of "homosexual" as a distinct identity category. There was also certainly no existing concept of equal rights for LGBTI individuals, as encapsulated in the notion of "gay rights" (Pant, 2015).

Although the argument is generally made by opponents of the LGBTI movement across the Global South, including Nepal, it is certainly true that the creation of a "homosexual" identity category is a distinctly Northern rather than indigenous concept. This does not mean agreeing with the religious or right-wing conservative argument across the Global South that "homosexuality" is a western decadence that runs contrary to indigenous heritage. Instead, according to Sunil Babu Pant, the long-serving former spokesperson for the gay movement in Nepal, the issue with gay rights is not cultural opposition but rather a failure to totally comprehend what being "homosexual" means because there is no term in the Nepali language that exactly corresponds to the western notion of "gay" (Pant, 2015). A study conducted in Vietnam, among many other similar studies in other contexts, also came to the conclusion that the term "homosexual" had no direct equivalent in the local language (Blanc, 2005).

Theme 4 identified by the bibliometric literature review of studies about sexuality and gender in the Global South, namely intersectionality, is a highly relevant yet largely ignored issue in the LGBTI movement of Nepal. Even when considering the basic women's rights movement, it has long been known that there is no single feminist movement. It has been argued that the Nepali women's movement is dominated by the agenda of the privileged Hindu upper caste and Newari[4] women

[4] An ethnic category in which most are considered to belong to the upper echelons of society.

at the expense of the Janajati,[5] Dalit,[6] and Madhesi women.[7] Since different heterogenous groups structure gender relations in different ways, any elevation of the dominant viewpoint leads to the masking of intersectional differences. The portrayal of a singular "Nepali women" is both homogenizing and essentialist at the expense of women from marginalized groups. While it is important to achieve strategic alliances along various intersectional lines, the importance of parity in status has also been stressed as an important objective, with this being referred to as "strategic essentialism" (Tamang, 2009).

The LGBTI movement in Nepal has been characterized as an elite urban movement that focuses more on MtF transgender issues, and it has not successfully managed to consolidate a collective identity under the *tesro-lingi* label. There obviously were, and still are, issues with consolidating various sexualities, gender identities, and sexes within such a broad umbrella term. Several other schisms also exist along intersectional lines in the LGBTI community. There is a subtle distinction between the indigenous "lady-man" traditions of queer sexuality and the Western-educated "gay community" in Nepal, and this is akin to the situation in Singapore during the 1970s (Oswin, 2014) and some Latin American contexts. As an illustration, the hangouts and social networks of Western-educated "gays" and the indigenous *Métis* are distinct (Boyce & Pant, 2001). There are also schisms along geographical (urban vs. rural), economics (higher class vs. lower class), and language (English-speaking elite versus the vernacular-speaking) lines among the LGBTI population. What is more, one could

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[5] This refers to groups of mainly non-Hindu indigenous nationalities, estimated to comprise 37.8% of the population.

[6] This refers to groups of people classified as "untouchables" (i.e., the lowest rung on the Hindu hierarchy), comprising 13% of the population.

[7] This refers to the population from the south-eastern region of Nepal, who are distinct in terms of social, cultural, and linguistic affinities and comprise 31.2% of the population.

explore the plight of the ethno-racialized queer population. Moreover, intersexuality remains the least-understood issue, not just in the Nepalese context but globally, both in the North and South. It is safe to assume that intersectional identities among the LGBTI population in Nepal, their incorporation as part of a collective identity, and their effect on the nature of the social oppression faced is perhaps a largely unexplored area that warrants further probing. Indeed, this seems to be the situation across the studies available for the Global South (Das, 2020).

Theme 5 identified in the bibliometric literature review of studies about sexuality and gender in the Global South, namely ethnocentric universalism, is highly applicable to the LGBTI movement of Nepal. The main contention of research in this cluster is that LGBTI activism frameworks, such as the "human rights" approach, are universalizing when applied contextually in areas of the Global South. The issue of the applicability of the human rights framework has been a dominant issue in the LGBTI movement of Nepal, as evidenced by the large cluster of news items focusing on human rights (Cluster 2, 298 documents, 15.3% of the corpus).

In most countries in the Global South, including Nepal, there is significant tension and debate about incorporating LGBTI rights into a bill of fundamental rights, with it being portrayed as a clash between traditional values and modernity. In the case of Asian jurisprudence—such as in India, Nepal, and Singapore—this is a fundamental issue (Kapur, 2013). In these cases at least, the struggles are similar because they share not just a common culture and religions but also a common colonial past and legal origins. "Universal" human rights have been viewed with some skepticism, with there being more focus on communitarian values based on collective norms, benefits, and duties.

The predominant social values in Nepal include reverence for the

family institution and societal interests, conservatism, and respect for authority, comparable to Confucian countries (Kapur, 2013). The first codified legal text in Nepal, the *Muluki Ain*, did not distinguish between religion and state. Later on, the constitution of Nepal went through several amendments until 1962, when the country was established as a Hindu state, although only after a series of revolutions. Nepal is now a federal republic, but according to the official census, 81.3% of the population remains Hindu. Hindu morality and ethical frameworks therefore guide societal norms. The Public Offences Act and the Bestiality Law, which criminalized homosexuality in Nepal, were primarily seen as enforcing the "communal values" of Hindu morality (Höfer, 1979).

The courts and constitutions are not the sole arenas where rights-based arguments can be made. Indeed, the rights of LGBTI people are not solely defined by legal texts based on the human rights framework but also wider policies, social values, and the context that informs the interpretation of legal texts and the various narratives it gives rise to. As a consequence, even once LGBTI movements have been able to secure legal gains under the provision of a constitution, the legitimization of new social categories like *tesro-lingi* can be prone to conservative backlashes (Kole, 2007). To illustrate this, the Nepalese government recently introduced discriminatory provisions in the newly amended Civil and Criminal Law that provide grounds for criminalizing homosexuality again. What is more, it is also not uncommon for NGOs advocating human rights in Nepal to be perceived as the stooges of western imperialism or as self-serving institutions (Tamang, 2002). Thus, there is perpetual tension between the universalism and cultural relativism of human rights in the context of LGBT politics, and this is a common theme explored in the studies of the Global South and news items in Nepal (Lee, 2016; Venganai, 2015).

Theme 6 identified in the bibliometric literature review of studies

about sexuality and gender in the Global South, namely minority stress and stigma, is one of the least explored yet highly applicable issues in the LGBTI movement of Nepal. Less than 1% of the corpus of news items related to the LGBTI movement in Nepal even mentions the mental health of LGBTI individuals due to corresponding minority stigma (see Table 1). Other related studies among MSMs report a high prevalence of violence, depression, and suicidal thoughts (Deuba, et al., 2013). The negative impact of discriminatory practices on the physical safety and mental wellbeing of LGBTI youths in the education sector is well reported. The experience of stigma driving the denial of healthcare services due to gender non-conformity is another well-reported issue (UNDP, Williams Institute, 2014). Similarly, existing surveys (UNDP, Williams Institute, 2014) and reports about the LGBT population (UNDP, USAID, 2014) clearly indicate that more research is needed to understand the issues related to mental health, reproductive health, and the use of hormones by transgender individuals.

Policy documents based on existing studies also recommend that the healthcare system should generally not only provide HIV-related programs but also consider providing psychosocial support and mental health services (UNDP, USAID, 2014; UNDP, Williams Institute, 2014). Despite these suggestions, research is clearly lacking for the mental health issues faced by the LGBTI community in Nepal. It is generally less well known how the concealment of identity and HIV-related stigma may affect the wellbeing of LGBTI individuals (UNDP, Williams Institute, 2014). What is more, it has been suggested that social support is the most important issue for mental health, so the role of social institutions—such as family, educational institutions, work organizations, and religious institutions—should be explored further (UNDP, USAID, 2014). This is clearly an important area for further exploration in the Nepalese context, because research is seriously lacking at the moment.

Theme 7 identified in the bibliometric literature review of studies about sexuality and gender in the Global South was de-colonial feminism, and this issue is only tangentially relevant to the LGBTI movement of Nepal. Most countries in the Global South have some form of colonial legacy. Nepal was never formally a colony, but due to the suzerainty of the British, the legal system of Nepal, including customary law, saw some Western influence (Kapur, 2013). Nepal's link to the Global North has always been related to issues of development rather than the legacy of colonialism (Tamang, 2009).

The first codified law in Nepal, the *Muluki Ain*, was enacted on January 6, 1854 after Junga Bahadur Rana, the then ruler of Nepal, visited Great Britain during the reign of Queen Victoria and was introduced to the "rule of law" (Höfer, 1979). Hence, Nepal's legal system mirrors that of most other Commonwealth countries and colonies, being characterized by common law and a three-level appellate process. The bulk of the legal framework in Nepal is derived from British and colonial legislation, predominantly the Indian Penal Code.

In the vast majority of former colonies, the basic structure of the criminal law, such as the Indian Penal Code, includes colonial impositions that criminalized sodomy. A large part of LGBTI activism in various territories has been aimed at public litigation processes to remove these discriminatory legal provisions and related legal frameworks, such as the unnatural intercourse provision in Singapore and India and the Bestiality Law and Public Offenses Act (POA) in Nepal (Kapur, 2013). However, in the Nepalese context, there are no direct remnants of legal provisions from the colonial era that limit LGBTI rights or criminalize homosexuality as such.

When it comes to **Theme 8** (transnational activism) and **Theme 9** (institutional differences and gender politics), there are clearly substantial similarities between the legal and political activism of the

LGBTI movement in Nepal and that of transnational LGBTI politics. Most themes identified in the hierarchical text-clustering process for the corpus of news article deal significantly with these issues. For example, Cluster 5 (Legal/constitutional activism, 276 documents, 15.6% of the corpus), Cluster 1 (Marriage equality, 171 documents, 8.8% of the corpus), Cluster 13 (Political participation, 112 documents, 5.7% of the corpus), Cluster 15 (NHS activism, 27 documents, 1.4% of the corpus), and Cluster 4 (Citizenship rights, 23 documents, 1.2% of the corpus) (See Table 1) all correspond to Themes 8 and 9 of the bibliometric literature review of studies about sexuality and gender in the Global South (see Section 3.4).

This can be considered a natural outcome because the LGBTI movement in Nepal is primarily framed as a legal and therefore political struggle. As is common in the Global South, the diffusion of constitutionalism means that social activism is more about incorporating LGBTI rights into any bill of fundamental rights in the constitution (Rangan & Gilmartin, 2002; Kapur, 2013). LGBTI movements, as well as several other identity movements, use the prism of non-discrimination or marriage equality within these bills as the basis for their struggles. In Nepal's case, however, the constitution-building process has been a lengthy one, and it is still in a state of flux after various revolutions and political movements. Due to a lengthy discussion about the issue of fundamental rights, which have been the subject of revolutions and political movements, the constitutional assembly adopted a liberal "rights-based model" while developing the interim constitution. This positioned the adoption of LGBTI rights as fundamental rights in the context of Nepal, unlike some other countries, even in the Global South. This outcome resembles the post-apartheid constitution-building in South Africa and the ensuing struggle by LGBTI activists to incorporate LGBTI rights as fundamental rights in the South African constitution (Epprecht M. , 2012).

In addition to mobilizing constitutional discourse during the democratization process, another key differentiating factor in terms of the LGBTI community's political mobilization is the formation of multiple intersectional coalitions based on perceptions of collective efficacy and shared historical grievances (Holdt, 2002). More specifically, LGBTI activists formed alliances with several minority ethnic and religious groups in the push to instill the fundamental rights clause in Nepal's constitution during the second People's Movement. As discussed in Section 4.1, the development of the LGBTI movement has been largely influenced by parallel political developments in Nepal. Due to the active involvement of LGBTI activists and communities in the Nepalese political arena, the LGBTI group eventually emerged as a significant force in its own right.

Theme 10 identified in the bibliometric literature review of studies about sexuality and gender in the Global South concerns gender equity and development, and this issue is highly relevant to the women's movement in Nepal. This issue, however, is not significantly represented in any of the various clusters identified among the corpus of LGBTI-related news items. Nepal's link to the Global North has been primarily defined as "development ties" rather than a colonial legacy, and this is important in understanding the various movements in Nepal, including both the feminist and LGBTI movements.

Nepal's democratization process, with the establishment of a multiparty democratic system, occurred during the 1990s and coincided with the growth of "civil society," because organizing movements was not possible in the previous autocratic monarchy system. The growth of this civil society was largely supported by an influx of foreign aid, which in turn was motivated by the optimism associated with the possibility of fruitful collaborations with NGOs, compared to when foreign donors previously had to deal with inefficient government bureaucracy (UNDP, Williams Institute, 2014). It was during this period that the issue of

gender equity and development came to the fore—when development programs in partnership with the UN, international donors, NGOs, and other civil society organizations were initiated—with the focus being on alleviating poverty and enabling inclusive growth. Most of these initiatives formed part and parcel of the "New Policy Agenda" pursued by the World Bank and USAID. The Women in Development (WID) doctrine, which began during International Women's Year (1975), has served as a major basis for foreign aid to promote gender equity and development (Tamang, 2009).

In this context, NGOs for female and LGBTI issues were established, and they flourished. Since then, foreign aid has accounted for 60% of Nepal's development budget on average. It has been paramount in delivering development programs to improve access to healthcare, education, financial credit, and political lobbying since the 1990s. Due to the absence of any complications arising from colonial legacies, Nepal has often been viewed as an experimental site for many developmental ideologies of the Global North (Tamang, 2002). Since 1992/1993, "gender streaming" has been the main basis for allocating resources for gender-equity goals by the state. Hence, many changes are fashioned by the development ideologies and strategies of foreign donors (Tamang, 2009).

It has been argued that most of the international donor-led programs function based on "welfare approaches" that portray Nepali women as backward and illiterate and in need of development assistance and uplifting. However, the construction of this essentially universalized vision of the "Nepali woman" was also important from the recipient's end, whether it be the state or NGOs. Such a vision was primarily established due to the political situation during the autocratic monarchic regime, where the erasure of multiple intersections in terms of ethnicity, caste, culture, and so on was essential to legitimize the Hindu national state and the vision of a single national culture under

the regime (Tamang, 2009).

Critics of North-led gender mainstreaming policies in the Nepalese context also point out several other unintended consequences. First, as discussed earlier, the Nepali women's movement is dominated by the agenda of the privileged Hindu upper caste and Newari women at the expense of the Janajati, Dalit, and Madhesi women. Hence, when it comes to donor-led development efforts, this has led to tokenism on the part of foreign donor agencies and the erasure of political differences by NGOs (Tamang, 2009). Second, some Nepali commentators (Tamang, 2002) point out how discourses pertaining to civil society, democracy, empowerment, and gender are simplified and sanitized, such that the goals of the civil society in achieving gender equity actually ends up further disempowering the target population. Many accounts present cases where despite highlighting the gendered perspective in achieving the goals of development programs, civil societies are more focused on reinforcing the plight of women in the patriarchal Nepalese society by delegitimizing their lived experiences and imposing the explanatory categories from donor organizations. Development initiatives funded by foreign aid based on the essentialized view of the "Nepali women"—which is dissociated from the caste, ethnicity, and religious belief of the target population—has been shown to reinforce structural inequalities around precisely these categories. Third, the competition for foreign aid among local NGOs, even among those advocating the same or similar issues, has fostered internal rivalries and fragmented rather than coalesced movements (Tamang, 2009). Lastly, due to the nature of NGOs accountability, which is limited to donors and related stakeholders rather than to the public, they have been vehicles for extending the agendas of foreign donors rather than meeting local needs (Tamang, 2002).

Whereas some previous analyses (Tamang, 2009) of women's movements that consider the development perspective are available, as

illustrated in previous sections, the inclusion of this issue in the context of gender (and sexual) minorities is clearly lacking. The legal category for sexual and gender minorities as *tesro-lingi* was only established by a Supreme Court ruling in 2007, although significant donor funding was aimed at eliminating the ongoing HIV epidemic, even before the establishment of the NHS in 2001. With the gender category only having been recognized in 2007, the lack of census data for the LGBTI community made it difficult to understand the development needs of the LGBTI community and create appropriate programs. Some limited survey data for LGBTI individuals in Nepal is available (UNDP, Williams Institute, 2014), and this shows that the third gender category tends to include those who were assigned male at birth and exist in the most economically vulnerable population. After this, LGBTI individuals who were assigned female at birth and cisgender women are the most economically vulnerable population in Nepal overall. Concerns have been frequently raised by the LGBTI community that government budgeting and resource-allocation processes still discriminate against them. However, the impact of North-led gender mainstreaming policies on this community in Nepal is one issue where previous research is seriously limited, so it demands further exploration.

4.5 Conclusions

This study began with the specific aim of answering the following two questions: (1) What social inequalities do LGBTI individuals face in Nepal, and how are these inequalities reproduced? (2) How, and to what effect, has collective action subverted this population’s experience of the oppression that results from heteronormative domination? To answer these questions, it was first necessary to understand how sexuality and gender identities are defined. This helped to contextualize how identity categories for sexuality and gender are defined and expressed for LGBTI individuals. On having established the various ways in which identity categories are defined, the study proceeded to understand

how seemingly innocuous identity categories can become sources of social marginalization in many ways. To answer the second research question, it was then established how the social marginalization faced by LGBTI individuals is sustained in society, so that by understanding these perpetuating mechanisms, it becomes possible to understand how they can be, or are already being, subverted.

This current study explores all these issues in the context of Nepal. It first tries to contextualize the situation for LGBTI issues and movements in Nepal within the generalized Global South. To do so, the ten most-common research themes were identified among studies of sexuality and gender in the Global South. These ten issues were compared to those identified in a corpus of LGBTI-related news items in order to establish the extent to which the situation in Nepal resembles the generalized situation in the Global South and identify any outliers. Next, the chronological history of the LGBTI movement in Nepal was supplied to familiarize readers with the empirical context.

The main conclusions of this study so far are as follows: With regards to the definition of sexuality and gender identities, as with all forms of social identity categorization, there is a danger of falling into the traps of both essentialism and relativism. To conceptualize sexuality and gender identities, which are anchored in real life experiences but are also malleable enough to be strategically deployed in symbolic mobilization, it is necessary to consider them as a) both self and socially constructed, b) embodied, c) intersectional, d) part of the habitus, and e) communicated by individuals through reflexive narratives.

The characteristics of sexual and gender identities also suggest there are corresponding ways through which social marginalization toward these same identity categories is perpetuated. The major factors that lead to discrimination toward LGBTI individuals include a) prevalent social attitudes toward sexuality and gender and the resulting stigma,

b) the nature of the embodiment and visibility of such embodied identities, c) the existing gender order in the form of institutionalized gender taxonomies in various social arenas, d) the nature of any intersection between sexual and gender categories and other existing social categories that may lead to multiple forms of oppression, and finally, e) the degree to which individuals with various identities have internalized the discriminatory gender order and thus become complicit in their own domination.

Once the nature of sexual and gender identities and the resulting social marginalization directed toward those identities had been identified, they were built upon to understand how they can act as catalysts for achieving equality and social justice. Some of the major strategies through which social marginalization can be resisted or subverted that were identified include a) engaging in personal-empowerment activities at an individual level to counteract internalized oppression, b) using intersectional identities to form coalitions for social change based on relatable experiences of social oppression, c) symbolic mobilization to counter the existing gender taxonomies that perpetuate social inequalities in various social arenas, and finally, d) collective organization of a movement to actively struggle for social justice and equality.

Obviously, all the previously identified issues are elaborated at an abstract analytical level. However, if all of these are to be applied to the Nepalese context, it is necessary to identify which of these issues are most relevant to the context. This study approached this by first identifying some basic research themes in the existing studies about sexuality and gender in the generalized Global South. A content analysis of the hundred most frequently co-cited articles helped to identify ten underlying research themes: (1) gender-based violence, (2) MSMs and sexual health, (3) indigenous masculinity and sexuality, (4) intersectionality, (5) ethnocentric universalism, (6) minority stress

and stigma, (7) de-colonial feminism, (8) transnational activism, (9) institutional differences and transnational gender politics, and (10) gender equity and development.

In addition, a textual hierarchical cluster analysis of the overall issues of concern in the LGBTI movement of Nepal clearly identified the following themes in descending order of their frequency in news items: (1) LGBTI awareness, (2) human rights, (3) legal/constitutional activism, (4) trans community, (5) government/institutional policies, (6) marriage equality, (7) political participation, (8) social marginalization, (9) police brutality/gender violence, (10) personal empowerment, (11) sex education/educational sector, (12) sexual and mental health, (13) NHS activism, (14) citizenship rights, and (15) cultural resources.

After comparing the existing research themes found in studies about sexuality and gender in the generalized Global South with those identified from the corpus of LGBTI-related news items from Nepal, not all themes were found to be equally relevant to the Nepalese context. More specifically, MSM-related issues and colonial influence on defining sexuality and gender norms and categories were found to be somewhat less relevant. Themes related to intersectional identities, the impact of gender mainstreaming policies initiated by civil society organizations, and the effect of identity categories on the mental wellbeing of LGBTI individuals in Nepal require significant further investigation, however. What is more, for the LGBTI movement in Nepal, the establishment and legitimization of a new aggregate category called *tesro-lingi* in the judicial and bureaucratic systems is clearly its primary objective. The use of the term *tesro-lingi* to denote the overall LGBTI movement in Nepal proves this point.

Next, this study will try to answer the following questions more specifically: First, how do we understand self-defined, as well as socially determined, identity categories as they pertain to sexuality and gender

among Nepalese LGBTI individuals? Second, is there a correspondence between identified sexuality and gender labels and the marginalization and socioeconomic conditions faced by LGBTI individuals? Third, is there any variation in the socioeconomic conditions and marginalization faced based on clusters of sexual and gender identity labels, and if so, what explains this variation? What role does intersection with other social categories play in this dynamic? Finally, given that there are various understandings of sexual and gender identity labels and various forms of marginalization, what strategies will be successful in the struggle against discriminatory gender taxonomies in various social contexts?

Thus, the broad aim of the rest of this study (i.e., the core of the study) is to apply earlier ideas to the specific empirical context. The analysis will be focused on how identities are defined based on the dialectic of social and self-constructions, how defined identities correspond with social marginalization and objective socioeconomic conditions, how such correspondences can vary depending on various clusters of identities, and ultimately, how we can understand effective strategies to resist and subvert these conditions at three levels: individual, group, and society. This necessarily requires a methodological approach that can relate analyses at the micro, meso, and macro levels (i.e., a multi-level field analysis) (Grenfell, 2014; Hardy, 2014), and this will be the subject of the next chapter.

5 RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter discusses the key methodological assumptions of this study. In Section 5.1, the epistemological choices made, the construction of the research "object," and researcher reflexivity are elaborated upon. Section 5.2 then discusses how these general methodological approaches are applied in the specific research case, before Section 5.3 discusses the archival and secondary sources of data and the role they play in this study. The final section, Section 5.4, elaborates on the principles of multi-field hierarchical analysis based on collected data and how this is applied in this study to help answer the research questions.

5.1 Key methodological choices and justifications

Given the rather ambitious scope of this study, which encompasses notions of gender identity and their relationships with the social inequality and social movements, it is challenging to explore the relevance and reach of these core concepts in the specific context of Nepal's LGBTI movement. Methodological choices help to bridge and translate theoretical concepts and observed phenomena in an empirical context, so this section will first highlight this study's fundamental assumptions, relate these assumptions to methodological choices, and justify those methodological choices in the specific context of this research.

The fundamental assumption of this study, which was largely explored in Chapter 2, is that there is no "essential" and immutable identity but rather the formation of an identity based on a dialogue between the person's self-feelings and the prevailing social categories, both of which are dynamic. Hence, at any given point in time, an individual's perception of identity is defined *in relation to* the existing social classification schemes. Hence, the varied lived experiences of individuals within a social category are also defined *in relation to* other

social groups. In other words, members of social groups do experience suffering "objectively" and "immutably" or benefit from privilege on a well-defined scale. The experiences of identities are not universal, and the subjectivities and inequalities due to them are always formed *in relation* to the material, historical, and cultural milieu into which they were born. Hence, a relational epistemology is required to understand sexuality and gender identities within a particular historical and sociocultural context, such as that of Nepal, and appreciate the multiple types of experiences related to sexuality and gender.

Issues of sex, sexual orientation, and gender are uniquely individual experiences, yet they are constrained by particular social-classification schemes. By our very nature, as both the researcher and the researched, we are uniquely positioned within a spectrum of varied experiences. Any sort of generalization about the experiences of others' can only ever be an approximation at best and untrue and offensive at worst. We are all also positioned in a specific social order that pertains to gender and other factors, and through no fault of our own, we are positioned hierarchically in a gender order. Every definition of marginalization and privilege is always based relatively on the vantage point one occupies on the gender hierarchy or the personal position one adopts.

When we discuss the social inequality faced by a particular social group, the perceived extent of the inequality faced, both consciously and subconsciously, depends upon who is measuring the severity of the inequality, and this will almost always be based on that person's position in the social order. Thus, one's position in the social order, as well as the adopted theoretical and methodological apparatus, yields a particular worldview that may or may not be "true" but will have measurable consequences in *justifying* a worldview. This is especially true when considering sensitive topics like sexuality and gender, inequality, and social justice, so one must adopt a reflexive approach for research choices, their consequences, and the resulting impacts

of any research findings. One also needs to adopt an empathetic approach to the experiences being researched, because they can never be "authentically" experienced. Hence, reflexivity should be, and is, a fundamental tenet of this study.

This study tries to understand how individuals define their sexuality and gender identities. When respondents are asked to define their identity as a selection from a given pool of existing categories, which are themselves largely based on the existing social nomenclature, it inevitably amounts to the construction of the research "object." This situation indicates a need to not only be reflexive and inclusive but also clearly define whether the categorical concepts are, as much as is feasibly possible, collectively exhaustive. Thus, a methodological approach is required that will help understand the evolution of social nomenclature for sexuality and gender in a specific historical and sociocultural context.

Another key aim of this research is to cluster the available sexual orientation and gender identity labels into different groups. This means that a method is required that can identify clusters of sexual orientation and gender identity labels and position them in terms of latent similarities or differences in a "social space." Of course, creating social groups based on orientation and identity categories to form pure research "objects" incurs the danger that such groups may not directly correspond to the "actual" social groups, and in the worst case, it could have unintended consequences due to overrepresentation or underrepresentation.

When it comes to social inequalities, either at the group or individual level, the researcher needs to make choices regarding the corresponding socioeconomic indicators, based on how marginalization is defined, and this may or may not correspond to individuals' and groups' perceived experiences of social discrimination. The choice of indicators

will inevitably define the extent of any observed variation in social inequality, so it is the researcher's subjective construction.

Finally, an objective of this study is to also understand how LGBTI individuals face and resist the various forms of marginalization that result from the existing discriminatory gender taxonomies in various social contexts. It is not possible to exhaustively consider all the different social contexts in which this can occur, but analytical choices must be made such that a general explanation of the social movements occurring across various social arenas can be made apparent. Hence, the adopted method(s) should be able to (a) delineate the key factors defining and affecting the evolution of existing gender taxonomies, (b) successfully identify relevant clusters of sexual-orientation and gender identities, (c) link these clusters to socioeconomic and other indicators that signify social discrimination, and (d) ultimately reduce various strategies for resisting discriminatory gender taxonomies into a few highly explanatory methods across all social contexts.

This study maintains methodological eclecticism (Fries, 2009), because the main issue here is not to be pedantic about a specific form of data or analysis. Given the breadth of the research, all sorts of data sources, both primary and secondary, and data-analysis strategies—whether qualitative, quantitative, or a mixture thereof—are relevant. Various unique sources of data gives the possibility of explaining the specific facets of the research.

When it comes to understanding how LGBTI individuals construct their identities and communicate their lived experiences, it is important to focus on their narratives. Interviews with LGBTI individuals about their experiences can act as valuable sources of information in this regard. To aggregate sexual-orientation and gender identity labels into various clusters, some form of survey approach and a statistical clustering approach is required, while relating these clusters of

sexual-orientation and gender identity labels to markers of social marginalization needs some sort of census data and an approach for identifying correspondences.

For tracing the general evolution of rhetorical strategies used to resist discriminatory gender taxonomies, a large corpus of news and media items may be the best source of data, and this will require a strategy for text mining. A large pool of archival resources, such as legal and policy documents, together with corresponding analyses, can also help identify the most fundamental rhetorical strategies adopted by proponents of the LGBTI movement, as well as those employed by the detractors. Considering the ambitious nature of the study and the various facets that each contribute to the overarching aim of the research, an eclectic approach to data sources and analyses is certainly warranted.

Ultimately, given the main research aims of this study, a multi-level field analysis is required. Suitable data should be available for (a) individual lived experiences and (b) survey data at the individual and group level, such that groups of sexual and gender minorities can be constructed and related to various indicators of social inequality. Eventually, (c) it should be possible to see the wide field-level changes in the discourse and gender nomenclature in relation to historical and sociocultural changes in the research context. Multi-level field analysis also demands that the individual narratives of lived experiences reflect the construction of a group/collective identity, as well as how broader societal gender taxonomies are internalized. A group-level analysis should relate to how broad societal conditions affect the construction of a group identity, as well as the common and differentiating sources of oppressive experiences. Next, a macro-level analysis should be able to relate to internalized gender taxonomies that perpetuate inequitable gendered practices and the collective mobilization across different social fields in a defined historical and sociocultural context. Hence, a multi-level field analysis should be able to relate individual

subjectivities to group identity formation and ultimately collective mobilization in a recursive and iterative manner.

To summarize from the previous discussions, to suitably achieve the research aims of this study, the key methodological toolkit involves deliberating on the following issues: (1) relational epistemology, (2) researcher reflexivity, (3) the role of the researcher in constructing the research object, (4) the nature and role of data, and (5) approaches to conducting multi-level field analysis (Grenfell, 2014; Hardy, 2014). Each of these issues are discussed briefly in the subsequent sections. In each of these sections, the general methodological principles are discussed first before the utility and application of these principles is subsequently justified.

5.1.1 Relational epsitemology

One of the key objectives of this study is to understand how LGBTI individuals understand their sexual and gender identities as a dialectic of self and social construction. The key assumption that this study makes is that the derivation and experience of gendered subjectivities is always established in relation to other reference points, such as other individuals, groups, or the overall gender order. For example, the unique gendered subjectivities of transgender individuals can only be understood properly in relation to other sexual and gender minority groups and heterosexual cisgender individuals. Relational epistemology is therefore important for this study.

Relational epistemology implies that the meanings of the objects *per se* can only be derived by considering the relational context in which they are embedded (Mohr, 2013). For instance, the intrinsic dispositions of a particular social group are not meaningful without comparing them to the dispositions of other groups. In other words, an analysis of the dispositions associated with a social group, in isolation, is not meaningful, but the meanings of those dispositions can be derived

by considering how they relate to the social practices and contexts in which they exist. To derive the meaning of any object, one needs to understand how it is embedded in a context along with other groups in terms of material and symbolic relations (Griller, 1996).

The tenets of relational epistemology are applied in this study through a multi-level field analysis where the focus is on first understanding the individual lived experiences based on the narratives of LGBTI individuals. Separate experiences of various sexual orientation and gender identities, in terms of their dispositions, are related to each other. These are then related to the group-level experiences of sexual and gender minorities by clustering based on individual-level variables. Each group is also then related to other groups in terms of the common, as well as differential, experiences of social marginalization. Thereafter, the evolution of societal gender nomenclature is discussed in relation to dynamic historical and sociocultural changes, and the strategies used for collectively mobilizing to challenge the dynamic gender classification schemes in multiple fields are explained.

5.1.2 Researcher reflexivity

Researcher reflexivity is important, not just to ensure objective and valid research but also out of epistemological necessity. Researcher reflexivity means that a researcher should apply similar methods of analysis to themselves as they apply to their objects of research (Hardy, 2014). When a researcher presents a research context, it is a representation of that person's own worldview, so a researcher's latent interest is always present. More precisely, the researcher should be reflexive about (1) any personal dispositions compared to the research participants, (2) the researcher's own social position if it differs from those of the participants, and (3) academic biases that may be installed in the scholastic field in which the researcher operates (Bourdieu, 2003). By being reflexive about dispositions, taken-for-granted

assumptions, and academic biases, researchers can expose how their own presumptions and positions in the social space may influence the research results (Grenfell, 2014; Hardy, 2014).

Conducting research about sexual and gender minorities is very difficult indeed for a married heterosexual cisgender individual, a little like walking in a minefield. The first challenge is to be reflexive about heterosexual bias in language. For example, care has been taken not to conflate sexual orientation and preference, with the latter indicating some degree of choice. Proper and specific terminologies are used, such as “gay male sexual orientation” rather than “homosexuality,” although the latter is often used in a pathological sense. Where possible, ambiguous and universalizing categorizations are avoided as much as possible, such as using “lesbian” or “gay male” instead of “homosexual,” because the latter may be unrepresentative of lesbians. Distinctions between “identity categories” and sexual behavior are made in a reflexive manner wherever possible, such as “gay male” vs. “MSM,” with the latter referring only to sexual behavior.

Appropriate guidelines (American Psychological Association, 1991) were followed to refer to sexual behavior when common terms like heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual were not adequate, such as cases when MtF transgender individuals engage in sexual relationships with cisgender male individuals. In such cases, self-described or self-preferred terms by the research subjects were used, such as “gay,” “straight,” or whatever else. Special care was taken not to conflate notions of “sex,” “gender,” and “sexual orientation.” Indeed, the first chapter of this study took pains to distinguish each of these terms.

In the Nepalese context, several of the established sexual orientation and gender identity categories do not necessarily fit with the experiences of sexual and gender minorities. In such cases, the guidelines established by the NHS (Neel Heera Samaj, 2010) for referring to indigenous

categories are used. Wherever there is a difficulty in describing indigenous categories, the indigenous terms—such as *hijra, panthi, kothi,* and *meti*—are used. In cases where neither of these approaches are applicable, the respondent's self-identified sex, gender, or sexual orientation is used.

When a researcher claims to study social groups and their dispositions and symbolic struggles, the researcher needs to also consciously reflect on his or her own social group's dispositions and hidden interests in these symbolic struggles. I personally do not identify as a sexual or gender minority, and I accept that I belong to the dominant social group in the Nepalese context by virtue of being a male in a heterosexual relationship, possessing educational qualifications and economic capital in excess of the national average, and occupying a privileged position in the Hindu caste system that structures Nepalese society. However, I have also not directly participated in any LGBTI events, so I personally like to believe that I have no hidden agenda to support either side of the debate beyond deeply understanding the research context. The interest in the current academic debate about sexual and gender minorities arises in part due to a personal desire to critically engage in social change and sincerely understand whether an unjust plight is being faced by some people.

As a "privileged outsider," some may argue that this denies my "right" or "entitlement" to comment on the subjective experiences of those who are different to me, precisely because my position and therefore my experiences are very different. Ultimately, one can always argue against the authenticity of any portrayal of lived experiences when the person describing the experiences lacks first-hand experience of the subjectivities being portrayed. However, one may also counter argue that a lower personal stake in a research case helps the researcher to maintain a greater degree of objectivity.

In addition, methodological rigor and authentic data can go some way to alleviating doubts in this context. The data sources used in this study include a survey among LGBTI individuals that was conducted by the NHS, a representative organization of the community, and the data were collected by the LGBTI employees working in the organization. Effort was made to pilot the survey to ensure its questions were understandable, representative, and accommodating of the sensitivities of the respondents. Similarly, another data source comprised interviews conducted by LGBTI hosts on a radio program for LGBTI individuals. In the survey and media transcripts, the LBGTI people expressed themselves in language that they chose themselves, and this was then transcribed with predefined categories that were sufficiently broad not to pigeonhole their subjectivities. There was no direct contact with the respondents, so it can be assumed that the data were not "colored" by my positionality.

On the other hand, precisely because of the lack of engagement with the respondents, one could easily question whether the population is authentically represented in this study. Indeed, these reasons alone definitely do not exclude the possibility of additional criticism. The research can also potentially be viewed as representational, extractive, and voyeuristic. Nobody who is sexed, gendered, and sexualized—which applies to all people in current times, although this has of course varied across time and space—comes to issues of gender and sexuality truly impartially and without investment in thinking about it. Furthermore, any research has its own personal archival narrative, and in the interests of depth and rigor, this needs to be acknowledged and considered to ensure that one does not reproduce the very discourse that one is challenging. As a researcher from the context being considered in this study, especially with the "positionality" I declared earlier, my own early socialization and internalized gender norms may have creeped subconsciously into the analysis, despite researcher objectivity and reflexivity always being pursued. In the end, however,

this is not a personal diary or an exercise in creative writing but an academic study in the public domain, and certain issues need not be, or cannot be, opened up even when they would instantly clarify the motives behind the research.

I have taken due diligence to be empathetic to the plight of sexual and gender minorities in the Nepalese context and careful not to belittle the everyday sufferings of sexual and gender minorities through purely academic abstraction by following the precautions stated previously. The most that can be done is to be sensitive, authentic, and critically self-interrogative while investigating the issues at hand by continually applying the tenets of researcher reflexivity through the subsequent steps of the research. In the end, however, the research process did not turn out to be a strictly academic endeavor. It was highly emotional in the sense that the journey progressed from a limited understanding of the context at the outset to genuine surprise at the multitudes of categories and experiences, ultimately leading to an enlightened and empathetic understanding of the roots of the social stigma that surrounds LGBTI identities. On a personal level, the research process was transformative.

5.1.3 Constructing the research object

Constructing the research object involves (1) constructing or choosing an analytical concept and (2) defining the scope of the research. Both relational epistemology and researcher reflexivity are necessary during the construction of the research object (Bourdieu, 2003).

Constructing the research object requires relational epistemology because when a researcher uses/chooses an analytical concept, such as a social group, the researcher initially selects from a number of stratification variables to derive social groups based on held assumptions about how different social groups must be related to each other. Regarding the scope of the research, a researcher must

always make a choice related to the field of study. Due to the inherently relational nature of social reality, the researcher must select what to analyze among the many systematic sets of relationships that exist in the broader social context (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 108). Any theorization is then contingent upon the scope defined by the researcher, which inevitably can only partially represent the entire social reality.

In addition, researcher reflexivity is an important element in constructing the research object. When a researcher assigns actors to a particular social class, it is inherently a political activity. A researcher occupies the privileged position of establishing legitimate social taxonomies and positioning social actors in those taxonomies, and this can influence how social relations are perceived. Without the researcher consciously reflecting on any hidden assumptions about establishing social taxonomies, that person may participate in perpetuating marginalization in social relations. Furthermore, taking for granted the commonly accepted categorization schemes without questioning the existence of any hidden principles means accepting and reproducing the dominant classification scheme. Therefore, relational epistemology and researcher reflexivity are both crucial during construction of the research object (Bourdieu, 2003).

As a researcher, it is important to question the actual classification process through which a given "social group" is derived rather than taking that "social group" as a given entity (Wacquant, 2018). In this study, both *self-identified* gender identities and sexual orientations were used as core dimensions for stratifying and structuring social groups. The study also historicizes the development of gender taxonomies through legal codes' and legitimate authorities' influence over the establishment of gender taxonomies in the Nepalese context. Hence, this study problematizes the fundamental symbolic order of gender in the research context as the object of study rather than taking

the binary gender taxonomies as given.

In order to not concretize common sense sexual and gender identities, the study takes the following steps when constructing sexual and gender identity labels: First, the commonly used terms (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and intersex) are identified as being largely a product of an imported discourse and therefore not necessarily applicable to the research context. Second, indigenous sexual and gender identity labels are prioritized over terms that are commonly/routinely used in the international literature. The researcher does not impose his own “norms of construction” in terms of sexual and gender identity labels but instead focuses on how participants self-construct their own gender and sexual orientation. In terms of data instruments, this meant that participants were not forced to select from a limited set of gender and sexual identity labels. In terms of social categorization, this implies that participants are classified into different gender groups based on their self-identified gender and sexual identity labels.

Another element in *constructing the research object* is defining the scope of the research, because one can only provide a partial representation of a research context. This study focuses on those important fields were the symbolic order of gender is contested in the Nepalese context, namely the juridical, political, bureaucratic, and cultural fields. The key institutions reproducing the symbolic gender order are assumed *a priori* as family households and educational institutions. Although there may be other fields where gender taxonomies are contested, as well as other key institutions where gender taxonomies are reproduced, this study is limited to the abovementioned fields and institutions, because cursory readings of the available data reveal that they are the most important fields for contesting and reproducing gender inequalities, so they are more explanatory than other fields. Focus on additional fields would also incur a loss of analytical focus on the research aims.

Previous research (UNDP, USAID, 2014) has shown that there are as many as 21 uniquely indigenous self-identified labels used by sexual and gender minorities in Nepal. However, for analytical purposes, these were aggregated into four major groups. In doing so, the study risks further marginalizing some already discriminated-against groups, such as "intersex" individuals. This is bound to occur, however, because the clustering approach will only use labels that score high in dimensions to construct gender groups. Being inclusive of all identity labels would again mean losing analytical focus on the research aims.

In addition, the perspectives of just a few key representatives has been used to represent the dominant symbolic order of gender in their respective fields. Obviously, this could just have been their idiosyncratic view within a contested field. When the focus is on analyzing concurrent symbolic struggles in several autonomous fields, a researcher cannot focus exclusively on the nuanced debates within a single field. The initial assumption is also that due to substantial legitimacy of the authority, and hence power, possessed by the key representatives in the field considered in the research, they are highly influential in shaping debates over gender taxonomies in their own respective fields.

A researcher should also be explicit about presumptions that are used to construct the "research object." The main presumption of this study, as clarified at the beginning of this section, is that the construction of identity categories and experiences of social oppression occurs relative to other identities, social groups, and the contextual historical sociocultural milieu. Indeed, one cannot understand the existing social inequalities and their reproduction without first historicizing social classification schemes. Any collective movement should also be able to resist and subvert gender taxonomies in all of the social "fields" concurrently. When one wants to relate social identities, experiences of social oppression, and the initiation of social change, one needs to relate analyses at multiple levels (i.e., individual, group, and social

fields), and this calls for a multi-level field analysis.

5.1.4 Nature and role of the data

Regarding the nature of the data and the data-collection methods, the approach considered in this study can be understood in terms of (1) a plurality of data sources, (2) methodological polytheism, and (3) construction of the data-collection instruments. The data-collection method used in this study can be considered a “discursive montage” in which “all the sources” and techniques that were relevant and practically usable were mobilized (Fries, 2009).

This study also used geometric data analysis (GDA) techniques, such as multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) (Duval, 2018), in an exploratory manner to identify social groups and help understand the correspondences between social groups and their dispositions. Although statistical analysis can make objective structures apparent, it is only through analyzing qualitative data that the individual practices and dispositions of various social groups can be understood. This study therefore uses personal narratives to interpret the subjective experiences of LGBTI individuals in Nepal.

Wherever possible, the principles of researcher reflexivity are extended to the data-collection methods (Bourdieu, 2003). This implies that data-collection instruments are not just considered tools for collecting data but also “objects” of analysis themselves. A researcher should be diligent in codification procedures and reflect on how the data-collection instruments construct the research object. Wherever possible, a researcher should reflect about whether one is being “objective” by not imposing one’s own “norms of construction” (Griller, 1996) through the data-collection instruments. Furthermore, data-collection instruments should be subjected to triangulation with other instruments, for instance via a mixed-methods design (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Regarding the *sources of data* and *data-collection methods*, the researcher first considered all the relevant and usable sources. To restate, the purpose of this study is to understand social inequalities and social action in the context of sexual and gender minorities, so to identify the relevance and effectiveness of data, the following criteria were applied. 1) The data should be capable of providing objective and representative demographic measures of sexual and gender minorities in Nepal. 2) The data should enable the researcher to understand the dispositions of sexual and gender minorities. 3) The data should enable the researcher to identify important social fields, influential actors, and existing power relations in the contestation of gender taxonomies. The data should also enable the researcher to chart the chronological history of symbolic struggles as part of the ongoing LGBTI movement in Nepal. Sources of data and data-collection instruments that question the legitimacy of the accepted gender taxonomies are prioritized. The actual sources of data and their uses in the research are discussed further in detail in Section 5.2. The data used were both qualitative and quantitative, and they were collected through both primary and secondary sources.

5.1.5 Multi-level field analysis

The data analysis procedure adopted in this study was a hierarchical field-level analysis. The guiding principle for such data analysis is to construct the social space, identify the locations of individuals within this constructed social space, and generally identify the correspondences between individuals, social groups, and sociocultural conditions (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The hierarchical field-level analysis comprised three steps: (*Step* 1) Identify autonomous social fields and their locations in terms of the meta-field of power. (*Step* 2) Identify social groups and the location of individuals within these groups. (*Step* 3) Chart the dispositions associated with specific social groups (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Grenfell, 2014; Hardy, 2014).

The subsequent sections very briefly describe the key actions involved in the above steps.

In *step 1*, autonomous social fields were identified in terms of the broad economic, cultural, and political forces, which crucially influence the social activity being analyzed. Some examples of semi-autonomous fields include juridical, political, cultural, and bureaucratic fields. Next, the focal field was analyzed in relation to other fields and ultimately related to the meta-field of power, which permeates all fields (Bourdieu, 1990). Eventually, the meta-field of power was considered the state itself (Bourdieu, Wacquant, & Farage, 1994).

In *step 2*, based on various sociodemographic characteristics, self-identified sexual orientation and gender identities, a multidimensional social space was created in which LGBTI individuals exist and are clustered into groups. Such a structural topography (Wacquant, 2018) of the social space is often depicted visually using statistical Geometrical Data Analysis (GDA) procedures, such as correspondence analysis (Duval, 2018).

In *step 3*, qualitative approaches, such as narrative analysis, were used to interpret the subjective experiences of individuals and social groups. Although steps 1-3 are presented here in a hierarchical and sequential manner for analytical purposes, the actual reality is not necessarily so linear and sequential. Regarding the data-analysis procedures, since the considered data sources are both qualitative and quantitative, a mixed-methods approach (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) was adopted. The detailed data-analysis steps together with the rationale for each of these steps is elaborated on further in Section 5.3.

5.2 Sources of data and data-collection methods

The relevance of data sources for this study was determined based on whether they provide information about (1) the population metrics

of sexual and gender minorities; (2) narratives and recounts of their everyday experiences; (3) important fields where gender taxonomies are contested, as well as the relevant actors and their power relations; and (4) the overall collective organization process for the LGBTI movement in Nepal.

To understand the LGBTI population, it was necessary to gather concrete information about its overall size, demographic information for the individual members, self-identified sexual and gender identity labels, and the discrimination this population faces in daily life. What is more, the data should also enable the identification of different groups based on sexual and gender identities and relate these constructed groups to their dispositions and structural conditions. A census would be the best resource for this, but a government census of sexual and gender minorities in Nepal remains unavailable. The integration of a "third gender" category for those not identifying as male or female was planned for the national-level household survey in 2011 by the government, but it was a massive failure in implementation (Knight, 2015).

The researcher therefore had the option of conducting a survey or relying on secondary data from existing surveys. Fortunately, a survey conducted by the UNDP, NHS, and Williams Institute in October 2014 was available (UNDP, Williams Institute, 2014). The results of this survey could help achieve the research aims in a credible way for the following reasons: a professional research team conducted the survey; the sample size was large (N=1178); the questionnaire items included several leading indicators of capital and dispositional characteristics; volunteers from sexual and gender minorities within the NHS were mobilized for data collection; and the survey was conducted in the Nepalese language and certified translators were used. The survey was also funded by non-profit organizations, so it can be assumed that there was no hidden bias or manipulation of the results. The original

survey is available in Appendix 4.

The survey may not be completely representative of the sexual and gender minorities, however, due to the use of snowball sampling, such that sexual and gender minorities who were affiliated to the NHS were more likely to be recruited. Additionally, the sample included a large proportion of individuals who were assigned male at birth, some 88% of the sample, so it may not accurately represent sexual and gender minorities in Nepal. There is also a strong possibility that most of the respondents resided in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal, which could mean that sexual and gender minorities from other regions were not properly represented.

Despite these limitations, it remains the only available systematic survey of sexual and gender minorities in Nepal. Even if a primary survey could have been conducted, it would have been difficult to match the resources available for the data collection and the amount of data collected. Another limitation of this secondary survey is that the data is aggregated, so individual level-responses were not available, despite this being requested many times. The availability of individual-level data would have made it possible to conduct a more sophisticated analysis that could have made it easier to understand the correspondences between individual-level socioeconomic indicators and experiences of discrimination. Despite this limitation, it was possible to construct gender groups based on self-identified sexual and gender identities without individual-level data.

In order to mitigate the lack of individual-level data and the inherently closed-ended nature of the questionnaire survey, a reliable data source was required that would enable the researcher to understand how sexual and gender minorities understand their identities, their everyday practices, and the structural constraints and social inequalities they face. The researcher considered conducting in-depth interviews with

individuals who identified as sexual and gender minorities in Nepal, but this option was discarded for several reasons. Due to the relatively formal setting of in-depth interviews, participants are less likely to open up about intimate aspects of their sexuality and gender to an outsider. Due to the heterogeneous and unique experiences of sexuality and gender, it was not feasible to plan an interview guide beforehand. Furthermore, due to time limitations, it was deemed impossible to gather information related to diverse individual experiences in such a short period.

Hence, biographical accounts and narratives about sexual and gender minorities from various existing sources seemed more appropriate. In such biographical accounts and narratives, individuals have the freedom to discuss and construct their own sexuality and gender (Fries, 2009). Published biographical accounts of sexual and gender minority individuals from different platforms were collected. In addition, conversations among sexual and gender minorities that were broadcast on the *Pahichan*[8] radio station were used as a source of narratives. Radio Pahichan was established in 2011 by the NHS to raise awareness about LGBTI issues in Nepal. It was made available both online and through FM radio. The radio program was broadcast through local FM stations daily from 1.8.2012, but these broadcasts were discontinued in 2015 due to funding-related issues. The radio station's archive includes programs broadcast between 11.6.2014 and 26.9.2014. The format of the program allowed individuals to recount their experiences of belonging to a sexual and gender minority within a certain time slot with guidance from a moderator. The moderators themselves also belonged to the LGBTI community and were employed by the NHS. The names of the interview hosts for the respective interviews considered in this study are provided in Appendix 3.

In addition, it was deemed necessary to gather information about

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[8] This Nepali word literally translates to "identity."

the various key autonomous fields in which gender taxonomies are established and contested, the actors involved, and the power relations among them. This meant identifying dominant actors in different fields, their perspectives on gender taxonomies, and their legitimate authority in establishing gender taxonomies. To understand the opinions and perspectives of actors, in-depth interviews is a suitable method. The researcher considered conducting in-depth interviews with influential actors in several different fields but ultimately settled on using interviews that were available from the *Pahichan* radio station's archives for several reasons.

The interviews were conducted when actual bureaucratic, legal, and constitutional changes pertaining to sexual and gender minorities were being publicly debated. Issues like indicating gender identity on citizenship certificates, using gender-neutral terms in the newly written constitution, and establishing a "third gender" as a legal category were some of the issues being debated. The hosts (see Appendix 3 for more information) interviewed diverse actors, such as bureaucratic officers, lawyers, journalists, health officers, NHS field staff, politicians, human rights activists, teachers, hotel employees, police officers, students, members of the public, and LGBTI activists. It would have been extremely difficult for a single researcher to access such a diverse range of people and perspectives. By virtue of being a well-funded radio station, the hosts were able to invite participants who were considered very powerful in their fields. It would have been difficult for an unknown researcher to obtain access to such influential people within a short period. Similarly, as a radio station exclusively focused on sexual and gender rights issues, it provided a platform for sexual and gender minorities from various parts of the country to pose questions to powerful representatives in the field about issues that influenced their everyday lives. The source of the data was credible, because the radio station was broadcast nationally. Professional journalists conducted the interviews, and these were mostly members of sexual

and gender minorities themselves, so they were presumably cognizant of their own conditions. Although 52 archived radio programs were available in total, the researcher selected 49 complete interviews. The discarded interviews either had poor sound quality or were considered irrelevant to the research aims. The interviews ranged from 18 to 55 minutes in duration. A list of interviewees and interviewers is available in Appendix 3.

The archived interviews were complemented with televised debates and panel discussions from the same period (2014–2015). Due to the contemporary nature of the debate, several different well-established talk shows devoted a segment or a whole episode to sexual and gender minority issues. There are several advantages to such contemporary debates, because the opinions expressed are reflective of the then-contemporary debates and have not been distorted by hindsight or retrospection. The talk show moderators were also well-known journalists. Key policy influencers—such as judges, lawyers, human rights activists, LGBTI activists, and Chief District Officers (CDOs)—were invited to the televised debate and panel discussions to state and defend their positions on sexual and gender minority issues, while the audience could pose questions directly to the participants in the panel discussions.

Altogether, 13 televised debates and panel discussions focused on sexual and gender minority issues, each lasting approximately 60 minutes. The televised debates and panel discussions helped to fulfil the research aims in the following ways: First, it became possible to infer the key influencers in the policy debate simply by recognizing the individuals being invited to the program. Second, it was relatively easy to identify the social fields they represented. Furthermore, the researcher could infer the relative power each representative held in their own field, the dominant orthodoxy of their fields, and subsequently the importance of their respective fields in relation to the overall field of power. Of course,

it would have been impossible for the researcher to singlehandedly gather such diverse perspectives from such key actors.

It was also necessary to understand the collective organization process of the LGBTI movement in Nepal. The most significant activists in the LGBTI movement of Nepal are Sunil Babu Pant and his NHS organization. To understand the overall process of collective mobilization, it is necessary to understand the roles of the key spokespeople and organizations in defining and representing the collective identity of sexual and gender minorities. Several relevant sources were used. To understand the central issues raised by the LBGTI movement in Nepal, news items were retrieved from Nepal's only LGBTI news-aggregator portal, pahichan.com. The final collection of relevant articles comprised 1,953 articles of various lengths. The earliest article retrieved was dated 5.8.2014, while the latest article retrieved was from 1.6.2021. These articles were used to identify various key clusters of issues that were raised by the LGBTI movement in Nepal, and this has already been elaborated on in Section 4.4.

Furthermore, archived but publicly unavailable publications of the NHS, such as annual reports, were requested from NHS representatives and delivered by email. Sunil Babu Pant has articulated his organization's vision, mission, and activities through his prolific blog writing and various other forums devoted to sexual and gender minority issues. In addition, two documentaries, each of about 60 minutes in duration, were available that mapped the progress of the LGBTI movement since its initiation. These four sources were used to develop a sequential case history of LGBTI organizations in Nepal; identify broad social, cultural, and political forces influencing their strategies; and understand the processes through which collective identity is forged and represented.

Essentially, the current research historicizes the development of gender taxonomies and the establishment of legitimate authority over

establishing gender taxonomies in the Nepalese context through the study of legal codes. Hence, various legal codes pertaining to issues of sexuality and gender were relevant. The current Criminal and Civil Code was available from the digital archives maintained by the Nepal Law Commission (NLC), a statutory body that drafts reform laws in Nepal. Key verdicts of the Supreme Court of Nepal, which sets precedents for national legal codes and how they pertain to sexual and gender minority rights, were available from the published archive of *Nepal Kanun Patrika* (Nepal Law Journal). This digital archive of all Supreme Court verdicts since 1958 also has a keyword-search function.

Most significantly, during the process of tracing the history of sexuality in the Nepalese context, it was necessary to obtain a copy of the oldest legal code available in Nepal, the *Muluki Ain* (1854). Interestingly, with some important implications for the current research, the government issues copies of the *Muluki Ain* (1854) in which the section related to homosexuality (*Gāṛ* mārā-ko) is completely omitted. The author personally and physically visited the National Archives of Nepal to retrieve the missing chapter from the only available copy of the *Muluki Ain* (1854) known to exist. A list of the specific sources of data used in this research is provided in Appendix 2.

5.3 Data-analysis procedures

Data analysis was conducted over several steps. In *step 1*, the aim was to identify relevant clusters of LBTI individuals, so a statistical clustering approach was used based on the survey data. In *step 2*, the goal was to relate the previously identified clusters of LGBTI individuals to corresponding sociodemographic variables and experiences of discrimination, and a multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) approach was utilized to achieve that aim. The purpose of *step* 3 was to elucidate the dispositions of the LGBTI individuals, so a qualitative analysis was performed on data from biographical, narrative, and

interview sources to fulfill this objective. In *step 4*, the aim was to comparatively assess the experiences of discrimination as faced by the previously identified groups of sexual and gender minorities in various social contexts. A further qualitative analysis was performed on the gathered biographical, narrative, and interview data to understand this issue. The purpose of *step 5* was to map the classificatory struggles occurring across various fields, so yet another qualitative analysis was performed on data gathered from interviews with key representatives in various social fields to achieve this objective. This was complemented by text-mining operations performed on 1,953 media items that had been retrieved from Nepal's only LGBTI news-aggregator portal, pahichan.com. The overall data analysis involved a sequential mixed-methods approach (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009), such that both qualitative and quantitative analyses were sequentially performed through steps 1-5. Each of these steps will now be elaborated on further.

Step 1, correspondence analysis performed on the survey data to identify gender groups: Statistical analysis was performed on data from the only available systematic survey of gender minorities in Nepal (N=1,178), which was conducted by the NHS, Williams Institute, and UNDP in October 2014 (UNDP, Williams Institute, 2014). The survey includes questions related to demography, self-identified sexual and gender identity labels, experiences of inequality in different social contexts, living conditions, and HIV status. The full questionnaire survey is provided in Appendix 4, but only those items that were deemed relevant (as denoted by an asterisk) were chosen for analysis purposes.

It may be relevant to question why correspondence analysis was specifically performed on the data. Multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) is a form of geometric data analysis (GDA) that allows researchers to correlate collections of individuals with similar profiles in their answers to a questionnaire's items, thus identifying

any associations between various categories. Technically, it involves identifying a solution to visualize large contingency tables formed by frequencies of more than two categorical variables in two-dimensional plots (Kassambara, 2017). Hence, it is primarily a descriptive statistical method rather than one for testing hypotheses. Through this method, it was possible to geometrically visualize clusters of individuals or categories based on the choice of various items in the questionnaire.

Such relational clusters help to model and operationalize the structural topography of the field and the positions of the various social groups therein (Lebaron & Roux, 2018). MCA therefore helps to identify social groups and understand any correspondences between social groups and dispositions. More generally, MCA helps to fulfill a hierarchical field-level analysis that involves the construction of a social space, the identification of where social actors are located in that constructed social space, and the correspondences between individuals, social groups, and sociocultural conditions (Duval, 2018). This method was found to be relevant to this study for constructing groups of sexual and gender minorities based on various sociodemographic variables and identifying their corresponding experiences of social discrimination.

The main purpose of the correspondence analysis was to construct groups of sexual and gender minorities based on various pertinent variables. This mostly involved choosing variables related to self-identified sexual and gender identity labels. The first question used was: “What sex/gender were you assigned at birth, as on your birth certificate”? (UNDP, Williams Institute, 2014). The choices available were “male,” “female,” and “intersex.”[9] The responses were used to categorize respondents according to their assigned sex at birth. The second question used to construct gender groups was: “There are

[9] Intersex refers to individuals born without clearly defined male or female sexual organs (Neel Heera Samaj, 2010: own translation)

many terms people use to identify their sexual orientation and gender identity. To which degree do the following terms apply to you? For each term you must answer 'not at all', 'somewhat,' or 'strongly'" (UNDP, Williams Institute, 2014). The ten choices available were *Méti,*[10] *Ta,*[11] *Kothi,*[12] *Panthi,*[13] *Hijra,*[14] *Fulumulu,*[15] *Tesro-lingi,*[16] Gay/Lesbian, Heterosexual/Straight, and Bisexual. Note how the given choices included colloquially used indigenous Nepalese sexual and gender identity labels.

In addition, a separate open-ended question was used to understand how sexual and gender minorities refer to their own identity: "What is the primary term you use to refer to your sexual orientation/gender

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[10] *Meti* is a term used in eastern Nepal to denote individuals who, despite being born male, discover their characteristics to be more female, and they consider themselves neither male nor female (Neel Heera Samaj, 2010: own translation). The term is used roughly to describe "effeminate homosexual men" (Neel Heera Samaj, 2010).

[11] *Ta* refers to homosexual men who regard themselves as masculine, such that they are no different from heterosexual men other than they engage in sexual relationships with *Meti* (Neel Heera Samaj, 2010: own translation).

[12] *Kothi* is a colloquial term for a transgender individual in southern parts of Nepal, and it is used synonymously with *Maugiya* (Neel Heera Samaj, 2010: own translation). The term is roughly used to describe "effeminate homosexual men" (Neel Heera Samaj, 2010)

[13] *Panthi* refers to homosexual men who see themselves as masculine, such that they are no different to heterosexual individuals other than they engage in sexual relationships with *Kothi* (Neel Heera Samaj, 2010: own translation). The *Panthi/Kothi* dynamic resembles that of the *Ta/Meti*.

[14] *Hijara* is used to refer to individuals who were born male but are encultured in a community to carry themselves as female. The *hijara* community is associated with a 4,000-year-old community who worship a half-male, half-female manifestation of the Hindu deity Shiva referred to as *ardhanārīśwara*. In extreme cases, individuals go through castration to remove their sexual organs (Neel Heera Samaj, 2010: own translation).

[15] *Fulumulu* is a colloquial term for a transgender person in the northern parts of Nepal (Neel Heera Samaj, 2010: own translation).

[16] *Tesro-lingi* is a general term that refers to any individuals whose gender identity, expression, personality, or whatever differs from the conventional expectations based on the physical sex they were born into (Neel Heera Samaj, 2010: own translation).

identity?" (UNDP, Williams Institute, 2014). Based on the responses available from the mentioned questions, a contingency table was created with ten different sexual and gender identity labels as rows and ten different patterns of identification. The final contingency table is presented in Appendix 5, with the values being the frequency of an identification among respondents. Correspondence analysis was performed on the data using the FactoMineR package (Kassambara, 2017) in the statistical software R (R Core Team, 2013). Based on this analysis, it was possible to construct four different gender groups. The process by which these four different gender groups were derived and the justifications for why such a solution was deemed to be optimum are discussed in detail in Section 6.1.

Step 2, identifying correspondences between gender groups and objective conditions: To explore the nature of the correspondences between the already identified gender groups and other dispositional characteristics, a further analysis was conducted in step 2. Several questions from the survey, which had theoretical justifications for being considered as leading to experiences in society, were selected. These related to (1) literacy status, (2) educational level, (3) age of enrolment in educational institutions, (4) relationship status, (5) HIV status, (6) income, and (7) discrimination faced in various social arenas, namely transportation, bureaucracy, judicial system, healthcare system, marketplace, law enforcement, and education system. The survey was a very rich source for identifying the discrimination faced by sexual and gender minorities in different social contexts.

The questionnaire was not designed with the explicit research aims stated in this research, nor was it developed with correspondence analysis in mind, so a full canonical application of the MCA method was not possible. However, to utilize the already available dataset in the best possible way and fulfill the stated research objectives, only variables that were relevant to elucidating sociodemographic conditions

and experiences of discrimination by different gender groups were selected. Thus, recoding was necessary to make the results of the survey amenable to correspondence analysis. It was necessary to collapse the categories to avoid "empty cells" in the contingency table. This involved first aggregating the frequency of various leading indicators for the four sexual and gender minority groups before several categorical variables were collapsed in number. For example, six categories for education level were collapsed into three, four categories for enrolment became two, ten categories of relationship status became six, and six categories for income level became four. The raw frequency was then converted into standardized scores to facilitate a comparison among the category levels.

Based on the responses and preliminary data screening, a contingency table was created with 63 different variables pertaining to each different group in rows and the four different identified gender groups in columns. The 63 variables in rows mostly described the sociodemographic conditions and experiences of discrimination for the various gender groups in the columns. The nature of the variables was clear from the detailed survey available in Appendix 4. The final contingency table is presented in Appendix 6. Correspondence analysis was performed on the data using the FactoMineR package (Kassambara, 2017) in the statistical software R (R Core Team, 2013). Based on this analysis, it was possible to relate different indicators of capital and disposition with different gender groups. The results are discussed in the results section of this study (Chapter 6).

Step 3, elucidating the dispositions of LGBTI individuals: The correspondence analyses performed in steps 1 and 2 helped to construct social groups and visually depict the relationships between multiple arrays of empirical variables and the constructed groups (Duval, 2018). However, only through qualitative data can the dispositions of a particular social group become truly visible (Grenfell, 2014; Hardy,

2014). Even a very well-developed quantitative survey will only measure preferences, so it cannot illuminate the actual behaviors and practices of individuals (Griller, 1996, p. 17). To identify the subjective dispositions of participants, the research drew on narratives, biographical accounts, and interviews.

In step 3, the data from various sources were first systematically organized. Key data sources—such as interviews, narratives, and other archival sources—were transcribed and translated to English. After becoming familiar with the data sources a number of times, key passages were extracted. These key passages amounted to a document of some 78 A4 pages, and most of the analysis was based on this. The key passages referred to any information related to the issues of (1) how individuals describe their own sexual-orientation and gender identities, (2) individual descriptions of experiences of discrimination in various social contexts, and (3) descriptions of how individuals come to terms with, or actively resist, social discrimination, whether individually or collectively. The available data sources deal with various aspects of LGBTI life in detail, and some aspects, such as food preferences, *presumably* have much less relevance to the research aims in terms of the three key issues identified earlier, so they were discarded.

On becoming familiar with the produced document, several pertinent themes were identified that were constitutive of the unique dispositions of various groups. For this purpose, Pierre Bourdieu's book *Masculine Domination* (Bourdieu, 2001) was used as a starting point and heuristic tool. Bourdieu theorizes that gender order sustains inequalities, because the discriminatory gender classification scheme is either actively reproduced by the dominant class or considered legitimate and natural by the dominated class. In his book, several mechanisms are discussed through which gender inequalities are reproduced, primarily (1) the internalization of gender taxonomies by the dominated as cognitive schemes, (2) the externalization of gender taxonomies

through institutions existing in the wider society, (3) the embodied aspect of gendered identities and resulting constraints in performing social activities, (4) strictly defined gender and sexual roles and a need to adhere to them, (5) absence of the dominated from the classificatory schemes used in various public activities, (6) existing social stigma against the dominated, and (7) the perception of dominated individuals as having limited agency to change the situation. Bourdieu obviously does not list these items in this order—indeed, he does not even list them at all. It requires sustained engagement with the literature to identify these as the most pertinent themes, and the interpretation provided here may differ from those of other researchers. The claim made here is not that this is the only, or even the best, source to use as a heuristic tool, but that it was found to be relevant as a starting point, because it suitably theorizes how gender inequalities are sustained, and it had potential for empirical application within this study. If questions are asked merely for the sake of asking questions, however, one can obviously question the validity of any tool or theory, including the work of Bourdieu.

Based on the identified themes from *Masculine Domination*, a closed coding scheme was developed. Several iterations took place between reading back and forth between the 78-page transcript and Bourdieu's *Masculine Domination*. An abductive reasoning process was followed where themes were identified in both documents and constantly compared with each other in order to settle upon the most common ones. Illustrative examples of the recurring themes were then identified in the data source. This was considered appropriate because the closed coding scheme had already revealed major themes of interest (Charmaz, 2006). These themes were then construed to be constitutive of the dispositions of LGBTI individuals in general. The results of this step are discussed in the results section of this study (Chapter 7).

<u>*Step 4, gender and social inequality:*</u> To recap, in step 1, gender groups

were constructed. In step 2, objective structural conditions for each gender group were identified. In step 3, the subjective mental and bodily dispositions of sexual and gender minorities were explicated. However, the earlier steps did not concretely relate the subjective mental and bodily dispositions to specific gender groups. Hence, following the analyses in steps 1–3, the main aim guiding the analysis in this step was to understand how the experiences of gender and social discrimination vary across the identified groups and whether gender identities or sexual orientations act as assets or liabilities in different social contexts.

The analysis in step 4 comprised the following actions: A table was created in the Excel software. Each of the earlier identified gender groups were entered in columns, and a new row was added each time a property necessary to characterize one of the groups was identified. Biographical data and respondent narratives were used as sources of data. In this phase, all possible properties characterizing the different gender groups were identified exhaustively and indiscriminately. Each property identified for a single group was compared across all groups to determine if they were present or absent. Redundant properties were deleted, and *only* functionally equivalent properties that appeared across all or most of the gender groups were retained, thus providing the maximum number of differences between gender groups.

Tabulation was achieved iteratively by revisiting the database to search for concordant features that distinguished different groups until a stable categorization emerged. Retained properties were also used to explore the interrelationships between different gender groups and social institutions (Hardy, 2014). In this way, all of the above actions collectively helped to delineate discriminating but functionally equivalent properties of different gender groups that led to various experiences of discrimination in different social contexts. The constructed table is presented in Appendix 7, while the results are

discussed in the results section of this study (Chapter 7).

Step 5, identifying dominant actors, fields, power relations, and situated classificatory struggles: The analysis in step 5 proceeded as follows: Based on the data available from archived televised debates, panel discussions, and interviews on the *Pahichaan* radio station, key influencers in the policy debate related to sexual and gender minorities were identified by recognizing the individuals who were invited to the program. Several key fields were identified by associating the identified influential actors with the respective fields in which they operated. The researcher inferred the position of respective fields in relation to the meta-field of power by considering the actors' own accounts of their legitimate authority in establishing gender taxonomies.

Based on legal texts and the archive of Supreme Court verdicts (which was complemented by other sources), key inscriptions of symbolic gender order in the form of binary classificatory schemes—such as citizen/non-citizen, natural/unnatural, and virtuous/perverse—were identified. Thereafter, the dominant orthodoxy existing in different fields was identified according to how actors in their respective fields naturalize the dominant standpoint by taking sides in the binary classification schemes mentioned earlier. A timeline of the LGBTI movement in Nepal was created based on archived materials from the NHS, the writings of Sunil Babu Pant, and other sources. In this way, the overall objective of this phase of analysis was to identify dominant actors and fields and the power relations existing therein, as well as to map classificatory struggles as actions to sustain or resist gender-related taxonomies across several fields. The results are discussed in the results section of this study (Chapters 6 & 7).

Taken together, the five key steps in the data-analysis process helped conduct a sequential multi-level field analysis. The overall aim of the analysis was to understand how individuals describe their subjective

experiences as LGBTI individuals, relate this to the experiences of various groups of individuals identifying as sexual and gender minorities, compare experiences of social discrimination across various groups, and map how support or resistance for the discriminatory gender nomenclature is pursued in different relevant social fields. Ultimately, as stated earlier, the main research aims were to understand the following: (1) What social inequalities do LGBTI individuals face in Nepal, and how are these inequalities reproduced? (2) How, and to what effect, has collective action subverted their experience of the oppression that results from heteronormative domination?

6 RESULTS FROM THE QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The aim of this chapter is to present the results and critically discuss the relevant key findings. It does so through several steps. In Section 6.1, the results from the correspondence analysis, which was performed to construct gender groups, are presented, together with the primary reasoning behind the classification procedure. Section 6.2 then presents the results from the correspondence analysis that was performed to relate the constructed gender groups to corresponding socioeconomic indicators and experiences of discrimination, and it also discusses the main differentiating issues among the gender groups. Finally, Section 6.3 gives a summary of the key findings.

6.1 Construction of gender groups

This section presents the results from the correspondence analysis that was performed to construct gender groups. Based on the correspondence analysis, four groups could be analytically distinguished: AFTG (assigned female third-gender), AFLG (assigned female lesbian/gay), AMTG (assigned male third-gender), and AMGB (assigned male gay/bisexual). The "construction" of these groups of LGBTI individuals led to several important conclusions. Most importantly, an analysis performed on the analytical groups identified varying sociodemographic factors and instances of social discrimination, suggesting that the inequalities faced by LGBTI individuals are not uniform but rather hierarchical and nested in nature.

This section outlines the main reasoning behind the classification procedure. To recap, correspondence analysis was performed on a contingency table where the rows denoted different labels for gender identities and/or sexual orientation, while the columns denoted various identification patterns by respondents (please refer to Section 5.3 for

the detailed analysis procedure).

A chi-squared test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant association between gender identity labels and the pattern of identification between respondents. The sexual orientation/gender identity labels and patterns of identification with those labels were found to be significantly associated (After the association test, the eigenvalues were examined to determine the number of axes to be considered, because eigenvalues represent the amount of information retained by each axis (Kassambara, 2017). The proportion of variances retained by different axes are presented in the scree plot in Figure 8.

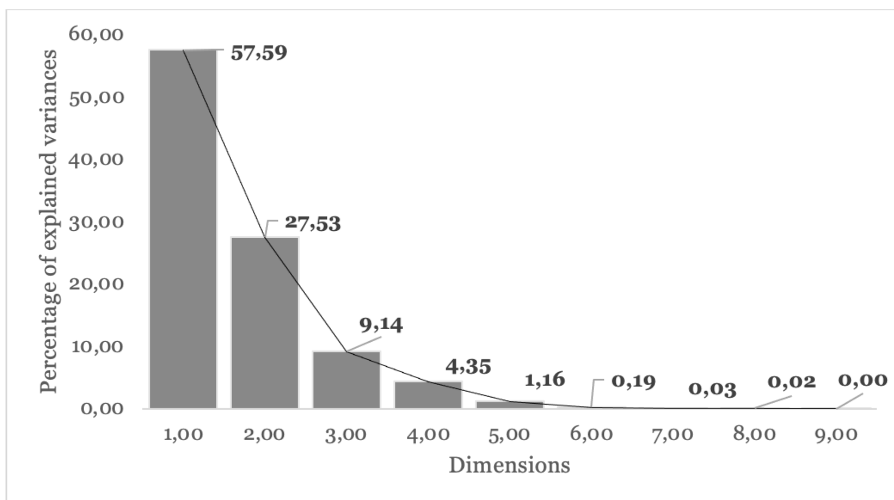

Figure 8 **Scree plot**

The number of dimensions retained was determined according to the point beyond which the remaining values are all relatively small and of comparable sizes (Kassambara, 2017). The first three dimensions explained about 94.25% of the variance, which was an acceptably large percentage (Kassambara, 2017), so it was decided in this case to interpret three axes. Only those categories with a contribution higher than the expected value for each axis were interpreted. Since the contingency

table contains 10 rows and 10 columns, the expected contribution value of different categories to each axis was (Kassambara, 2017). All variables contributing greater than 11.11% to the axes were therefore interpreted.

Table 2 Description of axis 1

Axis 1 (l=0.46; Variance explained=57.59%)				
Questions	**Categories**	**Identification patterns**	**(-)**	**(+)**
Identified sexual/ gender identity	Gay/lesbian			24.03
	Third gender			22.00
Assigned female (at birth)	fem_multi	Assigned female choose multiple identities		19.70
	fem_strong	Assigned female strongly identify		14.94
	fem_no	Assigned female no identification	17.75	
Assigned male (at birth)	male_strong	Assigned male strongly identify	17.08	

As can be seen in Table 2, six categories made greater than the mean contribution. Individuals were first asked to identify their sex and gender identity with the question: "What sex/gender were you assigned at birth, as on your birth certificate?" There were three possible selections: male (i.e., *Assigned male* in Table 2), female (i.e., *Assigned female* in Table 2), and intersex (not shown in Table 2). Individuals were then asked to select the extent to which they identify with 10 different sexual and gender identity terms on a three-point Likert scale (i.e., not at all, somewhat, and strongly).

In Table 2, *fem_strong* represents assigned female/strongly, *fem_no* represents assigned female/not at all, and *fem_multi* represents

assigned females who chose a particular label among multiple identities. The negative (-) and positive (+) positions are determined in axis 1 by looking at the contributions and coordinates of each of the categories. For example, in axis 1, the coordinate of the *gay/lesbian* label is +0.64, with a 24.03% contribution to axis 1, whereas the coordinate of the category *male_strong* is -0.89, with a 17.08% contribution to axis 1. The contributions and coordinates of all the categories used are presented in Appendix 9.

Axis 1 is the horizontal dimension in a two-dimensional plane. Based on the information presented in Table 2, on the left hand (negative) side, categories with an above-average contribution are *fem_no* and *male_strong*. This means that the left-hand side of axis 1 includes those gender labels that respondents who are assigned female at birth do not identify with at all, as well as those that respondents who were assigned male at birth identified strongly with. For example, the most distinct label that assigned males at birth identified strongly with but females did not identify with at all was *hijra*, probably because this is used as a derogatory term to denote effeminate males in Nepalese society. Axis 1 therefor has on the left side (-) those identities with which assigned females at birth do not identify with and those that assigned males at birth strongly identify with.

In contrast, on the right-hand side (+) of axis 1, categories with an above-average contribution are *fem_strong* and *fem_multi*. This means that on the positive side of axis 1, the sexual and gender identity labels that appear are those that females at birth either strongly identify with (*fem_strong*) or identify with along other available identities (*fem_multi*). The distinct labels that females at birth most strongly identify with, or choose among several other identity labels, are "*gay/lesbian*" and "*third gender*." Hence, axis 1 includes sexual and gender identity labels that assigned females at birth identify with. In other words, if individuals who were assigned female at birth strongly identify with

certain gender identity labels, they appear in the right-hand (positive) side of axis 1. If they do not associate with certain identity labels at all, they appear in the left-hand (negative side) of axis 1. In reality, the gender identity labels with which females do not strongly identify tend to be the labels that assigned males at birth often strongly identify with, such as *hijra*.

However, axis 1 alone is not sufficient to interpret the overall "sexual/ gender identity space," so a solution with more axes is called for. Hence, in the following sections, axes 2 and 3 are also considered together with axis 1. What follows are descriptions of these two additional axes for interpretation.

Table 3 describes axis 2, and only those categories that have an above-average contribution were interpreted. If a two-dimensional plane is constructed with axes 1 and 2, axis 2 represents the vertical axis, so categories with negative (-) coordinates are positioned below the horizontal axis (axis 1) and categories with positive (+) coordinates are positioned above the horizontal axis (axis 1). Please refer to Appendix 9 for coordinates and contributions for all categories.

Table 3 Description of axis 2

Axis 2 (l=0.22; Variance explained=27.53%)				
Questions	**Catego-ries**	**Patterns of identi-fication**	**(-)**	**(+)**
Identified sexual/gen-der identity	Hetero-sexual			12.9
	Bisexual			11.8
	Kothi		21.76	
	Méti		22.0	
Assigned female identi-fication	fem_ somewhat	Assigned female somewhat identify		18.4
Assigned male identifi-cation	male_ multi	Assigned male choose among multiple iden-tities	38.2	
	male_no	Assigned male no identification	23.2	

As can be seen in Table 3, for the lower half (-) of axis 2, the sexual and gender identity labels with above-average contributions are *kothi* and *m*éti. These are terms with which respondents who were assigned male at birth either do not identify with (*male_no*) or only identify with if they choose more than one identity *(male_multi)*. In summary, the negative/lower side of axis 2 represents identities with which individuals who were assigned male at birth either do not identify with or do so only weakly.

On the positive/upper side of axis 2, labels such as "heterosexual" and "bisexual" are represented. Individuals who were assigned female at birth weakly identify (*fem_somewhat*) with these labels. In short, Axis 2 seems to be an indicator of gender labels with which individuals only weakly identify.

Individuals who were assigned male at birth weakly identify with the terms *kothi* and *meti, as* represented on the negative/lower side. Individuals who were assigned female at birth weakly identify with

the terms “heterosexual” and “bisexual” and are represented on the positive/upper side.

Axes 1 and 2 are presented together in a symmetric plot (Kassambara, 2017) in Figure 9. The correspondence analysis biplot graphically displays rows as circles, thus representing identity labels, and columns as triangles, thus representing patterns of identification using the two principal dimensions 1 and 2. Along axis 1, on the negative/left-hand side, identity labels that assigned males at birth strongly identify with are represented. On the right-hand side, identity labels that assigned females at birth strongly identify with are represented. On vertical axis 2, the identity labels that assigned females at birth weakly identify with are represented above horizontal axis 1, while identity labels that assigned males at birth weakly identify with are represented below the horizontal axis 1. Altogether, this space represents 85.12% of the variation observed in the survey data.

In Figure 9, along the horizontal axis (axis 1), the most differentiating identity labels are *gay/lesbian* and *third gender*. Individuals assigned female at birth strongly identify with those labels positioned toward the right edge (i.e., *gay/lesbian*, *third gender*), whereas individuals assigned male at birth most strongly identify with labels positioned toward the left edge (*hijra, panthi*). Individuals assigned female at birth *do not* identify with the labels far to the left of the axis.

In the vertical axis, the most differentiating identity labels are *heterosexual*, *bisexual*, *kothi*, and *meti*. Toward the top are those identity labels (i.e., *heterosexual*, *bisexual*) with which individuals assigned female at birth somewhat identify with. Toward the bottom are those identity labels (i.e., *kothi, meti*) that individuals who were assigned male at birth do not frequently identify with. Other identity labels and identification patterns did not contribute more than the expected contribution value, which was determined to be 11.11%, to the

axes, so they were deemed unimportant to the interpretation.

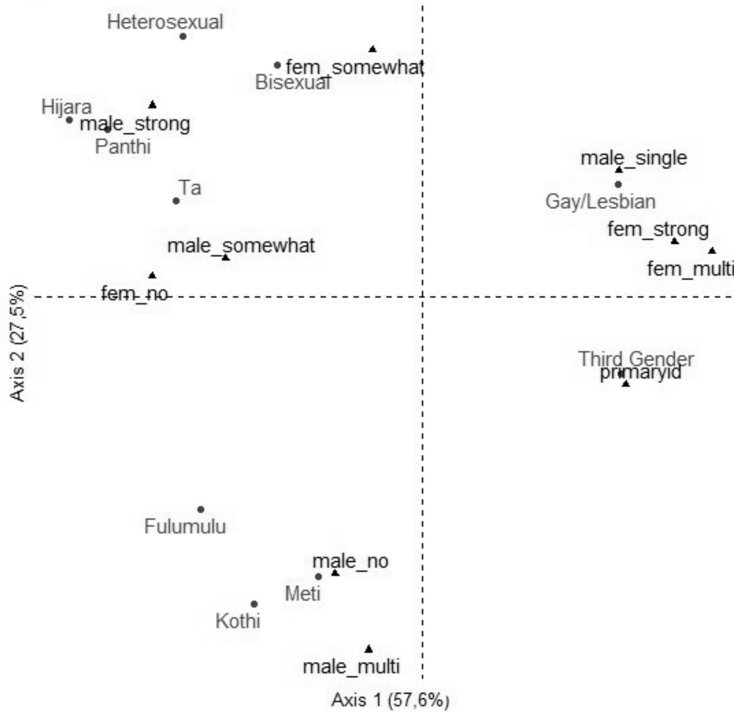

Figure 9 **CA biplot (Axes 1 & 2)**

Axis 3 was also interpreted further, as shown in Table 4. Only those categories that made an above-average (11.11%) contribution were interpreted. Although axis 3 explains only 9.14% of the variance in the survey data, taken altogether, axes 1–3 explain 94.25% of the overall variance in the survey data. If axis 3 is considered as an additional dimension to axis 1, axis 3 represents the vertical axis.

The lower/negative side of axis 3 represents sexual and gender identity labels such as *third gender*, *panthi*, and *hijra*. Individuals who were assigned male at birth strongly identified *(male_strong)* with these three labels. The upper/positive side of axis 3, meanwhile, represents

the label *gay/lesbian*. Individuals who were assigned female at birth somewhat identified (*fem_somewhat*) with this label.

In addition, when individuals who were assigned male at birth were asked to choose either only one identity from among many *(male_single)* or just a primary identity *(primaryid)* (by answering the question "What is the primary term you use to refer to your sexual orientation/gender identity?), they would also choose the label *gay/lesbian*. In summary, axis 3 represents gender labels that individuals who were assigned female at birth somewhat identify with (on the upper/positive side). On the lower/negative side, axis 3 represents gender labels that individuals who were assigned male at birth strongly identify with.

Table 4 Description of axis 3

Axis 3 (λ=0.073; Variance explained=9.139%)				
Questions	Categories		(-)	(+)
Self-identity	Gay/Lesbian			12.77
	Third Gender		29.57	
	Panthi		12.13	
	Hijara		20.61	
Assigned female identification	fem_somewhat	Assigned female somewhat identify		32.49
Assigned male identification	male_single	Assigned male choose a single identity		16.66
	male_strong	Assigned male strongly identity	16.90	
Primary gender id	primaryid	Primary sexual/gender identity	13.26	

A symmetric plot (Kassambara, 2017) with axis 1 as the horizontal axis and axis 3 as the vertical axis is shown in Figure 10. This explains 66.74% of the variation observed in the survey data. The correspondence analysis biplot in Figure 10 graphically displays the rows as circles, thus representing identity labels, and columns as triangles, thus representing patterns of identification, using the two principal dimensions 1 and 3. According to the symmetric plot, identity labels below the horizontal axis—such as third-gender, *panthi*, and *hijara*—are most cited by individuals who were assigned male at birth.

The identity labels above the horizontal axis, such as *gay/lesbian*, in Figure 10 are only somewhat identified with by individuals who were assigned female at birth. When it comes to the label *third gender*, this is not just the label that is most identified with by the individuals who were assigned male at birth—most of these individuals also consider it their primary identification term. All the other identity labels and identification patterns did not contribute over the expected contribution value, which was determined to be 11.11%, to the axes, so they were deemed unimportant for interpretation.

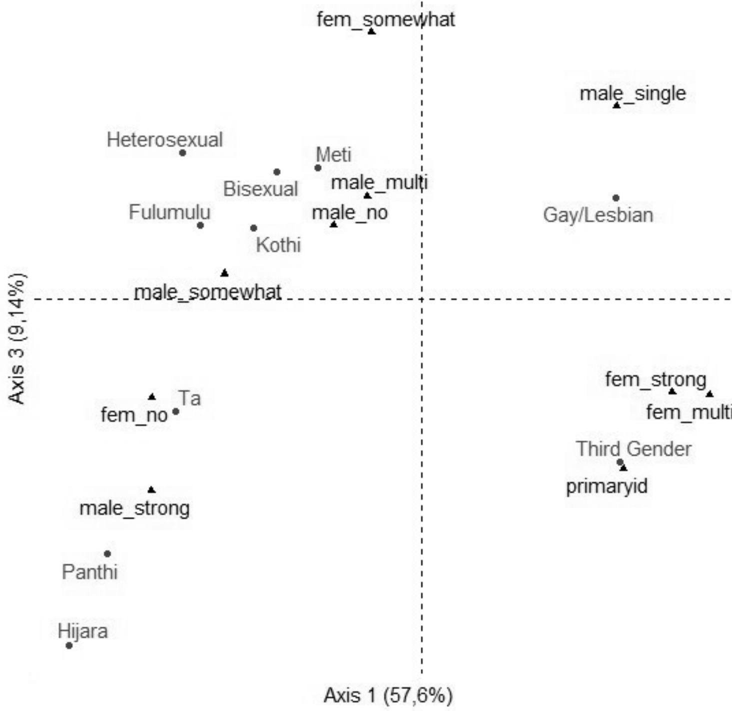

Figure 10 **CA biplot (axes 1 & 3)**

To completely interpret the sexual orientation and gender identities of the respondents based on the data available, it was necessary to consider all the axes (1–3) together. The results of the correspondence analysis are summarized in the matrix presented in Table 5.

Table 5 Analytical categories of sexual and gender identities

<table>
<tr><th>Assigned sex at birth/ citizenship certificate</th><th>-- (Weak or no association with gender labels)</th><th>++ (Strong association with gender labels)</th><th>Axes description</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Assigned male at birth</td><td rowspan="2">Kothi
(axis 2, -21,76%**)</td><td>Third gender
(axis 3, +29,57%)</td><td rowspan="8">Axis 1 (horizontal) [(--) assigned female/weak identification => (++) assigned female/strong identification] (left => right)

Axis 2 (vertical) [(--) assigned male/weak identification => (++) assigned female/weak identification] (bottom => top)

Axis 3 (vertical) [(--) assigned male/strong identification => assigned female/weak identification] (bottom => top)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gay
(axis 3, +12,77%)</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Méti
(axis 2, -22,01%)</td><td>Panthi
(axis 3, -12,3%)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hijara
(axis 3, -20,61%)</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Assigned female at birth</td><td>Hijra
(axis 1, -17,75%)</td><td rowspan="2">Gay/Lesbian
(axis 1, +24,03%)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Heterosexual
(axis 2, +12,90%)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Bisexual
(axis 2, 11,80%)</td><td rowspan="2">Third gender
(axis 1, +22,0%)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gay/Lesbian
(axis 3, +12,77%)</td></tr>
</table>

** (-) represents negative coordinates in the CA biplot, (+) represents positive coordinates in the CA biplot, the (%) refers to the contribution to respective axes

In Table 5, only those identity labels that made an above-average contribution to the various axes were retained. Based on the information in Table 5, it is possible to construct broad analytical groups of sexual and gender minorities. Considering respondents who were assigned female at birth or on their citizenship certificates, the sexual or gender identity labels that they most strongly identify with are clearly *third*

gender and *gay/lesbian*. Thus, respondents who were assigned female at birth are classified into two groups, namely *assigned female third gender* (AFTG) and *assigned female lesbian/gay* (AFLG). Although the term *gay* may be conventionally associated with a male same-sex orientation, the survey data reveals that individuals who were assigned female at birth may also identify with this label.

In summary, the AFTG group comprises individuals who were assigned female at birth or on their citizenship certificates but identify themselves as *third gender*, while the AFLG group comprises similar individuals who identify themselves as *gay* or *lesbian*.

On the other hand, for respondents who were assigned male at birth or on their citizenship certificates, the distinction is not so clear, because they clearly associate very strongly with four different terms, namely *third gender*, *gay*, *panthi*, and *hijra*. However, *panthi* and *hijara* are indigenous variations on the *third gender* theme, and they are often used synonymously. Hence, the terms *panthi* and *hijara* can be collapsed into a single *third gender* category. Based on this, an analytical category called *assigned male third gender* (AMTG) was constructed for individuals who were assigned male at birth or on their citizenship certificates but identify with the *third gender* label, which includes all regional variants of the term. The remaining term with which such individuals strongly associated was the *gay* label.

The only sexual or gender identity term that remains unaccounted for is the *bisexual* label. As can be seen in Table 5, individuals who were assigned female at birth or on their citizenship certificates only very weakly identified with the term *bisexual*. However, individuals who were assigned male at birth or on their citizenship certificates did have some sort of identification with the term. Hence, it became possible to combine the labels *gay* and *bisexual* and construct a group comprising individuals who were assigned male at birth or on their citizenship

certificates but identified with the terms *gay* or *bisexual*, and this group was named the *assigned male gay or bisexual* (AMGB) group.

Four analytical groups were therefore constructed based on the correspondence analysis performed between sexual and gender identity labels and various patterns of identification with terms: AFTG (*assigned female third gender*), AFLG (*assigned female lesbian/gay*), AMTG (*assigned male third gender*) and AMGB (*assigned male gay/ bisexual*). Section 6.2 presents further analysis that was conducted to identify the different socioeconomic conditions and experiences of discrimination that are faced by each of these different groups.

6.2 Correspondence between gender groups and objective conditions

This section presents results from an analysis that was performed to identify correspondences between the previously constructed gender groups and various objective characteristics. To recap, correspondence analysis was performed on a contingency table using the four different gender groups constructed earlier (AMGB, AMTG, AFTG, AFLG) and 63 rows of different variables based on socioeconomic indicators and experiences of discrimination in various social contexts.

A chi-squared test was conducted to evaluate the associations between the constructed gender groups and various objective indicators, and they were indeed found to be significantly associated . Following the association test, the eigenvalues were examined to determine the number of axes, because eigenvalues represent the amount of information retained by each axis (Kassambara, 2017). The proportion of variance retained by different axes are presented in the scree plot in Figure 11. The number of dimensions to retain can be determined according to the point beyond which the remaining values are all relatively small and of comparable size (Kassambara, 2017). Dimension 1 explained 56.80 % of the variation, followed by dimension 2 with

29.30% of variance and dimension 3 with 13.91% of the variance. The first two dimensions explained about 86.09% of the variance, while the first three dimensions explained 100% of the variance, and this was of course deemed an acceptably large percentage (Kassambara, 2017).

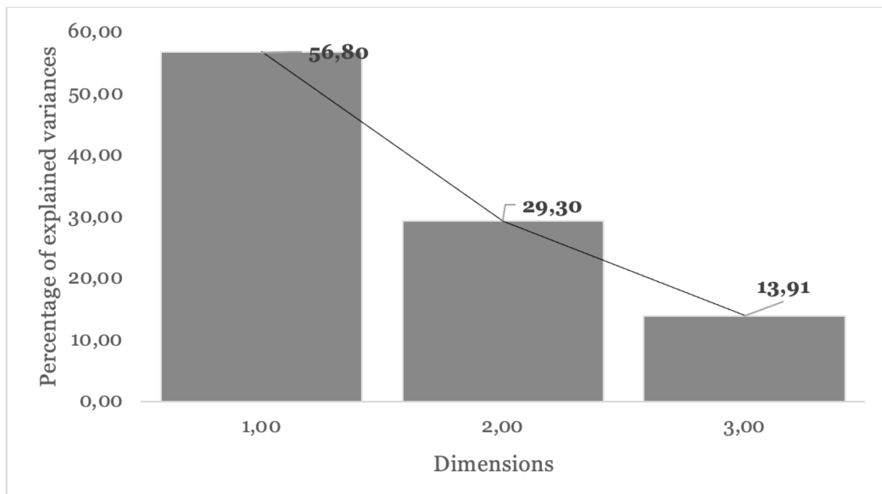

Figure 11 **Scree plot**

Thus, it was decided to interpret all three axes. The statistical criteria for interpreting a category was that it should make an above-average contribution to different axes. Since the contingency table contained 63 rows, the expected mean contribution of each category to the different axes was calculated as (Kassambara, 2017). All variables contributing more than 1.61% were therefore interpreted. The variables that were retained to describe axis 1 are shown in Table 6.

Table 6 **Description of axis 1**

Axis 1 (l=0.17; Variance explained=56.80%)				
Questions	Categories		(-)	(+)
Literacy	l3	Cannot read and write	2.42	
Education level	e3	Higher education		3.28
Enrollment age	eage1	Below 35		4.12
Relationship status	r6	Not categorized		2.67
Discrimination_transport	b1	Denial	3.81	
	b2	Verbal harassment	1.93	
	b3	Physical harassment	2.09	
	b4	Not used		3.51
	b5	Identity not visible		5.21
Discrimination_bureaucracy	gov5	Identity not visible		4.38
Discrimination_hospital	h1	Denial	2.22	
	h2	Verbal harassment	2.36	
	h5	Identity not visible		5.26
Discrimination_judicial system	j1	Denial	2.44	
	j3	Physical harassment		2.66
	j5	Identity not visible		2.49
Discrimination_marketplace	m1	Denial	3.89	
	m3	Physical harassment	2.75	
	m4	Not used		1.93
	m5	Identity not visible		5.77
Discrimination_police	p1	Denial	3.22	
	p2	Verbal harassment	2.14	
	p3	Physical harassment	2.38	
	p5	Identity not visible		6.22
Discrimination_education system	s5	Identity not visible		3.44

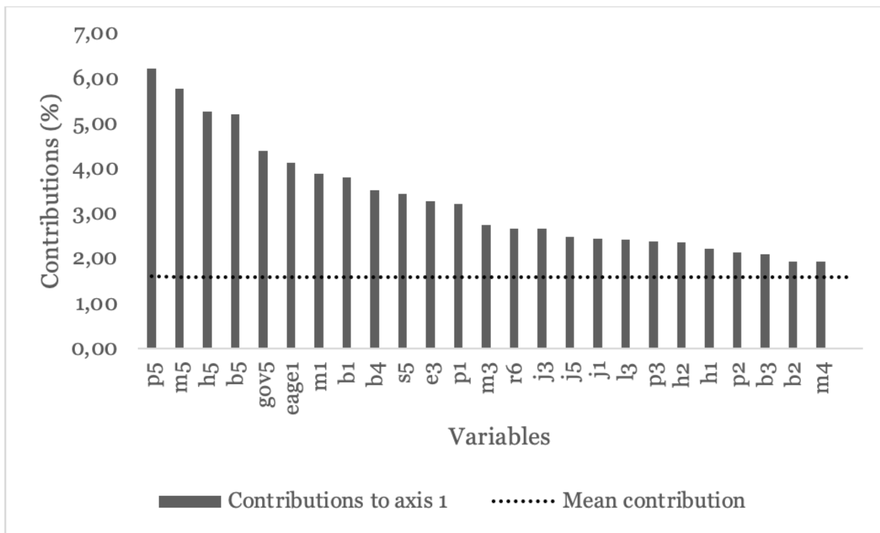

Figure 12 **Contribution of variables to axis 1**

Based on Table 6 and Figure 12, we can see that 25 categories make an above-average contribution (> 1.61%). Individuals were asked, "Can you read and write?" with the choices being "read and write" *(l1)*, "read only" *(l2)*, and "cannot read and write" *(l3)*. The *l3* variable had a negative coordinate and made an above-average contribution to axis 1.

There were six choices for respondents' level of education in the original questionnaire, but these were recoded into three levels: informal or primary education *(e1)*, until school-leaving certificate *(e2)*, and higher education *(e3)*. The *e3* (higher education) variable had a positive coordinate and made an above-average contribution to axis 1.

There were four choices for enrollment age in the original questionnaire, but these were recoded into two categories: below 35 *(eage1)* and above 35 *(eage2)*. The *eage1* (below 35) variable had a positive coordinate and made an above-average contribution to axis 1.

There were also 10 different choices for the respondents to indicate

their relationship status in the original questionnaire, but these were recoded into six different choices: single *(r1)*, in a relationship *(r2)*, widowed *(r3)*, separated *(r4)*, cohabitating *(r5)* and other/ uncategorized *(r6)*. Relationships that could not be categorized into any of the first five choices *(r6)* had a positive coordinate and made an above-average contribution to axis 1.

The questionnaire also included a series of questions related to the various forms of discrimination faced by sexual and gender minorities in different social settings. The social settings considered were 1) public transportation (e.g., bus, microbus, taxi, airplane) *(b)*, 2) health system (e.g., hospital, health clinic) *(h)*, 3) bureaucratic system (e.g., government office and agency) *(gov)*, 4) judicial system (e.g., judge, legal system) *(j)*, 5) marketplace (e.g., store, supermarket, market) *(m)*, 6) police (e.g., officer, station) *(p)*, and 7) education system (e.g., school, college, other education institution) *(s)*.

For each setting, respondents were asked if they faced 1) denial of service, 2) verbal harassment, or 3) physical harassment. If they did not, they were further asked if this was because 4) they did not try to access the service, 5) because nobody in the context recognized their sexual or gender identity, or 6) there was no negative experience in the setting. Combining the seven different social settings with six different types of experience yielded 42 options, including 1) discrimination on public transport (*b1-b6*), 2) discrimination in the bureaucratic system (*gov1-gov6*), 3) discrimination in the health system (*h1-h6*), 4) discrimination in the judicial system (*j1-j6*), 5) discrimination in the marketplace (*m1-m6*), 6) discrimination by the police (*p1-p6*), and 7) discrimination in the education system (*s1-s6*).

In Table 6, the categories that made an above-average contribution were *b4* (transportation/no discrimination/did not try to access), *b5* (transportation/no discrimination/identity secret), *gov5* (bureaucratic

system/no discrimination/identity secret), *h5* (health system/no discrimination/identity secret), *j5* (judicial system/no discrimination/ identity secret), *m4* (marketplace/no discrimination/did not try to access service), *m5* (marketplace/no discrimination/identity secret), *p5* (police/no discrimination/identity secret), and *s5* (education system/no discrimination/identity secret). These are represented on the right/positive side of axis 1.

Again in Table 6, the categories that made an above-average contribution were *b1* (transportation/ discrimination/denial of service), *b2* (transportation/ discrimination/verbal harassment), *b3* (transportation/discrimination/physical harassment), *h1* (health system/discrimination/denial of service), *h2* (health system/ discrimination/verbal harassment), *j1* (judicial system/discrimination/ denial of service), *m1* (marketplace/discrimination/denial of service), *m3* (marketplace/discrimination/physical harassment), *p1* (police/ discrimination/denial of service), *p2* (police/discrimination/verbal harassment), and *p3* (police/discrimination/physical harassment). These are represented on the left/negative side of axis 1.

Clearly, axis 1 represents a range of severity for discrimination. On the left/negative side, extreme forms of discrimination are represented, such as denial of service and verbal and physical harassment. On the right/positive side, less-severe forms of discrimination are represented, but whenever the severity of the discrimination was low, it was generally because either the individual's identity was not visible or the respondent did not try to participate in that social context. The only exception to this pattern is *j3* (judicial system/discrimination/ physical harassment), because despite it seemingly being a severe form of discrimination, it had *positive* coordinates and was therefore represented on the positive side of axis 1.

Similarly, the left/negative side of axis 1 also represents lower

educational capital (e.g., illiteracy, lower level of education, higher enrollment age). The right/positive side, meanwhile, represents higher educational capital (e.g., full literacy, enrollment age below 35, completed higher education). Combining all the information in Table 6, the left/negative side of axis 1 seems to represent individuals with less education capital who face greater instances of discrimination, including violence. The right/positive side of axis 1, in contrast, represents individuals with greater education capital who face less discrimination due to their identities being hidden or them not seeking to participate in a social context.

In terms of the various gender groups (column categories), only those categories were retained that made an above-average contribution to each axis. Since the contingency table contains only four columns, the expected contribution to each axis was calculated as (Kassambara, 2017). Only one gender group, namely AMGB made an above-average contribution to axis 1. The gender category AMTG, however, contributed 32.99% to axis 1, which is slightly below the mean contribution. Axis 1 therefore primarily describes the AMGB and AMTG categories.

The major characteristics differentiating these gender groups are the degree of education capital and the severity of the discrimination faced in various social contexts. Indeed, AMGB and AMTG were found to be polar opposites. Individuals in the AMTG category had comparatively less educational capital and faced severe discrimination in everyday social contexts, such as outright denial of service, physical harassment, and verbal abuse. On the other hand, individuals in the AMGB category did not face severe discrimination in various social contexts, either because they did not use the service, did not have to disclose their sexual or gender identity, or simply did not face any form of discrimination.

To interpret the overall correspondences between gender groups and the different variables, it is necessary to consider other axes. Table 7

describes axis 2. Only those categories that made an above-average contribution (1.61%) were retained (see Figure 13). If a two-dimensional plane is constructed with axes 1 and 2, axis 2 represents the vertical axis. Variables with negative coordinates are therefore positioned below the horizontal axis (axis 1), while those with positive coordinates are positioned above it. Please refer to Appendix 10 for the coordinates and contributions of all categories.

Table 7 Description of axis 2

Axis 2 (l=0.09; Variance explained=29.30%)				
Questions	Categories		(-)	(+)
Education level	e3	Higher education	1.72	
Enrollment age	eage 2	Above 35	7.71	
Relationship status	r4	Separated		5.88
	r5	Cohabited		3.96
	r6	Not categorized		19.26
Discrimination_ transport	b4	Not used	3.43	
Discrimination_ju-dicial	j3	Physical harassment		43.05
	j5	Identity not visible	1.84	
Discrimination_ market	m4	Not used	3.34	

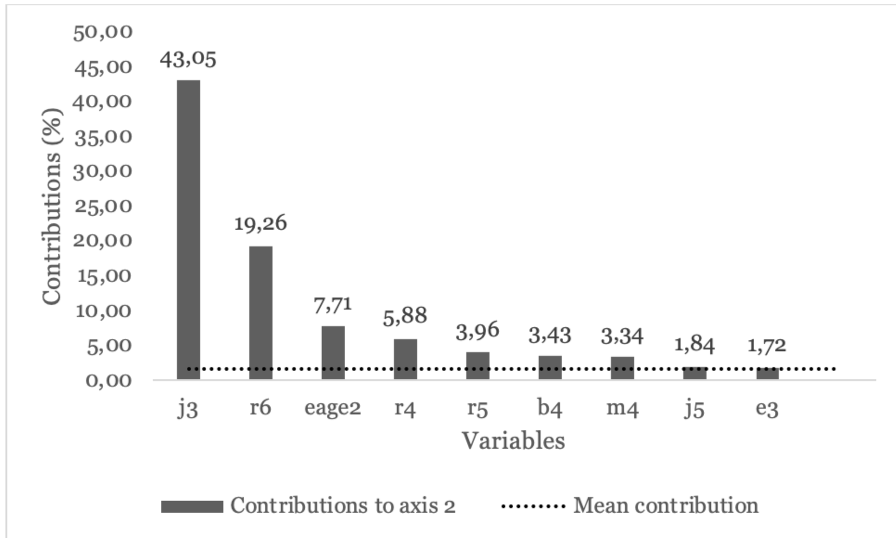

Figure 13 **Contribution of variables to axis 2**

Based on Table 7, for the positive/upper part of axis 2, the following categories made an above-average contribution: *r4* (relationship status/separate), *r5* (relationship status/cohabitation), *r6* (relationship status/uncategorized), and *j3* (judicial system/ discrimination/physical harassment). For the negative/lower side of axis 2, the following categories made an above-average contribution: *e3* (education level/higher education), *eage2* (enrollment age/above 35), *b4* (transportation/no discrimination/not used), *j5* (judicial system/no discrimination/identity not visible), *m4* (marketplace/no discrimination/not accessed).

Axis 2 predominantly describes relationship orientation, severity of discrimination, and the degree of educational capital. On the positive/ upper side of axis 2, individuals with unconventional relationship statuses, such as separation and cohabitation, are represented along with those individuals facing severe discrimination, mainly physical harassment in the judicial system. This latter point is self-evident

because the variable *j3* (judicial system/discrimination/physical harassment) contributes 43.05% to axis 2.

In contrast, on the negative/lower side of axis 2, individuals facing less-severe forms of discrimination are represented. This occurred mainly because either they did not use different social services or their identity was not visible in the social context. Furthermore, individuals possessing greater educational capital are also represented in the lower/negative side of axis 2. Thus, axis 2 principally differentiates individuals in terms of education capital, relationship status, and the severity of discrimination faced in the judicial system.

The AFLG group contributed well above-average to axis 2. The AMGB group also made an above-average (35.09%) contribution to axis 2. Axis 2 therefore differentiates between the AFLG and AMGB categories. The differentiating characteristics are the level of educational capital, the type of relationship status, and the severity of discrimination faced in the judicial system.

AFLG and AMGB are polar opposites, because individuals belonging to the AFLG category had comparatively less educational capital and faced physical harassment in judicial contexts. They are also more likely to have unconventional relationship statuses by Nepalese standards, which perhaps indicates a deviation from the traditional heterosexual marriage relationship. In comparison to the AFLG category, the AMGB category possessed greater education capital and were in more-conventional relationships, such as a heterosexual relationship, and they faced less discrimination in judicial contexts, because they did not have to disclose their sexual or gender identity.

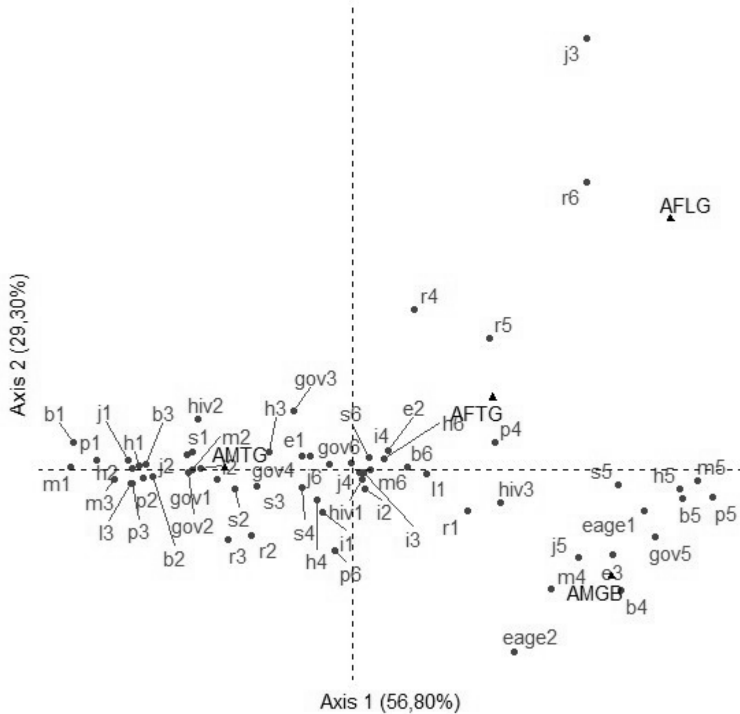

Figure 14 **CA biplot (Axes 1 & 2)**

The symmetric plot (Kassambara, 2017) with axis 1 as the horizontal axis and axis 2 as the vertical axis is shown in Figure 14. This plot explains 86.09% of the variation observed in the survey data. The correspondence analysis biplot in Figure 14 graphically displays rows as circles, thus representing socioeconomic indicators and experiences of discrimination, and columns as triangles, thus representing various constructed gender groups, using the two principal dimensions 1 & 2.

For the horizontal axis 1, the right-hand side represents the AMGB category, while the left-hand side represents the AMTG category. Individuals belonging to the AMTG category tend to be less well educated and face severe social discrimination. All the variables

clustered around the AMTG triangle indicate denial of service, physical harassment, and verbal abuse in various social contexts. On the other hand, the variables clustered around the AMGB triangle indicate less severe discrimination in various social contexts, because they either did not use the service, did not have to disclose their sexual and gender identity, or simply did not face any form of discrimination.

For the vertical axis 2, the portion above the horizontal axis represents the AFLG group, while the portion below it represents variables describing the AMGB group. Axis 2 therefore differentiates these two categories. The variables clustered around the AFLG triangle indicate a lower level of education, unconventional relationship statuses, and a greater degree of discrimination faced in the judicial system compared to the AMGB category.

To interpret the results completely, axis 3 is also considered, and this is described in Table 8. Only those categories that made an above-average contribution (1.61%) were retained, as shown in Figure 15. Although this axis only explains 13.91% of the variance in the survey data, axes 1-3 combined explain all the variance in the survey data. If axis 3 is considered as an additional axis along with axis 1, it represents the vertical axis.

Table 8 Description of axis 3

Axis 3 (l=0.04; Variance explained=13.91%)				
Questions	Categories		(-)	(+)
Enrollment age	eage 2	Above 35	1.74	
Relationship status	r4	Separated		7.88
	r5	Cohabited		2.06
	r6	Not categorized		9.63
HIV status	hiv3	Do not know/ refused		28.79
Discrimination_trans-port	b4	Not used	3.96	

Discrimination_bu-reaucracy	gov1	Denial		2.37
	gov3	Physical harass-ment	3.81	
Discrimination_health	h3	Physical harass-ment	2.70	
Discrimination_judicial	j3	Physical harass-ment	24.36	
Discrimination_market	m4	Not used	3.17	

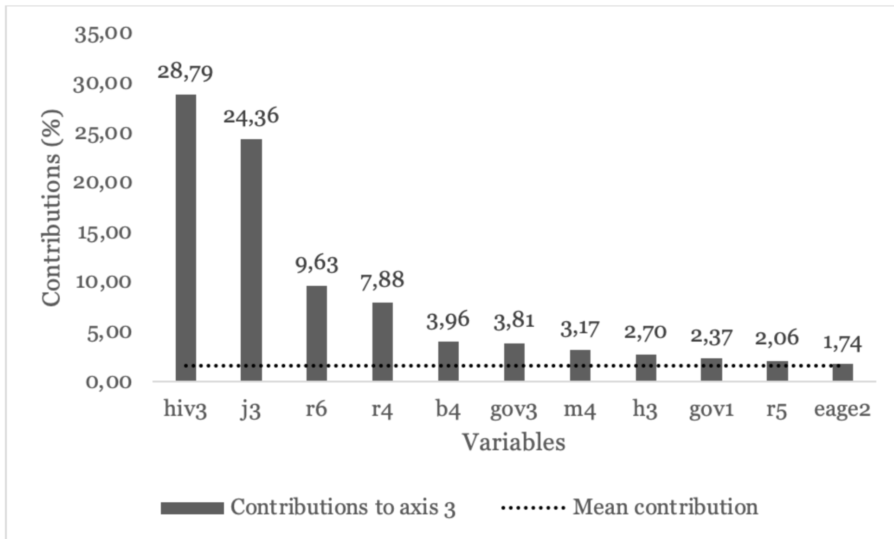

Figure 15 **Contributions of variables to axis 3**

In Table 8, for the positive/upper part of axis 3, the following categories made an above-average contribution: *r4* (relationship status/ separate), *r5* (relationship status/cohabitation), *r6* (relationship status/uncategorized), and *gov1* (bureaucratic system/discrimination/ denial). Additionally, *hiv3* (HIV status/do not know or refused) made

an above-average contribution to the positive dimension of axis 3.

In Table 8, for the negative/lower part of axis 3, the following categories made an above-average contribution: *eage2* (enrollment age/above 35), *b4* (transportation/no discrimination/not used), *gov3* (bureaucratic system/discrimination/physical harassment), *h3* (health system/discrimination/physical harassment), *j3* (judicial system/discrimination/physical harassment), and *m4* (marketplace/ no discrimination/not accessed).

Axis 3 is not analytically distinct from axis 2 in that similar variables—namely education capital, severity of discrimination, and relationship status—are represented in axis 3. Whereas discrimination in the judicial system is a distinguishing variable in axis 2, in axis 3 it is discrimination in the bureaucratic system. Individuals represented toward the upper part of axis 3 are therefore denied access to bureaucratic services. In addition, axis 3 represents more severe forms of discrimination, such as outright denial of services and physical harassment, when compared to those described in axis 2. Another differentiating factor is that individuals represented toward the upper part of axis 3 are more ambivalent about HIV.

In summary, axis 3 represents relationship orientation, physical harassment in bureaucratic and judicial systems, and ambivalence about HIV. The negative/lower side represents individuals facing physical harassment in bureaucratic and judicial systems, while the positive/upper side represents individuals who have unconventional relationship statuses, are denied bureaucratic services, and are ambivalent about HIV. To some extent, axis 3 also distinguishes gender groups in terms of educational capital. The negative/lower side of axis 3 represents groups with greater educational capital, similar to axis 2, but axis 3 predominantly differentiates gender groups in terms of the physical violence faced, the denial of bureaucratic services, and

unconventional relationship statuses.

Figure 16 **CA biplot (axes 1 & 3)**

The symmetric plot (Kassambara, 2017) with axis 1 as the horizontal axis and axis 3 as the vertical axis is shown in Figure 16. This plot explains 43.21% of the variation observed in the survey data. The correspondence analysis biplot in Figure 16 graphically displays rows as circles, thus representing socioeconomic indicators and experiences of discrimination, and columns as triangles, thus representing various constructed gender groups, using the two principal dimensions 1 & 3.

The horizontal axis 1 that distinguishes the AMGB and AMTG categories has been described. In the vertical axis 3, the part above the horizontal axis represents variables related to the AFTG group, while

the part below it represents variables related to the AFLG group. Axis 3 therefore differentiates between the AFTG and AFLG categories. The variables clustered around the AFTG triangle are associated with educational level, relationship status, and denial of service or physical harassment when trying to access bureaucratic and judicial services.

6.3 Summary

To summarize the results, after performing correspondence analysis on the data from the existing survey (UNDP, Williams Institute, 2014), it was possible to analytically categorize LGBTI individuals into four broad categories, namely *assigned female third gender* (AFTG), *assigned female lesbian/gay* (AFLG), *assigned male third gender* (AMTG), and *assigned male gay and bisexual* (AMGB). Further analysis was then carried out to explore the correspondences of these four gender categories to different socioeconomic indicators and various experiences of social discrimination.

The results revealed that the AMTG and AMGB groups are distinctly different in terms of their socioeconomic indicators and their experiences of discrimination. Individuals belonging to the AMTG group were generally less well educated and faced extreme forms of discrimination, such as outright denial of various services, physical harassment, and verbal abuse when compared to individuals in the AMGB group. The most significant reason for this was the greater visibility of the AMTG identity in the public space when compared to that of individuals belonging to the AMGB group.

The results also showed that individuals belonging to the AFLG category were less well educated and faced severe discrimination in judicial contexts, more so than individuals belonging to the AMGB group. Individuals belonging to the AFLG group were also more likely to report being in an unconventional relationship, meaning that it could not be considered as a conventional heterosexual one. In addition, individuals

belonging to the AFTG category were also less well educated, more likely to report being in an unconventional relationship, and faced denial of service or physical harassment in bureaucratic and judicial contexts. In general, it could be safely concluded that those individuals who were assigned female at birth are less privileged in terms of socioeconomic indicators and face greater discrimination in various social contexts when compared to their assigned male counterparts.

Although exploratory statistical analysis in the form of multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) helps to construct groups from survey data and then identify correspondences between these groups and various variables, the findings should be regarded with caution. Given that the purpose of this research is to understand how the categorization of LGBTI individuals as sexual and gender minorities influences their experiences of social discrimination, constructing further groups of minority groups may prove to be a counterproductive exercise. Indeed, one needs to be cautious of perpetuating further inequalities by pigeonholing distinct identities and orientations into constraining compartments.

For example, it would be legitimate to question why the *lesbian* and *gay* identity labels are compartmentalized into the single group AFLG and whether such an exercise effectively erases “lesbian” experiences. Similarly, one may also legitimately claim that putting *gay* and *bisexual* sexual orientations in the same AMGB group universalizes two clearly distinct orientations with different resulting experiences. Indeed, when the purpose of a study is to question discriminatory gender nomenclature, engaging in the very same practice may seem inappropriate. However, two counter arguments can be made against this hypothetical objection, both of which relate to the results being based on statistical associations.

First, statistical analysis can only describe the situations faced by sexual

and gender minorities at an aggregated level. It would be foolish to assume that aggregate results will be valid for each and every individual in a category.

The second regards the external validity of the classification, which in turn relates to sampling bias in the source data. The original survey (UNDP, Williams Institute, 2014) was a pioneering and commendable attempt to conduct a census of the LGBTI population in Nepal, but it is clearly characterized by sampling bias. Some 86% of the sample were assigned male at birth, so to some extent, the findings could be artifacts of the sample. When visually representing the overall data, dimension 1 explains 56.80% of the variation, followed by dimension 2 with 29.30% of the variance and dimension 3 with 13.91% of the variance. As discussed earlier, dimension 1 explains the differences between the AMGB and AMTG groups, both of which clearly comprise individuals who were assigned male at birth. Dimension 2, meanwhile, explains the differences between the AFLG and AMGB groups but with a significantly smaller proportion of individuals who were assigned female at birth. Clearly much less variance in the survey data was explained by the third dimension, which explained the differences in experiences between the AFTG and AFLG groups, both of which comprised individuals who were assigned female at birth. Although the analysis presented is somewhat valid for the individuals who were assigned male at birth, it may not be equally representative of individuals who were assigned female at birth due to their limited participation in the original survey.

Moreover, the sampling strategy was venue-based and thus dominated by the population of the Kathmandu Valley. The respondents were also recruited based on the snowball technique, so the social networks of NHS members were more likely to be surveyed. In addition, the NHS has been accused of prioritizing MtF transgender issues, so the survey is also clearly biased toward these individuals. One clear implication

of oversampling participants who were urban-based, assigned male at birth, and likely MtF transgender individuals is that it overlooks other LGBTI individuals who may not follow the same patterns of identification, face similar socioeconomic conditions, or experience similar forms of discrimination. This could also have the consequence of further marginalizing the experiences of LGBTI individuals who are assigned female at birth. Despite these flaws, the original survey (UNDP, Williams Institute, 2014) claims to have proved useful in planning for advocacy, outreach, and intervention. Overall, the correspondences found among the identified groups, socioeconomic indicators, and experiences of discrimination do seem to confirm anecdotal everyday experiences, and this serves as a useful basis for arguing for social justice. Whether this is truly the case is an empirical question for which a more detailed understanding of the subjective experiences of LGBTI individuals is required. Chapter 7 therefore explores the subjective experiences of LGBTI individuals by delving into their narratives.

7 RESULTS FROM THE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Section 7.1 presents the results from the qualitative analysis that was conducted to interpret the dispositions of sexual and gender minorities. It also discusses the identified features of gender dispositions. Section 7.2, meanwhile, presents the results from the qualitative analysis that sought to understand how generic dispositions manifest themselves differently across subcategories of sexual and gender minorities. This section discusses the key invariant properties that distinguish gender groups and their roles in gender relations across different social institutions.

Next, Section 7.3 presents the results of the qualitative analysis that was performed to map classificatory struggles that occur across various fields. It discusses the dominant actors, fields, and orthodoxy related to gender taxonomies in each field, as well as the specific strategies pursued by LGBTI activists to resist and challenge the dominant gender order across multiple fields.

7.1 Gender as a disposition

To identify the subjective dispositions of individuals who identify as a sexual and gender minority, the research draws on narratives, biographical accounts, and interviews. The analytical strategy used to derive key themes for the subjective dispositions of LGBTI individuals has already been explained in Section 5.3. To recap, though, data from various sources was first systematically organized. After becoming familiar with the data sources a number of times, key passages were extracted that comprised information related to (1) how individuals describe their own sexual orientation and gender identities, (2) their description of experiences of discrimination in various social contexts, and (3) their description of how they come to terms with, or actively

resist, social discrimination, either individually or collectively.

After further familiarization with the extracted passages, several pertinent themes that represented the unique dispositions of various groups were identified. For this purpose, Pierre Bourdieu's *Masculine Domination* (Bourdieu, 2001) was used as a heuristic tool. This book discusses several mechanisms through which gender inequalities are reproduced. Primary among these are (1) the internalization of the gender taxonomies by the dominated as cognitive schemes, (2) the externalization of gender taxonomies through institutions existing in the wider society, (3) the embodied aspect of gendered identities and resulting constraints when performing social activities, (4) strictly defined gender and sexual roles and a need to adhere to them, (5) the invisibility of the dominated in the classificatory schemes and various public activities, (6) existing social stigma directed against the dominated, and (7) the perception by dominated individuals that they have limited agency to change the situation.

In this study, the seven mechanisms identified by Bourdieu were adopted as a heuristic tool to explore how they play out and what they mean in the specific situation faced by LGBTI individuals in Nepal. It is not a given, however, that all seven of Bourdieu's mechanisms will be found to apply in the case of Nepal. Likewise, it may also be possible another as-yet-unknown mechanism is at work in Nepal.

However, it should be noted that Bourdieu does not precisely specify the seven mechanisms extracted for analysis here. Instead, Bourdieu comprehensively discusses his three theoretical mechanisms (field, habitus, and practices) to conduct a sociological analysis of gender relations in the context of masculine domination at a very general level. Bourdieu's explanation of masculine domination is not tied to a particular empirical context, although in *Masculine Domination*, he uses his previous study of Kabil society in the Mediterranean region

to illustrate the application of his ideas. Thus, there is a risk of not taking the subjective experience seriously *as a subjective experience* but instead pigeon-holing it into Bourdieu's categories or mechanisms.

To counter the risk of imposing external categories on subjective experiences, as well as to ensure that the mechanisms do actually comprehensively cover the subjective experiences of LGBTI individuals in Nepal, several steps were followed. First, based on the themes identified in *Masculine Domination*, a coding scheme was developed that was derived following an abductive reasoning process. Themes identified in *Masculine Domination* were constantly compared with the key passages extracted from the narratives of LGBTI individuals in Nepal, ones comprising information related to (1) how individuals describe their own sexual orientation and gender identities, (2) their descriptions of experiences of discrimination in various social contexts, and (3) their description of how they come to terms with, or actively resist, social discrimination either individually or collectively. The constant comparison between Bourdieu's theory in *Masculine Domination* and the empirical data over multiple times led to iteratively settling on the most-common corresponding themes, which turned out to be seven in number.

Second, there is a risk that closed coding may prevent the study from finding other mechanisms that Bourdieu did not identify. To counter this risk, during the analysis, "open" coding was followed in addition to closed coding. In practice, this meant that during the coding, attention was given equally to text fragments, which were derived from the narratives of LGBTI individuals in Nepal, that may not neatly fit in with the seven pre-defined codes derived from Bourdieu's theory. Third and finally, illustrative examples of the settled common themes were then identified in the data source. These themes were then construed to be constitutive of the dispositions of LGBTI individuals in general. The results of this are elaborated in this section.

Based on the analysis of biographical accounts, narratives, and available interviews with sexual and gender minorities, several ways in which dominant gender taxonomies are problematic for LGBTI individuals in their everyday lives are discussed in this section. Analysis shows the several problems faced by sexual and gender minorities include the following: (1) constraints on the expression of gender and/or sexual identity, (2) constraints on bodily dispositions, (3) constraints and freedom for the expression of sexual and gender roles, (4) the invisibilization from social life, (5) body stigma, (6) constant societal gaze, and (7) self-denigration. Each of these issues were identified through a combination of "open" and "closed" coding processes through an iterative abductive reasoning process. Thus, it could then be stated how Bourdieu's identified mechanisms correspond with the subjective experiences of LGBTI individuals in Nepal. Each of the issues are discussed further in this section.

7.1.1 Constraints on the expression of gender and/or sexual identity

On reading and listening to the narratives of LGBTI individuals, it gradually became clear that the accepted nomenclature for gender in the society and non-stigmatized sexual orientations constrain the expression of LGBTI individuals' gender identities and sexual orientations. In fact, almost all of the "coming out" stories focused on how they struggled to position their feelings and self-perception of their gender or sexual orientation with respect to the established choices. On having the existing gender categories and sexual orientations instilled, experiences of disjuncture lead to not just feelings of being a "misfit" but also a sense being ostracized from social services and institutions. Both the resulting emotions and experiences leads to individuals perceiving that they are lesser members of society and treated unequally in everyday life.

The consequences faced by sexual and gender minorities emerge as a result of the interaction between their own internal cognitive schemes, which are structured around the gender binary, and external societal institutions that still use similar gender classification schemes. When internal cognitive schemes and external societal institutions structured around the dominant gender scheme constraint the freedom of LGBTI people, they contribute to gender-related dispositions (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 30).

The orthodox binary gender-classification scheme limits any expression of gender identity for most LGBTI individuals. The experience of being confused about one's own gender identity and finding a place within the established classification scheme is a constantly recurring theme in the narratives and biographies of LGBTI individuals. For example, one intersexed individual conveyed the difficulty of defining one's own gender identity when it is difficult to place oneself in the traditional dichotomy of being "male" or "female":

> "I used to wonder what I was. I did not know. When I compared myself to boys, I was not the same...When I compared myself to girls, I was not the same. I was caught between two spheres and couldn't fit in either." (Esan Regmi, Intersex, Kathmandu)[17]

When institutional practices maintain the normative assumption of the gender binary, thus equating gender with sex and accepting only sexual attraction between opposite genders as being normal, this is referred to as heteronormativity (Schilt & Westbrook, 2009). The gender binary scheme also legitimizes this heteronormative order. The unquestioned status of heteronormativity leads people, even those engaged in same-sex sexual relations, to use the gender binary to define their own sexuality. As one respondent noted, because of the dominant manner of viewing gender as "male" or "female," even cisgender males who have sexual relationships with individuals who were assigned male at

[17] Narrative published in Stories of Intersex People from Nepal. Kathmandu (2016).

birth but identify otherwise, such as MtF transgender individuals, view themselves as engaging in a heterosexual relationship:

> "In our culture, we have the story of 'third gender,' but in society, people still think about gender as male or female. Even people who have sex with third gender [male-to-female transgender] think like this. Because they have family, they don't want to identify as MSM [Men who have Sex with Men]." (MSM in his 20s).[18]

7.1.2 Constraints on bodily disposition

Reading and listening to the narratives of members of the LGBTI community, it gradually became clear that in society, there is an acceptable way to bear one's body, one that aligns with the expected norms of the person's expected gender, role, or sexual orientation. For cisgender heterosexual individuals, unless they clearly transgress the expected bodily dispositions—such as due to disability, which is again another "can of worms"—any deviances in bodily conduct from the expected behavior barely registers. For individuals identifying as an LGBTI minority, however, their narratives frequently refer to past experiences of being criticized, objectified, ostracized, or penalized due to their bodily conduct, because while it is normal behavior for them, it is discriminated against in wider society.

The freedom, or rather the lack of it, for the bodily dispositions of LGBTI individuals are also structured by the dominant gender scheme. This has some important implications in that those who do not conform to the binary gender classification scheme are mainly categorized in society through their bodily dispositions. For example, the interview excerpt below shows how bodily dispositions primarily signify gender identity for some individuals:

> "Interviewer: Are they [transgender individuals] different from male and female?

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[18] This interview was conducted by Eirin Winsnes Isaksen.

> Interviewee: Fundamentally, there is not much difference, but still, when we are interacting with them, a little bit of discomfort is there. The way we see it, we feel like we are interacting with a male from outside, *but their gestures, the way they talk, we see them as female*. At the beginning, there was a bit of discomfort but not much difference. We had fun, but we also had open mentality from the outset. When we talked with them at the beginning, *there was a mismatch between their looks, body language, and the way they interacted, and gestures*…it is a bit strange." (Karuna Bajracharya, public healthcare officer, 5.08.2014)[19]

What is more, LGBTI people often find themselves in conflict with the expected bodily *hexis* of a biological "male" or "female." The bodily *hexis* denotes all forms of bodily deportment, such as stance, gait, and gestures (Bourdieu, 2001). In many cases, the bodily deportment of LGBTI people often conflicts with the expected bodily *hexis* of a "man" or "woman," leading to discriminatory practices in various societal contexts. One transgender individual narrated such experiences:

> "The teachers…rather than focusing on my studies, they were prejudiced about my speech, behavior, and opinions. I was not that good in maths, and when I sometimes could not answer some questions, under that pretext, they scolded me about my character. '*You were born as a son, learn to walk like a son,* etc.' were daily occurrences. How can I do that? I can only be what I am by nature, express what I can naturally, I am not performing a drama" (Bhumika Shrestha, transgender activist, Himalayan Television, "Focus of the Day" 17.5.2012)[20]

As the above narrative illustrates, when individuals do not exhibit the expected bodily dispositions, they are considered aberrations in need of correction.

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[19] Interview conducted by Ambika Dahal, journalist, Pahichan Radio Program, 5.8.2014.

[20] This was part of a televised panel discussion as part of the "Focus of the Day" program aired by Himalayan Television. The host on this occasion was Sunil Babu Pant, himself an LGBTI activist. The program was organized as part of the International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO), 17.5.2012.

The inculcation of bodily *hexis* through "pedagogic action" is a form of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2001). Such "pedagogic action" can manifest through three different mechanisms: diffuse education like informal peer groups, family relationships, and educational institutions like schools (Jenkins, 1992, p. 66). The imposition of bodily *hexis* through peer groups, family relationships, and the school system are frequent recurrences in the narratives of individuals who identify as sexual and gender minorities.

Family members in particular try to instill "correct" bodily dispositions. This can also involve seeking corrective treatment from doctors or faith healers in rural areas for relatives who identify as a sexual and gender minority, and this can be particularly severe. The following interview excerpt illustrates one such case:

> "The first thing is that for most people who are born in an LGBTI category, the family does not accept them. Most now feel that that if a person is born as a son they should continue behaving as a son. If they see *the gestures of a woman, they think it is unnatural, something artificial that cannot be. They think that it should change*. They are subjected to mental and physical torture and are taken to a doctor. We have had situations like that. And on not being able to get a cure from the doctor, we have instances of them being sent to *dhaami* and *jhaakri* [faith healers]. If their internal desire...if they do not want to change themselves, no doctor, *dhaami*, or *jhaakri* can cure that."
> (Ishwari Prasad Sigdel, field supervisor, 6.8.2014)[21]

7.1.3 Constraints and freedom for the expression of sexual and gender roles

Whereas the first theme (1) was related to the expression of gender identity or sexual orientation, this theme relates to being able to perform the gender role that one feels comfortable with. On reading and listening to the narratives of individuals who identify as sexual and

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[21] This interview was conducted by Laxmi Nepal, journalist, Pahichan Radio Program, 6.8.2014.

gender minorities, it became apparent that they frequently expressed their experiences of being unable to perform the gender (and sexual) roles that they wanted to perform, and when they did, they were criticized, objectified, ostracized, or penalized for doing so.

The freedom, or lack of it, for LGBTI people to perform sexual and gender roles is also structured by the dominant gender scheme. This means that the dominant gender scheme is internalized by LGBTI people as learned gender roles and required skills. This issue can also be understood through the sexual division of labor (Bourdieu, 2001). However, as sexual and gender minorities do not fit with the male–female gender binary, conflicts in their adopted social roles and possessed skills can result. A transgender individual talked about some conflicts faced while performing tasks assigned based on biological sex:

> "In the villages, when a boy is around 12, he starts ploughing the field with an ox and clears the dung. My father used to scold me a lot…that I was grown up now and should also start ploughing the field…but I could not. Once, when I was ploughing, the soil was so tough and the rocks so heavy that I kept on thinking that I probably cannot work to survive. When the ox pulled hard, all the time I was thinking, 'Why is it like this? Why cannot I even do such a simple thing?'" (Nabin Kumar Baiba/Anjali Lama (adopted name), 19.09.2014)[22]

Additionally, the expected gendered roles propagated by the dominant gender order often conflict with the bodily and mental dispositions of LGBTI people. The confusion in establishing one's own sexual and gender roles is the subject of the following narrative:

> From when I was small, my nature was like that of a woman. From when I was a child, I liked to put on nail polish, wear my mummy's *saree shawl* [a sort of scarf]…In school, I also did not talk with many people because I had a low voice, and people used to comment on my voice saying that it was similar to a woman's. Everybody, including teachers and classmates, used to

[22] Interview conducted by Ambika Dahal, journalist, Pahichan Radio Program, 19.09.2014.

> harass me. I felt sad about it because at that time, I was also not clear about my identity. I did not know I was like this. I thought that maybe it was just me. Well, I have the organs of a man, but why do I feel like wearing women's clothes? Why am I attracted to the same sex? I had those kinds of feelings. From when I was child, I had the feelings and soul of a woman. (Angel Lama, Miss Pink 2018, 7.05.2018)[23]

7.1.4 Invisibilization from social life

When reading and listening to the narratives of LGBTI individuals, it became clear that they were excluded from many entitlements and social activities purely due to their gender identities and sexual orientations. This leads to them perceiving that they are worth less than "ordinary" members of society and unjustly discriminated against.

The orthodoxy of the gender binary has the insidious effect of making individuals who do not conform to the male–female dichotomy invisible in public life. This invisibilization refers to situations where some social categories are denied a legitimate public existence. The invisibilization process primarily occurs through the lack of acknowledgement and recognition by the law (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 119). In the case of sexual and gender minorities, a lack of acknowledgement in the legal sphere has real consequences for their day-to-day lives. For example, one intersex person conveyed the following:

> "I am Eshan Regmi, an intersex person. Until I was 12-13, I was raised as a girl. My official name is Parvati Kumari Regmi [a feminine name]. When I was 13 and I had this sort of physical characteristics…after that my chosen name was Eshan Regmi. In my passport, citizenship, and educational certificates, everywhere the name is Parvati Kumari Regmi. Because of this, wherever I go to apply for jobs, I cannot get it. I have not been able to drive any vehicle because I have not been able to get my license. If I earn some wealth, I want to make it in my own name, but I cannot. I have to disclose my identity as Parvati Kumari Regmi. The name that I use to introduce myself [Eshan]

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[23] This interview was conducted by Madhav Dulal on May 17 2018 in a program held as part of the International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO).

> is officially mentioned nowhere. I have thus faced so many problems that despite being a citizen, I am living my life as a non-citizen." (Esan Regmi, Samakon panel discussion, episode 59, 08.14.2015, Kathmandu)[24]

Furthermore, social institutions are set up based on the dominant gender-classification scheme, so gender taxonomies are also inscribed in objective social structures. Such categorization schemes can lead to the invisibilization of sexual and gender minorities when it comes to services from various social institutions. For example, one individual narrated the following:

> "Still if a homosexual or a transgender person has to visit hospital for treatment, there are problems there also. When we fill in the form, there are only two options: male and female. For a transgender like me, if I have to go there for treatment due to some injury, where do I fill in my name? The doctors do not treat me in most cases, and they are a bit afraid and shocked because most of the physicians do not have knowledge about us. And perhaps in many cases, they just pretend to be unaware of such things. Sometimes I feel a bit scared if I get seriously sick. There are wards for males and females in hospitals, but I am a transgender." (Bhumika Shrestha, transgender activist, Himalayan Television, "Focus of the Day" 17.5.2012)

Similar to what occurs in healthcare systems, there are several other instances of how the established gender-classification schemes have rendered sexual and gender minorities all but invisible in educational institutions. The following narrative exemplifies the invisibilization of sexual and gender minorities in the educational sector:

> "There were some incidents when we [an LGBTI advocacy organization] took transgender people to get admitted to university. Their citizenship cards showed their names as "males," and [because of that] they would be cross dressing. Their reality and citizenship documents were different, and because of that, in many cases the administration department did not want to admit them. Even if they got admitted in a few cases, they would not be eligible for scholarships. Many people from other marginal communities

[24] The host of this televised panel discussion was Nirmala Sharma (original in Nepali, my own translation).

> are eligible for scholarships, but students from our community [LGBTI] are discriminated against. There is also discrimination from teachers. Where should we be seated in the classroom, in the exam halls [where seats are assigned by gender]. Another issue is related to the curriculum at the educational level, because there are only stories about males and females, even Dalits [so-called 'untouchables' in the Hindu caste hierarchy] stories are there, so why not include a story related to a transgender?" (Roshan Mahato, Himalayan Television, "Focus of the Day" 17.5.2012)[25]

When dominated categories are refused a legitimate public existence through invisibilization, a form of symbolic violence is perpetrated against them (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 119).

What is more, the pressure to hide one's own sexual and gender identity can intensify in the public sphere when the LGBTI movement demands visibility in public. In such a situation, the dominant groups may directly or indirectly demand "submission" and insist that the dominated groups "ought" to observe their standards. For example, the following narrative recounts the experience of a male-to-female transgender individual. Clearly the public transport conductor implicitly demands suppression of the individual's identity by not 'walking openly'.

> "Once I was on public transport, travelling to my office, and I could see people staring at my physique and appearance. They could perhaps figure out that I was a transgender. When I was about to get off the microbus, the conductor said, 'These kind of *Chakkas*[26] have also started to walk openly.'"
>
> (Sangita, male-to-female transgender)[27]

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[25] This was part of a televised panel debate on the Focus of the Day program, Himalayan Television, hosted by Sunil Babu Pant on the occasion of the International Day Against Homophobia on 17.5.2012.

[26] There is no direct translation for the term *Chakka* in English. It is a derogatory term used to denote an effeminate male, but it is often wrongly used to denote male-to-female transgender individuals.

[27] This interview was conducted by Eirin Winsnes Isaksen.

7.1.5 The body as a source of stigma

Whereas the previous theme (3) reflected on expected bodily conduct and behavior, this theme relates to the stigma associated with the particular sort of body that is possessed, thus leading to experiences of discrimination. While bodily dispositions are related to "appropriate" conduct, this theme focuses on the body itself as a marker of identity. Just like one may notice a body of a particular race, one may notice a transgender or intersexed body. Whereas bodily conduct performances can be modified, albeit with some difficulty in some cases, a person is born with a certain body and its identity markers. Reading and listening to the recounts of individuals who identified as a sexual or gender minority, it gradually became clear how a person's body can act as a marker for a particular sex or gender. In other words, this theme relates to how embodied aspects of sex or gender act as differentiating markers that in turn lead to experiences of discrimination for LGBTI individuals.

In the case of sexual and gender minorities, the physical body itself becomes the source of stigma and symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2001). Not conforming to the notion of the perceived ideal biological body as "male" or "female" can lead to LGBTI people being marginalized in their day-to-day lives. For instance, one intersex individual expressed the following:

> "I reached puberty when I was in grade five. At this point, there were drastic changes in my appearance as I started growing facial hair. This was difficult as my friends started teasing me, calling me different names and using bad language, calling me things like *Hijara*.[28] They saw me as a bad omen and often used to say to me and others that I must be expelled and sent to a faraway land." (Kamala Guragain, Jhapa)[29]

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[28] The word *hijra* directly roughly translates as "eunuch," but it is often used as a derogatory term to denote an effeminate or feminine male.

[29] Narrative published in *Stories of Intersex People from Nepal. Kathmandu* (2016).

In some cases, the stigma attached to the physical body can also inhibit the life opportunities of sexual and gender minorities. More specifically, a gendered body as a form of capital exhibits some degree of convertibility with other kinds of capital, such as economic capital. A body that visually accords with heteronormative ideals is privileged, while one that does not has a reduced ability to accumulate other forms of capital. Negative body capital can lead to being deprived of cultural and institutional resources (Connell & Mears, 2018). One transgender reflected on this:

> "I wanted to support myself financially, and despite having qualifications, in most of the places, [I was told] you are like a girl…you are a male, but you dress up like a female, you behave like a girl. We cannot provide you work here. I was rejected from many places. That is why it was also difficult for me to get work. Everywhere I went to work, I had to hear why I am like a girl and why do I behave like a girl? They [the employers] would keep me for 1-2 weeks max. I was completely depressed about my identity by then and the lack of acceptance." (Anjali Lama, Miss Pink 2018)[30]

7.1.6 Constant societal gaze

This theme deals with the "othering" process that is faced by individuals who identify as sexual and gender minorities in their everyday lives. On reading and listening to the narratives of LGBTI individuals, it became clear how, for various reasons, they are constantly "objectified" in the public domain. Such an objectification process in the public domain leads to feelings of being a less-than-equal member of society and being discriminated against.

In the context of masculine domination, women are viewed as symbolic objects whose being (*esse*) is being perceived (*percipi*). This constitutes a relationship of symbolic dependence where women constantly judge themselves through the masculine lens of perception (Bourdieu,

[30] This interview was conducted by Madhav Dulal on May 17, 2018 in a program held on the occasion of the International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO).

2001). It is possible to infer a similar form of symbolic dependence where sexual and gender minorities feel that a constant societal gaze is upon them, so they strive to embody the physical ideals established by the heteronormative order. Constant objectification and the resulting anxiety due to perceived shortcomings in realizing this bodily ideal are recurring everyday experiences for LGBTI people. The anxieties faced by the dominated are sometimes referred to as symbolic alienation (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 38).

One transgender individual who won the Miss Pink beauty pageant, which was organized by the NHS in 2017, reflected on this:

> "Since we transgender women have quite a different exterior, the stares of the people in the streets and occasional harassment are common. We were born as male, so even though we are in female garb, obviously we do not look like a woman by birth. We have to use hormones and stuff. At the beginning stage, when we are using hormones, male characteristics are apparent. People look at us in a negative way. For example, when they [some friends] were buying watermelons in Pasupathi [a place in Kathmandu], the shopkeeper just stared at them and did not sell them watermelons because they were transgender. It still exists in society. Staring at us from top to bottom. They also ask questions, which hurts a bit. Like they ask in public how our genitals look. Like where we go when we need to use toilets. Do our family members accept us? How do you feel when you wear these clothes? If transgender person gives birth to a child, will it also be a transgender? It hurts a bit." (Angel Lama, Miss Pink 2018)[31]

Being constantly externally judged and feeling a need to comply with dominant perceptions leads to sexual and gender minorities engaging in bodily modifications or *cosmesis*. The maintenance and transformation of the body is a major component of the gendered disposition. In most cases, individuals go through cosmesis due to "mimetic suggestions," "explicit injunctions," or the symbolic order designating a particular view of the biological body (Bourdieu, 2001, pp. 54-55).

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[31] This interview was conducted by Madhav Dulal, journalist for Pahichan Radio Program on May 17, 2018 as part of the International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO).

The issue of hormone use by transgender individuals in Nepalese society is related to such bodily manipulation. While it is the right of individuals to seek an exterior that accords with their internal feelings, cosmesis remains a product of the dominant symbolic order because it responds to a desire by the dominated to confirm to the expectations of the dominant gender order. However, there are also objective consequences in the social world. As Pinky Gurung, the then executive director of the NHS and a transgender individual, reflects:

> "The hormones that transgender people are taking is having negative effects on their health. Neither is there any clinic issuing hormone therapy, neither are there any counsellors, nor are there doctors providing proper prescriptions for medicines. People are just taking medicines blindly without any kind of awareness about how much hormones should be taken, how they should be taken, and what kind of lifestyle and diet should one have. Without being aware of such issues, most of the transgenders are taking male or female hormones since we have different internal feelings than our biological sex, *since we desire to live with an external appearance that matches our internal feelings and gender identity*... I do not ask people to stop taking hormones. It is also a matter within our rights, but while we think about our rights and external appearance, we also do not want to have a negative impact on our health." (Pinky Gurung, 5.09.2014)

7.1.7 Self-denigration

On reading and listening to the narratives of individuals who identify as sexual and gender minorities, it became clear that due to constantly experiencing social marginalization, these people somehow managed to psychologically internalize feelings of inferiority. It was also apparent that the LGBTI individuals had internalized the dominant gender taxonomy and applied it to themselves in some ways, whether consciously or subconsciously, further contributing to their own domination. Moreover, several individuals also recounted their experiences of "losing their agency," such that they deemed themselves incapable of effecting significant changes to attain social equality and justice. This theme explores these experiences.

Individuals who belong to a stigmatized social category and face real or symbolic everyday violence often accept the dominant categorization scheme and apply it to themselves. This phenomenon is sometimes referred to as the "destiny effect" (*amor fati*), and this sometimes results in "shame of the habitus" for those belonging to a dominated category (Bourdieu, 2001).

In the research context, several LGBTI individuals had internalized the view that they were unnaturally engaged in sinful activities. For example, one health officer observes the following about LGBTI visitors:

> "I also realize it when I talk to various people here [in hospital]. People who come from the [LGBTI] community also take it as a perversion (*Vikriti*). It is not a virtuous act and consider it as a sin (*paap*). There are also people in the [LGBTI] community like that. I do not think they are trying to make an effort to be homosexuals. I think it is natural; everybody thinks in a different way..." (Karuna Bajracharya, Public Healthcare Officer, 5.8.2014)

In most situations, LGBTI people cope with their life situations by resigning themselves to their sense of destiny. In the research context, many sexual and gender minorities use the Hindu/Buddhist concept of *karma* to make sense of their predicaments, which are not of their own choosing. A professional transgender dancer illustrated this as follows:

> "From dancing, well, sometimes there is profit, enough to survive, but even worse is how I have to face stigma and bullying. That hurts a bit. Sometimes, I think what kind of *karm*a I have committed in the past to have ended up being like this, but then I also think what to do. It's not even the fault of the one in the heaven; maybe whatever he is doing it is for the best" (Sapana, Dancer, 15.07.2014).[32]

In summary, the main challenges faced by sexual and gender minorities due to the dominant gender order are a) constraints on the expression of gender and/or sexual identities, b) constraints on bodily dispositions, c) constraints and freedom for the expression of sexual

[32] This interview was conducted on 15.07.2014 by Pradip Yadav, journalist.

and gender roles, d) invisibilization from social life, e) body stigma, f) constant societal gaze, and g) self-denigration. Each of the issues have been discussed in this section.

7.2 Comparing analytical subgroups of sexual and gender minorities

Earlier, in Section 6.1, four analytical categories of sexual and gender minorities were identified: AMGB (assigned male, gay or bisexual), AMTG (assigned male, trans-gender), AFTG (assigned female, transgender), and AFLG (assigned female, lesbian or gay). Further analysis in Section 7.1 revealed that LGBTI people face seven salient issues due to the orthodoxy of the gender binary: constraints on the expression of gender and sexual identity, constraints on bodily disposition, constraints and freedom for the expression of sexual and gender roles, invisibilization from social life, body stigma, constant societal gaze, and self-denigration.

We now subsequently need to assess whether the generic dispositions of LGBTI people are equally descriptive for the four identified subgroups. Some aspects of this matter were already considered in Section 6.2 through correspondence analysis, but correspondence analysis has limitations in terms of uncovering the subjective experiences of different LGBTI subgroups. This section therefore expands on the preliminary analysis presented in Section 6.2 by comparing how the various factors that comprise gendered dispositions are experienced by the four different groups. This analysis is based on biographical accounts, narratives, and previously available interviews with LGBTI individuals.

The key issues are presented in Appendix 7 in a 4 x 15 table, where the salience of 15 issues, including the seven given above, combined with socioeconomic indicators and experiences of discrimination, are presented in a table for cross-comparative purposes. The analytical

methods used to generate this table have already been explained in Section 5.3. To recap the aim of the qualitative analysis, however, it was performed on data gathered from biographies, narratives, and interviews to understand the issue at hand. The purpose of such analysis here is to comparatively assess the experiences of discrimination faced by the previously identified LGBTI subgroups in various social contexts.

A table was created in an Excel spreadsheet. Based on biographical data and respondent narratives, all possible properties that characterize different gender groups were exhaustively and indiscriminately identified. Each identified property for a single group was compared across all groups to determine if it was present or absent, so that redundant properties could be deleted. This meant that *only* functionally equivalent properties that appeared across all, or at least most, gender groups, and thus provided the maximum number of differences between gender groups, were retained. In this way, the different phases collectively helped to delineate discriminating but functionally equivalent properties of different gender groups as contributing to various experiences of discrimination in different social contexts.

To understand the differences that exist among the different subgroups of sexual and gender minorities, it was first necessary to understand the basic differences between the binary gender categories (i.e., "male" and "female") in the context of Nepal. Indeed, the inequalities between the traditional "male" and "female" genders and the persistence of masculine domination in society has significant implications for all the subcategories of sexual and gender minorities.

Nepal ranks 147th out of 189 countries[33] in the 2019 Gender Inequality Index, which compares reproductive health, empowerment, and economic activities between genders (UNDP, 2019). Furthermore, even

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33 https://kathmandupost.com/editorial/2019/12/12/gender-inequality-continues-to-plague-nepal

though all forms of gender discrimination were formally abolished in the Nepalese Constitution, females are generally treated as second-class citizens due to the patriarchal structure of society. The difference in the literacy rates of men and women is 17.7%. Women also suffer more instances of sexual violence than men, and it is common for women to die during pregnancy due to a lack of proper healthcare facilities. The preference for sons over daughters is also evident given the increasing rate of female feticide in the country (United Nations, 2018).

Hence, due to these long-standing gender inequalities, any category that is perceived to be "male," such as the AMGB and AFTG groups, may be privileged in various societal contexts. In contrast, any sexual or gender minority category that is perceived as being "female," such as the AMTG and AFLG groups, may be less privileged.

The desire for sons and the associated social prestige *(ijjat)* (United Nations, 2018) is a major factor in determining the gender identity of those who are born with indeterminate sex. Intersex individuals have characteristics that do not fit with the gender binary, so it is often up to parents and other family members to "determine" the gender of the newborn baby. In that respect, societal relations participate in constituting and defining the gender identity of an individual born with indeterminate sex. In such cases, the "male" identity tends to be preferred. In one of the narratives, an intersex individual talked about this:

> "When I was born, my body had sex characteristics that they could not distinguish as male or female. My parents had a daughter already…there was a desire to have a son. As a result, my family used to call me 'son' but my name is Archana [a feminine name]" (Archana Pokharel, Udaypur)[34]

Families and society tend to prefer a "male" in cases where the sex of a newborn is unapparent. Consequently, it became evident from

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[34] Narrative published in *Stories of Intersex People from Nepal. Kathmandu* (2016).

several analyzed narratives in this study that when a biological "male" transitions gender (the AMTG subgroup), it is associated with greater social stigma in the form of a loss of family *ijjat*. A journalist mentioned the following:

> "If you have a boy baby, the whole family is happy. They go and celebrate the son. If it is a girl, it is very bad. They have to give some dowry and other things. Then, of course, it's a very bad thing for a family if a son wants to be a girl" (Journalist in his 30s).[35]

Particularly in the Nepalese context, the inheritance of a name, land, and other property is patrilineal, and male descendants are obliged to guarantee the continuity of this patrilineage (Höfer, 2004). This male responsibility to perpetuate the patrilineage means that male-to-female transgender individuals can face considerable discrimination from other family members. Most individuals in the AMTG category are disinherited as punishment. As one AMTG person narrates:

> "I was born a son. I have never been home with women's clothes like I do here [outside home]. All of my desires are that of a female, but to play the role of a male in society is very conflicting and difficult. This person is a transgender; he will not ever get married…since he is not going to get married to a female, why would he need to inherit property? I have been left with a choice of either marrying a female or giving up my inheritance. Since I am not attracted to females at all, how can I ruin that women's life?" (Anonymous, Samakon panel discussion, episode 59, 08.14.2015)[36]

The loss of family *ijjat*, the associated social stigma, and the pressure to guarantee continued patrilineage, as discussed earlier, has led to several homosexual males (AMGB) being pressurized into sham marriages. One such homosexual individual narrated the following:

> "I feel guilty for lying as I have pretended to be a heterosexual all my life. I

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[35] This interview was originally conducted by Eirin Winsnes Isaksen.

[36] The host of the televised panel discussion was Nirmala Sharma, original in Nepali, my own translation.

have a wife, and she hardly has any clue about my orientation. Neither, can I say I have attraction for the same sex nor can I control my behavior. Our life is like a drama as depending upon the situation, we need to act. For instance, I have two identities: that of a heterosexual man and that of a homosexual man. To meet the role of two different identities, I have two different cell phones and two different voices. Now imagine how difficult it is for me to maintain these two complex identities. Until now, I have managed, but I don't think I can take this much longer" (Saurav, gay man)[37]

However, when people in the AMGB and AFLG subgroups are socially pressurized into sham heterosexual marriages, it can lead to several unintended consequences. The effects are not only felt by the AMGB and AMLG parties—they also have consequences for the unwitting heterosexual individuals in the relationship, such as a heterosexual male who marries a pressurized AFLG individual or a heterosexual female who marries a pressurized AMGB individual. As one AFTG reporter states:

> "In the society and family also, there is a concept that women should love a male and be married to a male, and they are also married against their will. In cases where lesbians do not even feel like being touched by a male, day and night their whole life is unbearable; it's like daily rape. That is their lives…This is the case with lesbians. The straight male is also not happy, because he is looking for a female, a heterosexual female. The kind of behavior, character that the male is looking for in the female…a lesbian cannot provide…so he is also not happy. It's the same with a gay male. The gay male is not attracted to the female at all, but he has been married against his will by the family. There is a wife at home, but for his happiness, he is making friends outside. That woman who is married to this man, whatever she expects from a boyfriend or a husband, she is not going to get it. The first story there is the lesbian woman suffering. Second is the women who is in a married relationship with a gay male, and that women is everyday devoid of love from her lover or husband. These are the stories of two women, even the heterosexual women who has been forced into a married relationship with the gay male is living a life full of pain and suffering." (Bishnu Adhikari, Female to Male transgender, Pahichan Radio Program, 31.7.2014)

[37] This interview was originally conducted by Eirin Winsnes Isaksen

The CEDAW convention report also mentions that because of the deep-rooted patriarchy and the consequently unequal power relationships between men and women, the family and society control and monitor women's bodies and sexuality throughout their lives. In Nepali society, the social prestige (*ijjat*) of the family also depends on how women in the family exhibit moral, sexual, and social decorum (United Nations, 2018). This means that women are expected to dress and act in a modest fashion and participate in an arranged marriage at an appropriate age. It also means that there are restrictions on women's mobility in public at certain times. Due to all these reasons, lesbians (AFLG) face a double whammy of discrimination and restrictions in society, first as a "female" and second as a sexual and gender minority. As one AMTG mentions:

> "It's more difficult for lesbians, because they are also discriminated against on the basis of their gender. Even for transmen who are seen as men and transwomen who are biologically male, it may be easier to leave the home." [Transgender (MTF) in her 30s]

On the one hand, mobility is restricted for female individuals and hence there are fewer possibilities for AFLG people to explore their sexuality. On the other hand, due to male privilege, AMGB people are freer to explore their sexuality, even in cases when they are already in heterosexual relationships. As one AMGB person narrates:

> "Gay men have easier lives than lesbians because they are men. In our society, men have more mobility. They can go out of the home and socialize, but women do not have that possibility. That is the reason why the areas in Thamel [a popular part of Kathmandu city] are more for transwomen and gay men. But there are places, such as the army and the police, where there are less gays but more lesbians." [Gay man in his 30s]

The preceding observations indicate that when a biological female transitions to a transman, it is generally more acceptable. As indicated already, compared to heterosexual females and lesbians in general, transmen have greater mobility.

Additionally, due to the preference for sons in Nepalese society and the associated male privilege, the AFTG category may face less discrimination in society. As an AFTG in the following interview revealed, in comparison to AMTG individuals, this person experienced less discrimination:

> "From when I was small, my parents had one son and five daughters. My father always thought that the next one born will be a son when I was in the womb. Since I was born, I was always treated like a son, and I have acted as a son in taking care of my parents. After I was 14-15 [years of age], I wore shirts and trousers. I never wore frocks. My parents used to call me *'Kancha'* [male little one, as opposed to the feminine noun *Kanchi*] from when I was small. Everybody knows me in my village as '*Kancha.'* Nobody has derided me as a homosexual, a girl, *chakka,* or a *hijada*. Compared to others [from the LGBTI community], I had no difficulties at all. With my current partner also, there is no discrimination from my partner's family or mine. When my father died, he divided all the ancestral property among my deceased brother's three sons and me." (Milan Bastola, Jeevan Sathi Program, Himalaya Television, Malvika Subba, 18.08.2017)

One would imagine that due to the persistent masculine domination in society, individuals belonging to the AMTG group, when considered as equivalent to biological females, would be in a subjugated relationship with their partners. However, it is interesting that when biological males express themselves as transwomen, they have more freedom to define their gender roles, perhaps even more so than biological females do in heterosexual relationships. They do not necessarily need to adopt the role of a subordinate woman, as would be customary in a heterosexual relationship. The first AMTG to officially marry a biological male in Nepal defined her gendered role as follows:

> "In our Nepali society, just because somebody is somebody's wife, they automatically treat them like women. It should not be like that. Sometimes, I also share my knowledge with my husband. I have never learned to cook in life. I do not know how. I also learned to wear *sari* [a traditional women's dress] just the other day. When I go to my home, my sister prepares food for me. I somehow compensate for that. When he [her husband] comes to

> Tikapur [a place in Southern Nepal] he prepares food, but I wash dishes. I wash his clothes and socks, but only he cooks. What to do I cannot. Instead of that, I do many other things." (Monika Shahi, 23.6.2018, Naresh Phuyal, Pahichan Radio Program)

There is a similar ambiguity about gendered tasks in an AFTG household, as expressed by a lesbian couple:

> "We do not really have any definite roles set out for each other. Whoever can do." (Milan Bastola/Nirmala Bastola, Jeevan Sathi, Himalaya Television, Malvika Subba, 18.08.2017)

It is apparent from the above discussion that the situations faced by AMTG and AFTG individuals are more severe than those of AMGB and AFLG individuals. In other words, as long as the individuals are perceived as biological "male" or "female," they face fewer constraints.

On the other hand, transgender individuals (AMTG/AFTG) who are not perceived as biological "males" or "female" face severe constraints. The major cause is perhaps the noticeability of their transgender identity and the associated stigma, as explained by a field supervisor for an NGO involved in LGBTI rights:

> "We can already notice transgender people from afar. Inside this [LGBTI community] there are also gays, bisexuals, etc. It is very difficult to recognize homosexuals from afar; we can only know them from their behavior. Some disclose their identity slowly. Some people disclose partially. Some people never open at all. They only open up with the field staffs but otherwise to nobody else. Considering transgenders, they are way behind the MSMs in terms of education. *Since trans-genders can be identified from afar, they face more discrimination*, even from their families; since you are like this, you have no need for education. Since they are not that well educated, subsequently, they have fewer opportunities for employment. Because of his, they have to do anything to survive. That is why they are even more prone to HIV. They are taking up sex work more often." (Iswari Prasad Sigdel, Field supervisor, BDS branch office, Morang, 6.8.2014", Laxmi Nepal)

It is perhaps because a transgender identity is highly visible that individuals belonging to the AFTG and AMTG groups face greater discrimination compared to other subgroups of the LGBTI community. These subgroups have a greater level of stigma attached to their physical bodies, prompting a constant need for associated bodily modifications. They also have to face constraints in their bodily dispositions and the resulting pedagogical interventions. By not identifying as either a biological male or female, transgenders are also invisible when it comes to social services and legal provisions. They are also constantly subjected to societal gaze. Several of the instances discussed here have already been illustrated in Section 7.1.

As already discussed, transgender individuals face numerous constraints when expressing their gender identity. Moreover, they also face similar constraints on expressing their sexuality. In the Nepalese context, a “male” and a “female” can customarily only be openly physically affectionate with each other on becoming engaged or married, with there otherwise being a large degree of segregation between these genders in society. The intermingling of these genders is naturally low, because females are expected to exhibit moral, sexual, and social propriety, and males therefore have less access to females (Tamang, 2003).

Paradoxically, this gender segregation in public has facilitated same-sex bonding and normalized public physical intimacy between people of the same sex. Such a behavior is referred to as homoaffectionalism (Tamang, 2003). It is not being argued that gender segregation leads directly to homosexual behavior, but the normalization of same-sex bonding may perhaps facilitate expressions of homosexuality, particularly for AMGB and AFLG individuals. By extension, greater gender segregation and the stigma attached to public displays of affection between opposite sexes can be constraining for heterosexuals and transgender individuals (AMTG and AFTG). This is evident in the

narrative of one bisexual individual (AMGB):

> "If we live as a couple, it is not very easy. But a man and woman who hold hands will be perceived as girlfriend and boyfriend or husband and wife. But when two men are holding hands, only those who know about this homosexual relationship, and those who are homosexual themselves, will understand that these men are gay. Others who do not know will not think about it." (Bisexual man in his 20s)[38]

Not only do transgender individuals face constraints on expressing their gender and sexual identities, they can also be marginalized within the LGBTI community itself. Previous analysis based on the secondary survey in Section 6.2 has already demonstrated that AMGB and AMTG categories are opposites. Objective conditions, such as their level of education and income, clearly distinguish these two categories. Hence, among the narratives available, it is quite common to see some individuals from the AMGB category being derisive toward AMTG individuals. One gay individual had this to say about AMTG individuals:

> "They are just aesthetically unpleasing. It's then very difficult to treat them equally." (Anonymous gay individual, Nepal Minds, 19.01.2018)[39]

The transgender community, however, comprises both the AMTG and AFTG subcategories. Within these two subcategories, it is apparent that AMTG people face more social inequality than their AFTG counterparts. Some reasons for these differences were discussed earlier, such as the general preference for sons in families and the obligation to perpetuate patrilineage.

Delving more deeply, the established symbolic gender order positions the masculine principle as "active" over the female principle as "submissive," so the masculine principle is considered the dominant

[38] The original interview was conducted by Eirin Winsnes Isaksen.

[39] This is an excerpt from a televised program called "Nepal Minds" broadcasted by Ramsar Media Pvt. Ltd. on AP1 HD Channel on 9.1.2018

principle. Manliness and virility are considered points of honor, so one might suppose that MtF transgender people are seen as somewhat sacrilegious, because they are "feminizing" the masculine identity (Bourdieu, 2001) and transgressing the male "active" principle. On the other hand, for AFTG individuals, the reverse is the case. One AFTG individual confirmed this by stating:

> "I can easily go to college and study, because in Nepalese society, even a girl can have short hair and wear pants. However, if a person with a masculine physique wears feminine dress, then it becomes a matter of shame." (Biswas, FtM transgender)

Finally, as a side note, being fully reflexive enough that the issues do not remain on the sidelines, it is important to consider intersex individuals as minorities even within the LGBTI community. Indeed, the LGBTI subcategories identified in this research are not representative of intersexed individuals. This is in fact a reflection of the overall status of intersexed individuals in the LGBTI community and movement, not just in the Nepalese context but also the wider Global South (please refer to Chapter 3 for additional discussions). This suggests that the plight of intersexed individuals as a minority within a minority community warrants further consideration in future research. According to one intersex individual:

> "Wherever I go, all of the issues raised consists of homosexuals and third-gender people, wherever I go. We have very few intersex people, but nowhere do they raise our issues." (Eshan, Samakon panel discussion, episode 59, 08.14.2015)

To summarize, the dominant gender binary scheme explains the various degrees of social inequality faced by the various LGBTI subcategories. Due to the social prestige that is associated with sons and the accompanying male privilege, identities perceived as "males," such as those of AMGB and AFTG people, face less discrimination. Consequently, when biological males transition to transwomen

(AMTG), they are more stigmatized. Individuals who are perceived to be "proper" biological "males" (AMGB) or biological "females" (AFLG) face less social inequality than transgender individuals (AMTG and AFTG). Transgender people have a highly visible gender identity and face associated stigma. Between the AMTG and AFTG categories, however, AMTG people face more discrimination, even from other sexual and gender minorities, and they are perceived as being more unnatural. Finally, intersex individuals tend to be invisible even within the LGBTI community. The following section discusses how the social inequalities faced by all sexual and gender minorities are challenged through an alternate gender categorization scheme and charts the associated classificatory struggles in different social contexts.

7.3 Mapping classificatory struggles across fields

This section transitions from the lived experiences of LGBTI individuals, which are passive in a way, to action for change, specifically what the overall movement has done to change the nature of the LGBTI community's status in society. An analysis of the classificatory struggle in the context of the LGBTI movement of Nepal was conceptualized based on the efforts made in various fields, such as the juridical, bureaucratic, and political contexts, as well as the overall sociocultural context. The results of the analysis suggest that these fields are arranged in a hierarchical order, such that the weight of the classificatory struggles waged in various fields have different significance in terms of effecting real change for the lives of LGBTI individuals. The classificatory struggles waged in the abovementioned four contexts target three dichotomous classificatory schemes: natural/unnatural, human/non-human, and citizen/non-citizen.

To chart the classificatory struggles that LGBTI activists have engaged with in Nepal, archived interviews, biographical accounts, and individual narratives were used as the main sources of data. The analysis owes

much to the conceptual repertoire and "field analysis" methodology of Bourdieu (Grenfell, 2014), because the idea of classificatory struggles occurring across "fields" as efforts to subvert the symbolic order has much to do with an idea that Bourdieu and John Thompson described in their book *Language and Symbolic Power* (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991). However, the four important "fields" and three key dichotomous classificatory schemes were derived inductively from the available data that pertains to the empirical context. The process in which the analysis was performed and the implications of its findings are described in this section as follows: Section 7.3.1 describes the analytical strategy through which the most important fields were "identified." Next, Section 7.3.2 discusses the hierarchies existing among the fields in terms of their importance for significantly influencing the debate about gender taxonomies. Section 7.3.3 then describes the process through which the key debates in classificatory strategies were distilled into three dichotomies. Finally, Section 7.3.4 describes and illustrates a recount of the classificatory struggle in terms of the three dichotomies.

7.3.1 Identification of the key fields

The analytical strategy to derive four key fields and the three key contested taxonomies had already been briefly described in Section 5.3. The key fields were determined as follows: First, key influencers in the policy debate about LGBTI rights were identified based on the data available through televised debates, panel discussions, and archived interviews. Such influencers were identified by recognizing those individuals who had been invited to the *Pahichaan* radio program or who had participated in televised debates and panel discussions. Several key fields were then identified by associating these influential actors with the respective fields in which they operated.

For example, local development officers (LDOs), chief development officers (CDOs), police officers, and such like were identified as working

in the bureaucratic field, because these individuals are responsible for implementing policy changes in practice as government officials. Human rights activists, lawyers, and court justices were classified as representing the juridical field, because these individuals are responsible for deliberating on the legal ramifications of legislation for LGBTI rights. NHS activists, Members of Parliament (MPs), and the leaders of political parties were classified as representing the political field, because these individuals either have some degree of political power or try to influence those who do through lobbying. All other individuals—such as actors, writers, musicians, students, and other "ordinary" citizens who participated in interviews or panel discussions—were classified as belonging to the sociocultural field because they represent the general views of society.

A detailed list of participants, their positions, and their classifications in various fields is presented in Appendix 11. Table 9 gives an aggregate representation of the various 64 participants and their corresponding fields. It shows that the juridical field (7%) is the least represented, while the most represented field is the sociocultural one (45.31%). This is somewhat expected, because many "ordinary" members of society who were asked about LGBTI issues—such as students, hotel proprietors, and so on—are classified as representing the sociocultural field.

Table 9 Number of respondents based on their represented field (see Appendix 11 for a detailed list)

Fields	Number of respondents	% of total respondents
Bureaucratic	13	20.31 %
Juridical	7	10.94 %
Political	15	23.44 %
Sociocultural	29	45.31%

7.3.2 Hierarchies among fields

The positions of the respective fields in relation to the meta-field of power, which refers to the state here, were determined by considering the participants' own accounts of their legitimate authority in establishing gender taxonomies. In several of the interviews/narratives of influential actors, it was possible to understand how they position their abilities to consider and shape the discussion about gender taxonomies. It became quite clear that the ultimate responsibility for deliberating on the issues of gender taxonomies resided with the state and *not* the LGBTI activists:

> "*In any country, there is a state, the government. The main responsibility lies with the state.* From the perspective of human rights, the role of the state is to respect rights, protect them, and fulfill them. Those are the three responsibilities of the state. When we talk about third gender, about the LGBTI community, since the government, the state, has not been able to ensure the rights of the third gender and LGBTI community. The NHS as an organization has grown as a civic society. It has worked for the empowerment of this community, advocating and lobbying for the rights of the community. If the state itself would have ensured such rights, there would not have been much difference if we were there or not. *The main thing is this: Does the state have the will and capacity to ensure the rights of citizens within its scope. We are only helpers; we are not ourselves agents.* We are only helping appendages of the state. We should understand that." (Abhinash Karna, Terai Human Rights Network, Third Alliance, Janakpur/ Bhairawaha, emphasis added)[40]

When it concerns the hierarchy among the four fields, clearly the bureaucratic field, due to the implementation of legal provisions at the local level and the power to achieve actual change for LGBTI individuals, is more "powerful" than the juridical field. The sense that can be derived from several of the available narratives is that even in the face of progressive legal provisions, a failure to implement these changes at the bureaucratic level prevents any substantial change for

[40] Interviewed by journalist Pradip Yadap.

LGBTI individuals. For example:

> "Whatever way it is put in the document [the proposal on same-sex marriage legislation] itself, our conclusion was that same-sex marriage should be allowed. My own opinion was that they are also humans and this entitled to all human rights. But unfortunately, it is still not implemented. We have done the research at the international level. We put in so much effort. We met individuals, their families, and did research with people door to door. I forgot to mention earlier, but we also met with religious organizations and communities. We invited lots of religious communities on the Valmiki campus to discuss the issue. We made presentations. We also took their opinions. *After submission of the report, the issue of implementation. Well, nothing gets implemented in this country. Along with this, there are many other issues which should have been implemented but are not. This issue has also been backlogged*." (Dr. Laxmi Raj Pathak, Committee member to study the possibility of same-sex marriage, as initiated by the Supreme Court Verdict of 2007, emphasis added)[41]

But what leads to the failure to implement important policies that should address LGBTI issues? More often than not, positive legal provisions initiated in the juridical field are "closed down" in the political field—such as in Parliament, the Constitutional Assembly (CA), and such like—so they seldom get communicated as directives or circulars to bureaucrats at the local level who would normally be responsible for implementing these changes in a way that would directly affect LGBTI individuals. For example:

> "It took 6 years [to recommend legalizing same-sex marriage]. If it were only up to us, we could have got it done in 2-3 months. There were lots of elections in between. There was the CA assembly election. There were lots of difficulties in Parliament itself. There was political instability. We did not want to present our report right away. It was a transitional period. There were lots of issues in Parliament, including those of ethnicity, federalism. At that moment, we did not want to add yet another contentious issue. It took us 2-3 months just to get it signed. Then to where should we submit? To whom? We wanted to submit it at the highest level, at that moment, there was the

[41] Interviewed by journalist Madhav Dulal.

> Prime Minister. Unfortunately, the committee could not meet the PM, so it was submitted to the chief secretary, but it was then sent to the women's ministry [from there], because there is no ministry directly involved with gender issues, and only the women's ministry was presumed to have some knowledge. We were asked to conduct a study on this issue again, and again they have also formed a committee to study the issue. It is already the result of such a detailed study. What is there to study still? *The politicians did not have the same understanding [as us]. Most of them thought that this [the possibility of implementing same sex marriage] was a useless study."* (Sujan Panta, lawyer and committee member to study the possibility of same sex marriage initiated by the Supreme Court Verdict of 2007)[42]

The sociocultural field relates to the views of wider society. Despite progressive legal changes, the awareness and acceptance of LGBTI issues is minimal. Most of the public opinions available from the data sources confirm this view. The proponents of the LGBTI movement have also emphasized that real change can only occur once public awareness and acceptance improves. This takes time obviously, but it is not impossible. For example, as one public member mentions:

> "Well, society is made up of individuals like us. It's made up of people. If individuals want to change society, then it can happen. Just by waving a magical wand, of course, there will be no societal change. Societal change is the changing of minds." (Anonymous, Nepal Minds, AP1 HD Channel, 2018)

The conclusion about the hierarchy of the identified fields is that the ultimate arbiter of the gender-classification taxonomies is the state. Any changes must be foremost in the political field, however, and provisions achieved through the juridical route need to be implemented in practice in the bureaucratic field. After these, for the desired changes to become stable, a greater part of society (i.e., the sociocultural field) must accept them.

[42] Interviewed by Madhav Dulal.

7.3.3 Identification of key debates around the tesro-lingi category

The main area where this debate has taken place is the juridical field, where *tesro-lingi* was established as a legal category following a verdict of the Supreme Court in 2007. However, if *tesro-lingi* is to be adopted across bureaucratic agencies, how ought these agencies develop criteria for identifying individuals as *tesro-lingi* for documents and other administrative procedures? Similarly, how are the legal rights granted to the *tesro-lingi* individuals ensured through political processes? Finally, if *tesro-lingi* is to become an acceptable category, how is it going to be institutionalized in the public psyche? These issues are discussed in this section.

If the classificatory struggle to legitimize *tesro-lingi* as a gender category on par with the orthodox gender binary is to be understood, we need to distill the debates waged across different social fields. The essence of a classificatory struggle is to fundamentally problematize the existing social classification schemes (Bourdieu, 1987; Wacquant, 2013). In this case, the classification scheme relates to the dominant gender binary taxonomy and institutionalizes *tesro-lingi* as an alternate gender category. To understand the institutionalization process for *tesro-lingi* as a gender category, it is necessary to chart the classificatory struggles that have been waged in different social contexts.

The previous section explained how four major fields were identified based on the social contexts in which participants in interviews and televised panel discussions were assigned (see Appendix 11). After assigning the 64 different participants to different fields, the narratives/interviews/responses of each participant were used to identify instances where they referred to gender taxonomies. Whenever the participants referred to various dichotomies in the gender nomenclature, it was noted. For example, in the excerpt below, the public health officer

clearly refers to the gender categorization scheme directly and positions LGBTI individuals as unnatural (as opposed to natural) and non-virtuous/*paap* (as opposed to virtuous). This respondent was previously identified as being representative of the sociocultural field:

> "I do not think society *understands the [gender] categorization in the same way in many cases*. It's only been recently that people start to talk about this issue openly. Homosexuals and third gender people also now have started to openly participate in rallies and other programs. I think because of that, a bit of awareness has developed, but many people still do not know about the issue and even if they do, they think of this *as unnatural (bikriti)*. I also realize it when I talk to various people who come here [in the hospital], people who come from the [LGBTI] community also take it as *bikriti*. It is not a virtuous act, *and they consider it paap* [a non-virtuous act]." (Karuna Bajracharya, public healthcare officer, Lalitpur Sub metropolitan, public healthcare office)[43]

There were several instances of categorization acts in the available data. For example, in the excerpt below from a talk with a student, who was previously assigned as a representative of the sociocultural field, the student discusses the opportunities available to LGBTI individuals in the education sector:

> "If there are discriminations in normal schools, perhaps they should be provided with a separate school. The way normal people are separated into quotas in different fields, so they should also be provided with such opportunities. We should behave with homosexuals and third gender people as we behave with normal males and females; they are also humans." (Gynajana Bajracharya, student)[44]

The student again clearly engages in the act of categorization by referring to "homosexuals" and "third gender" individuals as "abnormal" (as opposed to "normal") and "non-human" (as opposed to "human"). Looking at the several instances of positioning LGBTI

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[43] Interviewed by journalist Ambika Dahal.

[44] Interviewed by Sunil Babu Pant on Pahichan TV program, episode 2.

individuals within gender-categorization schemes, a pattern emerged: The dominant view of the gender taxonomies and the positioning of LGBTI individuals in a particular way is not idiosyncratic of only one field. For example, in the excerpt below from an interview with the head of the committee that was formed to investigate legalizing same-sex marriage (juridical field), the use of the human/non-human dichotomy is quite evident:

> "However, the way it is put in the document [the commissioned report on marriage equality] itself, our conclusion was that same sex marriage should be allowed. My own opinion was that they are also *humans* and are entitled to all human rights." (Dr. Laxmi Raj Pathak, Committee member to study the possibility of same sex marriage)[45]

In addition to the dominant discussions about the human/non-human and natural/unnatural dichotomies, in almost all the social contexts, the issue of citizenship rights was also prominent. For instance, the judge responsible for delivering the 2007 verdict on legal recognition of the *tesro-lingi* category discussed his reasoning in a panel discussion on the Samakon TV program:

> "During the [2007] verdict, we gave a broad-minded interpretation. We defined [*tesro-lingi*] in a detailed manner and emphasized the right of individuals to have their own identity. That is admittedly very vague. If we only gave the ruling that they should be granted a citizenship card or driver's license according to their identity, and the CDO [Chief District Office] became limited in those issues only, what could we have done? We must have contingencies for all cases. *The same way that male and female have the right to their own identity and have enjoyed those rights, they should also be able to enjoy those rights. They are also citizens of this country.* There was also the issue of same-sex marriage. We have been very clear in the decision that they should also have the right to same-sex marriage." (Balaram K.C., Justice of the Supreme Court of Nepal, Samakon panel discussion, episode 59)

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[45] Interviewed by Madhav Dulal.

The analysis of the interviews and televised debates and panel discussions were complemented by other legal texts and the archive of Supreme Court verdicts. After repeated readings and analysis, key inscriptions of symbolic gender order in the form of binary classification schemes were identified as citizen/non-citizen, natural/unnatural, and human/non-human. Although several other dichotomies, such as virtuous/perverse, were identified, they did not appear to be commonly reflected in all the fields. Thereafter, the dominant orthodoxies that exists in different fields were identified according to how the actors in their respective fields naturalize their dominant standpoints by taking sides in the binary classification schemes that were mentioned earlier.

The first goal of the classificatory struggle has been to establish *tesro-lingi* individuals as natural, mentally healthy people. The second aim has been to establish *tesro-lingi* individuals as humans who are therefore deserving of basic human rights. The third objective has been to establish *tesro-lingi* individuals as full citizens who deserve the same rights as any other citizen. Hence, by understanding the debates across social fields about the three sets of binaries, it becomes possible to understand the legitimatization process for *tesro-lingi* as an alternate gender category.

In this way, the overall objective of this phase of the analysis was to identify the dominant actors in their fields and the power relations existing therein, followed by mapping the classificatory struggles as actions to sustain or resist gender-related taxonomies across several fields. Based on the archival data, interviews, biographical accounts, and narratives of the respondents, classificatory struggles can be reduced to a set of dichotomies: (1) natural/unnatural, (2) human/non-human, and (3) citizen/non-citizen. The classificatory struggle to establish *tesro-lingi* as an alternate gender category will be elaborated here by referring to existing debates about these three sets of binaries in various social fields, such as the juridical context, the bureaucratic

context, the political context, and finally, the overall socio-cultural context, whenever relevant.

7.3.3.1 Natural/unnatural dichotomy

Tesro-lingi as an alternative gender category has been the dominant orthodoxy in the juridical sphere. Primarily, the National Code (*Muluki Ain*) of Nepal shapes its legal context, and this has gone through three revisions. The first version was introduced on January 5, 1854 (*Muluki Ain 1910 B.S*[46].). In the *Muluki Ain* of 1854, sodomy is considered an offense (Fezas, 2000; Tadié, 2016) in the section related to homosexuality (*gāḍa-* mārā-ko — "On Sodomy"). This is perhaps natural when considering that the main purpose of this legal text was to institutionalize Hindu beliefs and values based on classic normative texts (śāstra) (Höfer, 1979). In general, penalties for engaging in homosexual behavior were severe if the individual committing the offense was an active "sodomite" and belonged to a higher caste order, especially if the act occurred between individuals of disparate castes (Fezas, 2000, pp. 837-841).

The second revision of *Muluki Ain* was published in 1963 (*Muluki Ain 2020 B.S.*). The section related to homosexuality (*gāḍa-mārā-ko*/ "On Sodomy") in the first version was omitted in the revised edition of 1963 (Höfer, 1979). In the first version, the criminality of homosexual relationships in the *gāḍa-* mārā-ko ("On Sodomy") section were defined mostly in terms of the degree of transgression within the caste hierarchy. Before the publication of the second *Muluki Ain* in 1963, the caste system had been legally abolished in Nepal with the Civil Liberties Act of 1955. Hence, one reason for omitting the section related to homosexuality (*gāḍa-* mārā-ko/ "On Sodomy") in the second

[46] Vikram Samvat (abbreviated as V.S. (or VS) or B.S. (or BS) and also called the Bikrami calendar or sometimes just Hindu calendar) is the historical Hindu calendar of India and Nepal. It uses lunar months and solar sidereal years. It is the official calendar of Nepal. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vikram_Samvat

version of *Muluki Ain* (1963) may have been that a large part of the section dealt with the caste system (Höfer, 1979).

Under the statutes of the second revision (*Muluki Ain 1963*), homosexuality was not directly specified or criminalized. However, homosexuality could be interpreted as falling under other unnatural forms of intercourse (*aprākritik maithun*) under the section *Paśu karaṇi* ("On Bestiality"), which mentions in Chapter 16, Number 1:

> No person shall commit, or cause to be committed, sexual intercourse with female cattle, or commit, or cause to be committed, any other *unnatural intercourse*. (*Muluki Ain* 1963 A.D.)

Thus, under the *Muluki Ain* 1963, although homosexuality was not directly specified or criminalized, it could still be interpreted as being an unnatural sexual relationship. What is more, while reading the *Muluki Ain* 1963, it is quite clear that heterosexual relations are privileged, because all forms of conjugal relationship are assumed to be between a male and a female. All issues related to gender and sexuality are defined in terms of the gender binary (son/daughter, husband/wife, etc.) and heterosexual relationships, thus restricting any possibility for a *tesro-lingi* identity. For example, the section on marriage mentions:

> "While contracting a marriage, no one shall arrange to marry nor cause to be married where the *male and the female* have not completed the age of eighteen years." (Chapter 17, On Marriage, Number 2)"

Those opposing the LGBTI movement in Nepal have leveraged long-lasting legal ambiguities about homosexuality and the legitimacy of heterosexual relations in the juridical field. For example, a petition filed in 2004 by a practicing lawyer, Achyut Prasad Kharel, sought to extend the definition of unnatural intercourse to include homosexual relations and therefore position homosexuality as being illegal. The 2004 petition states:

> "In considering the inherent underlying meaning in the phrase 'any other unnatural sexual intercourse' it becomes clear that this section [Section 4 of Chapter 16, Bestiality act from Muluki Ain 1963 A.D.] has incorporated unnatural sexual intercourse to be committed between man and man. *Unnatural sexual intercourse includes homosexual physical relations*. Therefore, Nepal law has forbidden homosexual physical relation. If a serious look is given to the provision of no. 1 of the chapter on "Marriage," it clearly denotes that *marriage will happen only within human beings of opposite sex*. That is to say, man and woman. The right to equality under the sponsorship of a non-government organization called Neel Heera Samaj, which is endeavoring to provide legal recognition for the right to homosexuality. It is necessary to ban paid activities which are prohibited by Nepalese law" (Writ No. 3736 of 2061 BS, 2004: His Majesty's Government, Ministry of Home Affairs, District Admission Office, Kathmandu vs. Achyut Prasad Kharel)[47]

The NHS along with three other LGBT rights organizations (Mitini Nepal, CruiseAIDS Nepal and Parichaya Nepal)[48] jointly filed a written petition in 2007 to counter the arguments for regarding homosexuality as unnatural. The petition focused on presenting homosexuality and the *tesro-lingi* category as natural. The natural/unnatural dichotomy was therefore central to this petition process. The main goal of this petition may indeed have been to argue that people with "unnatural" orientations are actually "natural" people (Tadié, 2016). To do so, the petitioners invoked "rationalizing" arguments (scientifically proven facts) and the global discourse around LGBTI issues (e.g., the report of the World Health Organization) to claim that sexual and gender minorities are in fact natural. The verdict delivered by the Supreme Court in response to the petition focused on similar grounds:

> "Such identities [*tesro-lingi*] of human beings are not hypothetical but a *scientifically proven fact*. Even a *report of the World Health Organization* has acknowledged the existence and birth of such types

[47] The author used the Nepali version, but an English translation is available at https://ilga.org/nepalese-sexual-rights-groups-to-be-banned

[48] All LGBTI organizations operating in Nepal.

> of people. By confirming the existence of such types of people, the report has also emphasized that it is a *natural phenomenon and not a disease*. Despite the fact that the aforesaid persons are *born naturally, the existing society mistrusts their existence in the name of unnatural phenomenon*." [Writ No. 917 of the year 2064 BS (2007 AD)]

The Supreme Court verdict of 2007 thus institutionalized *tesro-lingi* as a natural and legal category. Furthermore, the verdict called for legal reforms to end all discriminatory laws against sexual and gender minorities.

Nepal's Ministry of Law introduced the third revision of the General Code to the country, on October 16, 2017. The entire *Muluki Ain* was replaced with a new body of laws organized into two codes: a criminal code *(Muluki Apradh Samhita Ain, 2017 AD/2074 B.S.)* and a civil code *(Muluki Devani Samhita Ain, 2017 AD/2074 B.S.)*. The new civil code *(Muluki Devani Samhita Ain, 2017 AD/2074 B.S.)*, however, is considered to be regressive because it backpedals on the natural status given to *tesro-lingi* individuals by the Supreme Court verdict of 2007. It does not mention sexual and gender minorities in any of its legal provisions. Furthermore, it legitimates the principle of gender classification to just "male" and "female" and ignores *tesro-lingi* as a gender category. Overall, it strengthens the heteronormative order and perpetuates symbolic violence against *tesro-lingi* individuals through invisibilization. One LGBTI rights lawyer summarized the new civil code as follows:

> "The civil code has completely ignored the issues of LGBTI by simply not mentioning them anywhere. It has recognized two species of humans, male and female, and all the provisions are addressed accordingly. Chapters related to name, individuals' rights, property, and marriage mention only male and female, which goes against the verdict of the Supreme Court." (Advocate Rabin Subedi, 5.8.2015, E-Kantipur)[49]

[49] Available from http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/printedition/news/2015-08-05/civil-code-ignores-lgbti-issues-fails-to-address-2007-sc-verdict.html

Most LGBTI activists feel that both the criminal and civil codes discriminate against the *tesro-lingi* category because it recriminalizes homosexuality and ignores the verdict delivered by the Supreme Court in 2007. This is especially apparent in Article 226 *(Muluki Apradh Samhita Ain, 2074 B.S. 2017 AD)*, which reintroduces the "unnatural sexual intercourse" clause. One of the key figures in the LGBTI rights movement in Nepal, Sunil Pant, said about this:

> "The Supreme Court then also said that LGBTI people are 'natural,' but this new criminal code mentions 'unnatural sex' and [is] *de-facto* saying that sex between same-sex partners is 'unnatural'. I am not sure whether technically this article criminalizes same-sex relationships directly or not, but I see it as an attempt to vaguely recriminalize [it] through the 'back door.' Whatever the legal technicality of this law, this is definitely a backtracked development given all the history of the Supreme Court's 2007 decision and the new constitution's guarantee of LGBTI rights and equality. Why did they think they needed a draconian 'unnatural sexual act law' separately when there is already a rape law that also punishes non-consensual sexual acts? This law makes it sound like having 'natural' sex without consent is okay. Sex without consent is not sex: it's rape. Let alone the question of how they define 'natural' and 'unnatural.'" (Sunil Babu Pant, 15.3.2018, Pahichan Media)

The classification of homosexual relations as natural or unnatural has important implications for the *tesro-lingi* community. The major problem is obviously the term "unnatural," because like with the earlier Country Code (*Muluki Ain*), those opposing the LGBTI movement may use it in an attempt to recriminalize homosexuality. The new Country Code also legitimizes the binary gender division and invisibilizes the *tesro lingi* community, thus opening up legal grey areas for LGBTI individuals.

For example, section 219 of the criminal code supposes that rape can only be perpetrated against a "female." It precludes the possibility of rape against *tesro-lingi* individuals. Similarly, following the Supreme Court Verdict of 2007, a committee was established to study the feasibility of legalizing same-sex marriage in Nepal. In its report

on same-sex marriage, published in February 2015, the committee recommended that Nepal legalize same-sex marriage, ensure family protection for LGBTI individuals, and amend discriminatory provisions in the civil and criminal codes. These recommendations proposed cannot be implemented, however, due to the binary gender division being recognized in the legal codes. One LGBTI lawyer stated:

> "The issue is when the *Devani Samhita* [Civil Code] was legislated by the government, there was a mention of male/female, husband/wife, etc. Just the fact that a *purush pati* [male husband] and *mahila patni* [female wife] are mentioned makes it complicated. The constitution already [eliminated such gender-specific categorization] and the committee already submitted the report [recommending same-sex marriage]. If they had the will to implement same-sex marriage…if they had just mentioned 'person' instead of gender-specific terminologies, everything was already done. In the criminal code [*Muluki Apradh Samhita Ain, 2017 AD/2074 B.S.],* [it] also mentions 'persons' and there is no gender-specific language in there. The legal provisions themselves are somewhat conflicting. It clearly shows that there was no intention of implementing [same-sex marriage] in the first place." (Panel discussion with Dr. Laxmi Raj Pathak, committee member to study the possibility of the same sex marriage and Sujan Panta, LGBTI lawyer, 5.4.2018)

The legitimization of the gender binary through the legal codes affects the lives of *tesro-lingi* individuals in other ways. For instance, an Indian lawyer reflected on some impacts of discriminatory clauses based on the gender binary in the civil code:

> "Let me give you an example. The way that you are introducing the civil code [*Devani Samhita],* there is this chapter of *Dharmaputra/Dharmaputri*[50]… the same people do not want to accept that a *tesro-lingi* person also has the right to be adopted…that this person also has the right to a home or parents. What are the words being used? *'Dharmaputra/Dharmaputri,'* so a *tesro-lingi* who is neither a son nor a daughter, is that person never going to be

[50] The closest translation for the word "Dharmaputra" is "adopted son" and Dharmaputri" is "adopted daughter." The lawyer is referring to *Muluki Devani Samhita Ain, 2074 B.S. 2017 AD, Appendix 8, Article 169i*, which mentions these words.

> adopted? Will that person live in an orphanage forever?" (Aditya Bandhu Upadhya, Indian Lawyer, 22.09.2014)

Although recent legal developments have been considered setbacks in the LGBTI movement, *tesro-lingi* is still established as a legal category in the juridical field. However, the perception of *tesro-lingi* as an unnatural gender category persists in several other social fields.

In the bureaucratic sphere, the perception of *tesro-lingi* as a deviant category has been the conservative view. For instance, when registering the NHS, its founder Sunil Babu Pant recalled:

> "Even registering the organization was a problem, as when it came to listing its functions, we could not use the word homosexuality. The clerk at the office looked at the papers and said he could only register the organization if its goal was to convert people back to heterosexuality." (Pant, 10.2.2011)[51]

As a result, as Pant mentions, the NHS started with a vague mission statement focused on public health rather than focusing specifically on LGBTI issues.

What is more, *tesro-lingi* is largely considered an unnatural gender category in the sociocultural context for several reasons. Homosexuality is considered a foreign import rather than an indigenous concept. By extension, organizations promoting *tesro-lingi* issues are considered as acting for foreign governments and INGOs. There is a dominant tendency to associate the term *tesro-lingi* with transgender individuals and the social perversion (*vikriti*) that people believe is being promoted by transgender individuals.

On the other hand, those advocating *tesro-lingi* issues have employed various symbolic strategies to present the *tesro-lingi* category as being natural. They have selectively used Hindu mythologies to argue that

[51] Narrative in a documentary: Journey of a Decade, published on 10.02.2011

there is a traditional acceptance of gender identity beyond the gender binary. Activists have also cited existing customs to argue for traditional acceptance of gender fluidity in society. Each of these issues are briefly discussed in the remainder of this subsection.

There is an existing mindset in the sociocultural context that considers "homosexuals" and "transgenders" as imported foreign notions, so they are therefore non-indigenous and "unnatural." For instance, according to an anonymous respondent on a TV program focused on gay marriage:

> "People say that homosexuals are unnatural: They are untrue and copy foreigners." (Anonymous individual, Nepal Minds, 19.01.2018)[52]

One of the causes for such a mindset is a partial understanding of *tesro-lingi* as a gender category, one that differs from how it is defined in law. The ambiguities mainly originate from a basic problem in equating "third gender" with "transgender," because both literally translate into Nepali as *tesro-lingi*. Hence, the *tesro lingi* category is conflated with "transgender" rather than representing all forms of sexual and gender identity that do not conform to the gender binary, heterosexual norms. Indeed, a variant of male-to-female transgenderism, the *métis*, are considered locally to be producing social perversion *(vikriti)*, so the common understanding of the "third gender" category is prejudiced in Nepalese society and culture. One healthcare officer explained:

> "I do not think *society understands the categorization in the same way* in many cases. It has only been recently that people start to talk about this issue openly. Homosexuals and transgender people now have started to participate in open rallies and other programs. I think because of that, a bit of awareness has developed, but many people still do not know about the issue and even if they did, they think of this as *unnatural*

[52] This is an excerpt from a televised program called 'Nepal Minds' broadcasted by Ramsar Media Pvt. Ltd. in AP1 HD Channel on 9.1.2018

> (*vikriti*)” (Karuna Bajracharya, public healthcare officer, Lalitpur Sub metropolitan, public healthcare office, 5.8.2014)[53]

It is not just laypeople in society who equate the *tesro-lingi* category with unnaturalness and perversion. Due to a lack of focused education on the issue, even medical professionals can consider homosexuality a symptom of a mental aberration. As one transgender narrated:

> “We once had a homosexual friend, and since he had a problem in his rectum, he went for a check up at Bir hospital. It was a while ago, maybe 6-7 years ago, and the doctor asked how he had injuries in such a place, and when he said that he was attracted to the opposite sex and he had a relationship with another male, the doctor was surprised at that time. The doctor was a bit shocked and he referred that friend to a mental hospital. I think it was Patan hospital.” (Bhumika Shrestha, Transgender activist, Himalayan Television, “Focus of the Day” 17.5.2012)

However, Nepal is predominantly a Hindu country where 80% of the population is Hindu and about 10% is Buddhist (Government of Nepal, 2011). References to homosexuality and gender identities beyond the traditional gender binary exist in various Hindu epics. People are familiar with transgender deities such as the *ardhanareshwar*, the merged androgynous form of Hindu deities *Shiva* and *Parvati* (UNDP, USAID, 2014; Knight, 2015). Occasionally, the *Kinnar* from the Tantric tradition is used to signify everything “queer” in nature that does not fit in the traditional binary classification schemes, such as the *tesro-lingi* gender category (Pant, 2015). As one person involved in a non-governmental organization (NGO) working for *tesro-lingi* rights mentioned:

> “In conversations with people who don’t understand, we always try to relate it to the Gods. Shiva was in one story half-man and half-woman. You can talk about these things in a very traditional way and that can help. That’s the way we can talk about it openly and people start to understand—the logic begins with the tradition and then they

[53] Interviewed by Ambika Dahal, Journalist, 5.8.2014.

> conceptualize it that way, we can see that in the conversations we have." (LGBTI organization employee, July 2013)[54]

Similarly, cross-dressing is widely accepted in cultural mores. During the *Gai-Jatra* festival—a traditional *Newari*, one of the common ethnic identities in Nepal, festival to commemorate the dead—cross-dressing is common. Men dressing as women is also common in the *Ropai Jatra* during the monsoon season when crop-planting occurs. When there is a marriage between *Bahun* individuals, the highest echelon of the Hindu caste hierarchy, and *Chettri*, the second-highest echelon of the Hindu caste hierarchy, it is customary for a woman to dress as a man when the bridegroom's party comes to take the bride (Pant, 2015). *Tesro-lingi* activists have used such indigenous cross-dressing mores to argue that gender fluidity has always been considered "natural" in Nepal. For example, Sunil Babu Pant explained the significance of such gender-fluid cultural mores in the Nepalese sociocultural context:

> "...the 'West' calls 'such things' cross-dressing without thinking much of the implication. But for us it is never crossdressing, rather it is a symbol and process of transformation. The young men take hours to put on make-up, wear colorful dresses, long hair, bangles, outlandish traditional jewelries, some also wear masks and most importantly, they practice the effeminate body languages and gestures. The transformation is about liberating yourself physically, intellectually, and emotionally by transforming your presentation, identity, and feelings of who you think you otherwise are..." (Sunil Babu Pant, 26.7.2014)[55]

To summarize, the legitimation of *tesro-lingi* as a natural gender category is largely waged in the juridical field. Those who argue for *tesro-lingi* to be a natural category in the legal sphere have invoked scientific and transnational discourses. Those who oppose this have

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[54] This interview was conducted by Kylie Knight, July 2013.

[55] This was based on an interview conducted by an anonymous Pahichan Media reporter on 26.7.2014. It is available from: pahichan.com/it-is-a-cosmic-dance-not-cross-dressing-understanding-the-culture-and-festivals-of-nepal/

used historical legal frameworks that support the gender binary taxonomy and categorize homosexual relationships as an unnatural form of intercourse.

In the bureaucratic sphere, the struggle continues. In the sociocultural sphere, those who oppose the *tesro-lingi* category as something unnatural have considered it an imported concept perpetuated by foreign organizations for their own ends. Advocates, however, have used cultural logic to legitimize *tesro-lingi* as a natural category by recounting Hindu mythologies that support the *tesro-lingi* identity and gender-fluid traditions.

7.3.3.2 Human/non-human dichotomy

Like with the natural/unnatural dichotomy, LGBTI activists have used the language of human rights in mobilizing discourse to legitimize the *tesro-lingi* category. Those who oppose the movement have argued that human rights cannot be equated with *tesro-lingi* rights and that such rights are not covered by the international treaties on human rights that Nepal has ratified. They claim that even if the country gave such rights, it would only serve the interests of foreign donors and opportunistic local advocacy organizations. In contrast, LGBTI activists have adopted the language of human rights to accelerate contemporaneous changes in the political field as the *tesro-lingi* movement has progressed. These issues are discussed further in this sub-section.

In the juridical context, a petition filed in 2004 by private lawyer Achyut Prashad Kharel argued that *tesro-lingi* rights cannot be equated with human rights. The petitioner claimed that human rights are not the same as "homosexual rights" and that to give such rights would go against the existing legal provisions and activities of the state. More concretely, he argued:

> "Even though the homosexuals have termed the right to homosexuality

> as a human right, in reality, *homosexuality is not a human right*. Indeed, homosexuals are also human beings. Nevertheless, they *have not become human beings by virtue of being homosexuality* [sic]. No international human rights instruments out of the sixteen ratified by Nepal have granted legality to homosexuality. The ICCPR[56] (1966) ratified by Nepal has not incorporated homosexual marriage and relationships." (Writ No. 3736 of 2061 BS, 2004: His Majesty's Government, Ministry of Home Affairs, District Admission Office, Kathmandu vs. Achyut Prasad Kharel)

The petitioner argued that homosexual rights and human rights are not similar, because although homosexuals are human, they did not become human by virtue of being homosexual *per se*. In fact, he cited homosexuality as "a characteristic weakness of human life." Furthermore, he argued that the treaties ratified by the Nepalese Government did not legalize homosexuality, so homosexual individuals were not worthy of human rights related to their sexuality. The logic he put forward was that since the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) implies that a marriage must be between a man and a woman, the spirit of that treaty clearly denies homosexual marriage and homosexual relationships.

In the sociocultural milieu, those who have attempted to tarnish the movement have done so by accusing *tesro-lingi* activists of being the agents of foreign donors and helping them to disseminate a "Western" issue for private gain. The considerable impact of INGOs' funding on promoting human rights has led to "human rights" being regarded as a foreign discourse, and collaborating NGOs are sometimes seen as agents of foreign organizations in the public psyche. Such opinions are quite common among those who oppose the LGBTI movement, as commented upon by one individual:

> "Sunil [Pant, founder of the NHS] felt that there were no third genders in Nepal at that time, so he started an organization. It was his cleverness to

[56] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx)

> start this organization, to attract dollars." (Anonymous individual, Nepal Minds, 19.01.2018)[57]

This individual directly accuses the founder of the NHS, one of the most important LGBTI-rights organization in Nepal, of making a clever move in establishing an LGBTI organization because it made good business sense. The respondent there denigrates the NHS as an opportunistic money-making scheme. Maligning the human rights activists working in various NGOs by accusing them of seeking international funding by exploiting an underprivileged class in the name of human rights is quite common in Nepal. However, this is also a reflection of the widespread corruption that prevails among NGOs in Nepal. For example, the NGO sector has been referred to with terms like "dollar farming," a "begging and cheating bowl," "slave of the foreigners," and "family entrepreneurial endeavors" (Tamang, 2002). What is more, a petition filed to the Supreme Court in 2004 also makes similar claims:

> "The person and organization who publicizes the right to homosexuality as a human right do not possess anything except the bad intention of exploiting the people who are poor, helpless, and neglected after attracting them to homosexuality. This exemplifies how deep down the non-governmental organizations habituating dollar-milking can exploit helpless and poor Nepalese people engaged in homosexuality in the name of human rights, in contravention to the existing acts/law and publicize themselves as human rights activitists." (Writ No. 3736 of 2061 BS, 2004: His Majesty's Government, Ministry of Home Affairs, District Admission Office, Kathmandu vs. Achyut Prasad Kharel)

In reality, however, such claims seem to contradict the funding received for human rights work. Sunil Pant, founder of the NHS, claims that the opposite is the case. Even INGOs were unwilling to equate *tesro-lingi* rights with human rights during the inception of the NHS, which severely constrained its ability to frame *tesro-lingi* rights as human

[57] This is an excerpt from a televised program called "Nepal Minds" broadcast by Ramsar Media Pvt. Ltd. in AP1 HD Channel on 9.1.2018

rights. As he states:

> "For the most part, when BDS [the NHS] was established, it was oriented towards service delivery (e.g. condom distribution and training) and health issues rather than a robust human rights frame-work. Nobody – including the international community – even thought of talking about gay rights at that point, and donors had no policy or funding to support sexuality and gender rights advocacy. The questions around sexual and gender minorities were therefore approached only tangentially. Our initial activities centred onHIV prevention programmes, condom distribution and AIDS activism. " (Pant, 2015)

As the *tesro-lingi* movement progressed, the use of human rights language became increasingly relevant for a number of reasons. The deaths of many ordinary citizens during the Maoist insurgency had highlighted human rights as a matter of genuine concern. Indeed, the escalating human rights abuses committed against sexual and gender minorities during the insurgency by the security forces led to documenting them and advocating *tesro-lingi* rights as human rights (Knight, 2015). The increasing publicity given to human rights abuses by both the Maoist insurgents and the national security forces had garnered international attention and attracted donor support for human rights work. Similarly, the democratic movement that led to the end of the Hindu monarchy, the formation of a new federal republic, and the writing of a new constitution also began a genuine debate about ensuring human rights for all citizens, including the *tesro-lingi* community. As Pant summarizes:

> "During the decade-long armed conflict, many NGOs shifted from basic service provision to more politically salient but controversial rights-based work, including reporting on human rights abuses related to the conflict… By 2004, the people's movement against King Gyanendra and Nepal's monarchical system was fully under way. We therefore built our political consciousness and *made a productive shift from the service provider health paradigm to a human rights activist stance* and decided to join the movement for democracy in Nepal. We were able to join a people's movement for democratization and think about political rights that included

> *all minorities*. The second factor that allowed BDS [the NHS] to push for inclusion of an LGBTI discourse in the social and political sectors in Nepal was the *shift in international funding* and donor-driven development with the opening up of a global discourse on sexual orientation and gender identity…" (Pant, 2015)

There is no doubt that the political changes that were occurring contemporaneously in the national context provided the *tesro-lingi* movement with many opportunities to frame this community's rights as human rights. LGBTI activists therefore strategically used the developing political context to leverage benefits for their own movement. The dissenting voices, meanwhile, seemed to slowly dissipate.

7.3.3.3 Citizen/non-citizen dichotomy

The concrete institutionalization of the *tesro-lingi* category requires that individuals belonging to this category are considered citizens on par with any other citizen of the country. For the adoption of *tesro lingi* as a gender category in bureaucratic agencies, it is first important to practically define the specific criteria for identifying *tesro-lingi* individuals in relation to official documents and other administrative procedures. Promoting the fact that *tesro-lingi* individuals should be considered citizens with the associated citizenship rights has been an important goal of the LGBTI movement across various social fields.

In the juridical field, the petition filed by Achyut Krishna Kharel in 2004 argued that homosexuals were not citizens, and even if they were, they would have a lower standing than citizens with virtuous characters. Just as a murderer in society is regarded as a second-class citizen with restricted rights, homosexuals are also positioned as being lower in status than virtuous citizens, as stated in the petition:

> "Indeed, as they have said, homosexuals are also human beings. Nevertheless, they have not become human beings by virtue of being homosexuality [sic]… understand that *the status of an offender convicted on a charge of murder and a citizen of good characteristics is not equal.* (Writ No. 3736 of 2061

> BS, 2004: His Majesty's Government, Ministry of Home Affairs, District Admission Office, Kathmandu vs. Achyut Prasad Kharel)

The NHS and other organizations responded in a petition filed in 2007 to the Supreme Court as follows:

> "We, the people, based on sexual orientation and gender identity being minority in number, are denied from enjoyment of the rights guaranteed by the Constitution and international human rights laws, and we are compelled to live as *second-class citizens*...The state has not taken any initiative to resolve our problem. The state is responsible to *provide equal status to all citizens* by making sufficient laws in this issue...The writ petitioners further state that there is no doubt that all Nepali citizens have equal standing in the eyes of the constitutional provisions of Nepal and rights enshrined by these provisions..." [Writ No. 917 of the year 2064 BS (2007 AD)]

The use of the label "second-class citizen" is informative because it implies that the rights of sexual and gender minorities are equal to those of the general populace. One particular issue that LGBTI activists have focused on is the right to obtain citizenship documents that reflect self-identified sexual and gender identity. In this matter, the activists further state in the petition:

> "...Police administration and other state mechanisms are not sensitive towards the condition of such [LGBTI] people. Even the officials of the concerned government agencies are also in a dilemma in the matter of issuing citizenship certificates to us, mentioning our sexual identity, because our sexual identity is neither male nor female. We do not want to get a citizenship certificate that indicates other than our identity..." [Writ No. 917 of the year 2064 BS (2007 AD)]

There is a reason why LGBTI organizations have focused on the citizenship certificate as the principal document. In Nepal, a citizenship certificate is the most important document that recognizes citizens as persons before the law. Based on the citizenship certificate, citizens apply for government jobs and pensions, driving licenses, and passports, as well as participate in government-run programs

like secondary school exams and health services. Bank accounts, land inheritance, and voting also require a citizenship certificate. In brief, without a proper citizenship certificate, it is impossible for a person to enjoy all the legally available citizenship rights. (UNDP, USAID, 2014; Knight, 2015)

But why are the existing citizenship certificates so problematic for *tesro-lingi* individuals? Without a gender identity marker other than “male” and “female,” there is inevitably going to be a mismatch between the identity stated in a citizenship document and the self-identified sexual and gender identity of a *tesro-lingi* individual. For example, transgender people often face explicit discrimination because their citizenship certificates do not reflect their self-identified sexual and gender identity. The narrative below illustrates this point:

> “My citizenship card mentions Sanjiv Gurung [a male name]. My passport is also as a male. If I go to the CDO [Chief District Office] to get a citizenship according to my identity, I have to get certified as a *tesro-lingi*. How can I medically certify my internal feelings that I am a *tesro-lingi*? What kind of medical equipment can certify my gender identity? This is absolutely my internal feeling; this is my gender identity.” (Pinky Gurung, Samakon panel discussion, episode 59, 08.14.2015)

Nonetheless, the established gender binary taxonomy has objective consequences for *tesro-lingi* individuals. One of the most serious consequences of having the wrong gender on identity documents is that they are forced to reveal to strangers details about their gender identity and associated aspects of their private lives in many daily transactions. This can make *tesro-lingi* individuals especially vulnerable (Currah & Mulqueen, 2011). This is exemplified in the following narrative:

> “I had to travel to Bangkok. I had a male’s passport, and when I went to Nepal’s airport, if we have any problems we are just a comedy character for them. My passport is that of male, and my getup is that of female. So, when I present my passport, I have to present it to the male police officer in the male line, and when they see my appearance, they do not want to do body checkup.

> They want me to go the female line. And when I go to the female line, they do body checkup but get shocked when they see my male passport. Sometimes male, sometimes female, we are like characters in a comedy. When I went to the USA, there were also cases of sexual harassment. I had a transit in Qatar. In a Muslim country, they do not have any framework to understand this situation, and there is no acceptance. I have a male passport, so when they checked in immigration, I have male passport, but the person looks like a female. What is the reality? Nobody seems to understand that I am a transgender woman. So, they take us to a separate room and feel across the body. I felt like I was sexually harassed." (Bhumika Shrestha, Transgender activist, Samakon panel discussion, episode 59, 08.14.2015)

Tesro-lingi individuals also face difficulties in registering same-sex marriages because they are still not legal in Nepal. Furthermore, there are no provisions for when same-sex couples want to adopt children. The heteronormative model of citizenship also creates difficulties in registering births when a same-sex couple adopts a newborn baby. The following narrative illustrates the case of a lesbian couple:

> I am Milan Bastola. My home is Chitwan, NarayanGhat, Mangalpur. I have a same-sex partner. We also have a small daughter. We adopted our daughter from the hospital, but we were not able to register her birth. I have been able to admit her [to school] because of my connections in the school. But if they ask for a birth certificate, what I am going to submit? The name given by my parents is Dhankumari Bastola [a female name]. The same name appears in all of my documents. My daughter calls me baba [father]. How am I going to register her birth? That is the difficulty I am facing. Our marriage was also not registered. (Milan Bastola, Samakon panel discussion, episode 59, 08.14.2015)[58]

> Our problem is how to get a marriage registration certificate and after that a birth registration certificate for our daughter…for a heterosexual couple, when they are infertile and adopt children, they can easily do it, but for us same-sex couples, we cannot. When we go to the bureaucratic office, they are like, how is it possible for same-sex [parents] to have children? You were not married, so how can you have a baby? How can we explain? (Nirmala

[58] The host of the televised panel discussion was Nirmala Sharma, original in Nepali, my own translation

Bastola, Samakon panel discussion, episode 59, 08.14.2015)[59]

Due to the discrimination and practical difficulties faced by sexual and gender minorities, the Supreme Court verdict of 2007 ruled that *tesro-lingi* individuals were entitled to citizenship certificates and other ancillary documents. The Supreme Court also clearly stipulated that the gender identity mentioned on a citizenship certificate should be based on an individual's self-feeling. Concerning this issue, the verdict clearly stated:

> "It is the responsibility of the state to provide documents—including the birth certificate, *citizenship certificate*, passport, voter-identity card, etc.—specifying the sex per their interest to people of gender minorities to free them from the practice of gender discrimination…Legal provisions should be made to provide gender identity to the people of transgender or third gender, under which the female third gender, male third gender and intersexual are grouped, per the *concerned person's self-feeling*." [Writ No. 917 of the year 2064 BS (2007 AD)]

Despite the verdict establishing provisions for citizenship certificates for *tesro-lingi* individuals, the specific criteria that are used to identify *tesro-lingi* individuals for the purpose of official documents and other bureaucratic procedures are ambiguous. Since bureaucratic officials are responsible for processing citizenship certificates, there are inevitably some practical concerns. An LGBTI lawyer who belonged to the committee that was formed to address this issue described the thought processes behind their eventual decision:

> "How are we going to determine this? A person is male at birth, and then turns to female—how are we supposed to identify [them]? Somebody is born a female, but everything else is like a male—how are we going to grant [a citizenship certificate]? It seems like there are even five of them: L, G, B, T, and I. How are we supposed to give five kinds of identity card. So, we participated in lots of meetings and finally concluded that…well, you have

[59] The host of the televised panel discussion was Nirmala Sharma, original in Nepali, my own translation

> to give identity cards according to self-identification anyway because this was already decided by the Supreme Court. If it is not implemented, we have to go to court again. So, we, both sides, concluded that...let us have *'anya'* (others) category. If it is male and female, okay, but if it is anyone from the LGBTI community, mention '*anya*', and let us do it that way. The decision was endorsed by the Home Ministry and circulars were sent to all district offices accordingly." (Lawyer Prem Bahadur Thapa, 15.06.2014, Pahichaan radio)[60]

As a result, *tesro-lingi* individuals are now officially acknowledged on citizenship certificates and other ancillary documents by the alternative gender label *anya*. In addition, in 2011, the *anya* category was included in the National Census alongside *male* and *female*. In 2012, the government instructed local district offices to issue citizenship certificates with the same three categories. In 2013, the Supreme Court also ruled that the Nepalese government should issue passports that include *tesro-lingi* categories under the "O" category to denote "others" *(*i.e., *anya).* Thus, the legal decrees guaranteed that sexual and gender minorities could obtain identification documents based on self-identification, thus largely institutionalizing *tesro-lingi* as a gender category.

However, the official indication of *tesro-lingi* individuals as *anya* is not without issues. Lumping together many kinds of sexual and gender identities as *anya* in official documents and forms is not representative of the diverse range of sexual and gender identities. In particular, the essentialized *anya* category makes it difficult to differentiate individuals who differ based on sexual orientation alone. One individual reflected on whether it makes sense to aggregate MSMs—who are biologically male and identify as male but have sexual relations with other men—with MtF transgender people under a single *tesro-lingi* category.

> "We do not have clear laws that distinguish men who have sex with men and transgenders as an appropriate category in citizenship certificates.

[60] Interviewed by journalist Gauri Nepali, 5.8.2014.

> (Anonymous)"[61]

Therefore, not only does the essentialized *tesro-lingi* category fail to represent all forms of sexual and gender identity (Bernstein, 1997), not all LGBTI individuals want to have *anya* on their citizenship documents. Some researchers have highlighted the "costs of recognition" (Aboim, 2020), in which gaining access to citizenship rights can paradoxically lead to discriminatory practices (Richardson, 2015). For example, as narrated by one transgender individual, having a citizenship card where *anya* is mentioned in the gender category can increase the chances of experiencing inequitable practices:

> "My name is Sophia Lama. My home is Pokhara. Wherever I rent my home, say with 2000 Rs, a male and a female [i.e., a heterosexual couple] can rent it and stay. They raise my rent to 6-7000 Rs. The landlord threatens to kick me out all the time, raises the rent every month, bullies me all the time, and throws my stuff out, all this just because I am a transgender. I am not allowed to rent the whole flat if I want to stay alone also, because they think that children in their family will turn out the same due to my influence. I am facing lots of difficulties. There are so many discriminations from society, landlords, home, everywhere." (Samakon panel discussion, episode 59, 08.14.2015)

In summary, in order to institutionalize *tesro-lingi* as an alternate gender category, LGBTI activists focused on establishing *tesro-lingi* individuals as citizens with rights on par with those of any other national citizen. Those who have opposed the movement, however, have claimed that *tesro-lingi* individuals are instead second-class citizens by considering them as unnatural and therefore undeserving of human rights. LGBTI activists therefore prioritized securing the legal right to claim citizenship certificates that state sexual and gender identity based on self-identification. Despite the progress made, practical problems persist due to the inefficiency of the bureaucratic system. More significantly, the downsides of "essentializing" the *tesro-*

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[61] This interview was originally conducted by Dalia Nori.

lingi category and the associated cost of recognition have paradoxically had practical consequences that run counter the achievements gained.

7.4 Conclusions

As a reminder, the main aim of this study is to understand social inequalities and social change as they pertain to sexual and gender minorities. To achieve this aim, based on an available survey of 1,178 individuals, four analytical subgroups of sexual and gender minorities were constructed, namely AMGB (assigned male, gay/bisexual), AMTG (assigned male, transgender), AFLG (assigned female, lesbian/gay) and AFTG (assigned female, transgender). Further correspondence analysis was conducted to understand how the objective conditions faced by different gender subgroups explain social inequalities. The degree of discriminatory practices faced by different gender groups in various social contexts were therefore concretely identified.

On identifying the objective conditions faced by each of the categories through statistical analysis, a qualitative analysis was performed to understand the subjective dispositions of sexual and gender minorities. In the process, several instances of discriminatory practices toward sexual and gender minorities were identified, and these emanated from the dominant symbolic gender order. The analysis revealed that among the several problems faced by sexual and gender minorities are a) constraints on the expression of gender and/or sexual identity, b) constraints on bodily dispositions, c) constraints and freedom for the expression of sexual and gender roles, d) invisibilization from social life, e) body stigma, f) constant societal gaze, and g) self-denigration. Internal cognitive schemes and external societal institutions are structured around the dominant gender scheme, so they generally constrain the freedoms of sexual and gender minorities and contribute to their gender-related dispositions.

Further qualitative analysis was conducted to understand how the

social inequalities experienced by the analytical LGBTI subcategories subjectively differed. The dominant binary gender-classification scheme explains a degree of the social inequality faced by various LGBTI minorities. Indeed, the broad patriarchal nature of Nepalese society means that those perceived as being "male," such as AMGBs and AFTGs, face less discrimination. In contrast, when a biological male transitions to a transwoman (AMTG), that person is stigmatized. Individuals who are perceived as being a "proper" biological "male" (AMGB) or "female" (AFLG) face less social inequality compared to transgender individuals (AMTG and AFTG). Indeed, transgender people have a highly visible physical gender identity, so they face associated stigma. Between the AMTG and AFTG categories, the former faces greater discrimination, even from other sexual and gender minorities, and such people are perceived as being more unnatural. Finally, intersex individuals tend to be invisible, even within the LGBTI community.

After identifying the basic instances and causes of the social inequalities faced by sexual and gender minorities, this study set about explaining the social change effected by LGBTI activists. A brief sketch and clusters of significant issues that were raised by the LGBTI movement in Nepal were therefore provided. The recent changes in Nepal's political context have largely shaped LGBTI activism. As regards the issue of social change in the context of sexual and gender minorities, this study maintains that the LGBTI movement in Nepal is primarily a classificatory struggle against the symbolic gender binary order. LGBTI activists have therefore attempted to establish the alternative *tesro-lingi* gender category as being on par with existing categories in the dominant gender binary scheme. This gender category represents people who do not self-identify as either "male" or "female" for whatever reason, and belonging to the *tesro-lingi* category is based purely on self- identification.

LGBTI activists have focused on legitimizing the *tesro-lingi* category

in various social fields by focusing on three dichotomies: natural/unnatural, human/non-human, and citizen/non-citizen. To establish *tesro-lingi* as a valid category in the legal sphere, LGBTI activists have invoked scientific and transnational discourses. Those who oppose it, meanwhile, have used historical legal frameworks that validate the gender binary taxonomy and class homosexual relationships as an unnatural form of intercourse. In the sociocultural sphere, those opposed to the *tesro-lingi* category have painted it as an imported concept that is perpetuated by foreign organizations for their own ends. However, activists have used cultural logic to legitimate *tesro-lingi* as a natural category by recounting existing Hindu mythologies and traditions that support the *tesro-lingi* identity and gender fluidity.

In addition, LGBTI activists have sought to establish *tesro-lingi* individuals as deserving of basic human rights. Without a doubt, the political changes that occurred simultaneously in the national context provided the *tesro-lingi* movement with many opportunities to frame *tesro-lingi* rights as human rights. Indeed, LGBTI activists strategically used the developing political context to benefit their movement, while the dissenting voices seemed to slowly dissipate. LGBTI activists have sought to position *tesro-lingi* individuals as full citizens of the country, ones deserving of the same rights as other citizens. However, those who have opposed the movement have claimed that *tesro-lingi* individuals are actually second-class citizens by positioning them as unnatural and therefore undeserving of human rights. LGBTI activists, however, have focussed on securing the legal right to claim citizenship certificates that mention sexual and gender identity based on self-identification. Despite the progress made, some practical problems persist due to inefficiencies in the bureaucratic system. More significantly, the “essentializing” of the *tesro-lingi* category has run the risk of incurring an associated cost of recognition, which may work contrary to the achievements gained.

At this stage of the study, the major research questions have been

answered to some extent. In Chapter 8, the research questions will be related to the available literature and a theoretical meaning. In Chapter 9, the conclusions chapter, how this study contributes to the overall debate will be discussed. The main goal of the analysis in the remaining chapters is to consider how the empirical findings of this study relate to the state-of-the-art literature, such that the research problems that motivated the study in the first place can be effectively resolved.

8 DISCUSSION

Chapter 1 discussed the use of key sociological approaches to understand the research problem and the expected contributions of this study before Chapter 2 elaborated more broadly on these sociological approaches and pointed out some of their shortcomings in understanding gender relations. Next, Chapter 3 discussed the conditions faced by LGBTI individuals in the Global South, while Chapter 4 provided a brief outline of the LGBTI movement in Nepal. Chapter 5 then described the empirical context and the methodological approaches that were adopted. Finally, Chapters 6 and 7 provided the results of various analyses of data conducted at different levels. The next step in this chapter is to relate the research questions to the available literature. This chapter therefore describes how this study is useful for understanding the research problem and its implications for understanding inequality and social activism as they pertain to the LGBTI population of Nepal, as well as, by extension, the more general context of the Global South.

The initial goal of this study was to understand: (1) What social inequalities are faced by LGBTI face in Nepal, and how are these inequalities reproduced? And, (2) how are experiences of the oppression that results from heteronormative domination subverted in practice? To understand LGBTI issues, it was important to explore the formation of gender identities, so Chapter 1 discussed the major issues behind gender identity, such as the interactions between self and social constructions of identity, embodiment, dispositions, and intersectional social categories. Chapter 7 later looked at the narratives of LGBTI individuals and identified several ways in which they describe their experiences of belonging a sexual and gender minority. Now, does our theoretical understanding of gender identity correspond to the lived experiences of LGBTI individuals?

The first section of this chapter deals with how sexual and gender identities are formed. The construction of gender categories is discussed first in Section 8.1.1 before Section 8.1.2 discusses the role that self and social constructions play in the formation of gender identities. Next, Section 8.1.3 discusses the role that embodiment plays in the creation of gender identities based on what was conveyed by LGBTI individuals and compares this to the theoretical ideas that were discussed in Chapter 2. Section 8.1.4 then elaborates on the interactive and intersectional nature of gender-specific categories by conceptualizing multiple masculinities and femininities. Next, Sections 8.1.5 and 8.1.6 discuss how gender identities are contextually formed based on the socio-historic and cultural antecedents of gender identities, and this is an important contribution of the study.

Having discussed aspects related to the formation and expression of gender identities in Section 8.1, section 8.2 goes on to focus on the social inequalities faced by LGBTI individuals. In section 8.2.1, the concept of heteronormative domination is proposed to describe the broad social discrimination faced by LGBTI individuals. The study goes on to claim that the extent of the heteronormative domination faced by LGBTI individuals is mediated by the degree of masculine domination that exists in society. This issue is elaborated on further in section 8.2.2. Section 8.2.3, meanwhile, proposes that heteronormative domination is not experienced in a uniform manner but rather that various LGBTI subgroups experience discrimination in a hierarchical manner.

After discussing the social inequalities faced by LGBTI individuals in Section 8.2, the chapter then turns to addressing the second research question in section 8.3, namely, how are the experiences of the oppression that results from heteronormative domination subverted in practice? To explain this process of social change, section 8.3.1 draws attention to the process of identity negotiation in the everyday lives of LGBTI individuals, specifically how LGBTI individuals

communicate and negotiate their identities by using their narratives of lived experiences. Section 8.3.2 then proposes a process through which individual reflexive accounts of gender identities work as a catalyst for forming a collective identity, which can in turn be mobilized through appropriate leadership and organization in a process that is explained in Section 8.3.3. In the final subsection (8.3.4), the process for subverting the dominant gender order through struggles against discriminatory gender taxonomies across various social contexts is discussed.

A summative conceptual framework is ultimately presented. Overall, this chapter deals with, among other topics, gender identities, heteronormative domination, political action, and broad cultural antecedents to the formation of gendered identities. The goal of this chapter is to theoretically reflect on the findings presented in the previous two chapters. Ultimately, this chapter seeks to link the formation of gender identities, the experiences of social inequality faced by people with such gender identities, and the ways in which such discrimination can be challenged through classificatory struggles in multiple social contexts.

8.1 Formation of gender identities

8.1.1 Gender and sexual categories

Some sociological approaches place an extreme emphasis on the objective categorization of sex/gender and having a quasi-perfect correspondence with the subjective identification of these categories (Reeser & Seifert, 2003). This research, in contrast, demonstrates that there is no need for such a one-to-one correspondence between objective social categories and personal identification with those categories. When the 1,178 surveyed LGBTI people were asked to state the gender label that they primarily identified with, they mentioned a total of 21 unique terms, including the conventional "male" and "female" labels. Many of these identity labels are indigenous and have geo-cultural

origins, so they do not entirely correspond with the commonly accepted "LGBTI" categories (UNDP, Williams Institute, 2014).

This does not imply, however, that individuals are entirely free to "make up" their own identity labels, because those 21 terms still represent a spectrum of gender categories. People in a particular social milieu generally do not freely create a new gender/sexual category to describe themselves but rather select from existing categories. This choice, of course, need not be confined to the traditional binary categories, and this study clearly suggests that even when faced with rigid social categories, individuals always have some degree of latitude in their self-identification (Nagoshi J. L., Brzuzy, Terrell, & Nagoshi, 2012).

Furthermore, in the described research context, the law itself provides for the alternative gender category *tesro-lingi* to be used based solely on the self-identification of individuals who do not fit in with the gender binary. Legal categories are objectively imposed in society (Bourdieu, 1987), but in practice, the existence of a legally sanctioned social category based solely on self-identification clearly indicates that even the most authorized legal categories can have some leeway to accommodate self-constructed aspects.

The results of this study further support the notion that individuals do not only use dichotomous categories (i.e., male and female) to describe their gender identities. They also exhibit varying degrees of identification with other gender categories outside the gender binary. As mentioned earlier, the survey considered in this study (UNDP, Williams Institute, 2014) revealed 21 different identity categories, so identification with any particular gender/sexual label is not uniform. What is more, individuals may freely associate themselves with multiple labels, sometimes equally so with several different labels (Monro S. , 2007). As such, individuals may consider that a label describes their primary identity category, but they may simultaneously also identify

with various other sexual and gender labels in different ways and to a lesser degree. Some individuals may also have more freedom to identify with different categories, such as someone who identifies strongly with the "gay" label but also weakly identifies as "heterosexual." Some individuals simply have more freedom when deciding their gender/ sexuality labels, whereas others are more constrained in their selections. Intersexed individuals, for instance, find it harder to associate with any particular gender or "sex" label.

Based on this observation, the gender categories in this research were constructed using not just the given objective gender categories (male/ female/*tesro-lingi*) used by the state in official documents but also the self-identified labels of the respondents. The self-constructed element of subjective identification in relation to objective social categories is an issue that is sometimes overlooked.

Mottier (2002) argued that classical feminist approaches conceptualize gender primarily in terms of the sexual difference (Mottier, 2002), and the extreme focus on the close correspondence between biological sex and gender roles leads to portraying the gender order as one of masculine domination and feminine subordination. However, such a simple dichotomy of sexuality and gender fails to acknowledge the complexity and diversity of gender and sexual identities (Mottier, 2002).

For example, for transgender individuals, the fluidity of their gender identity necessitates some intersectionality with sexual identity, while for bisexuals, the fluidity in their sexual identity necessitates some intersectionality with gender identity (Nagoshi & Brzuzy, 2010). This research clearly shows that LGBTI individuals participate in categorization in a way in which sexuality and gender labels are distinct. For example, if individuals were simply categorized based on their assigned sex at birth, male or female, it would hardly be possible

for individuals to self-construct identities. However, the additional labels for sexual and gender identities are essential for some people to position themselves within the overall sex/gender order.

The four analytical categories distinguished in this research are amalgams of both sexual and gender identities. Sexual and gender identities are clearly distinct, but they complement each other in defining the position of many individuals in the gender order (Chodos & Curtis, 2002). While it may seem obvious, any framework that conflates sexuality and gender will ignore the fact that the inequalities faced by individuals result from not just their gender identities but also their sexual identities (Mottier, 2002; Reeser & Seifert, 2003). The intersectionality of sexual and gender identity should therefore be considered, and the construction of various analytical groups for sexual and gender minorities in this research represents a way of overcoming this limitation.

8.1.2 The dialectic of social and self-construction

This chapter's discussion so far has sufficiently established that there is no need for strict correspondences between socially constructed social categories and people's subjective experiences of them. This does not mean, however, that individuals are free to refashion their identities as they see fit (Lane, 2006, p. 100).

For instance, the very existence of transsexuals challenges the essentialized notions of gender and sexual identity, but nonetheless, they need to define themselves within the given practical taxonomies that exist in society at that time. In addition, many transsexuals are not actively trying to subvert the existing social constructions for gender and sexuality but rather just seeking to experience being embodied in the "right" gender (Monro S. , 2007; Nagoshi, Nagoshi, & Brzuzy, 2014).

Sexual and gender identities obviously include some degree of self-construction, so the socially constructed categories should be considered alongside the "agency" that allows LGBTI people to recognize, understand, express, and frame their own understanding of their identities (Lane, 2006). Indeed, belonging to a specific category does not imply unconditionally adopting all the norms traditionally associated with that category (e.g., being "manly" or "girly").

Some individuals do generally adhere to their socially constructed gender categories, such as some cisgender individuals, but even then, they do it to varying extents. Other individuals are aware of the constructed nature of their gender categories but remain attached to some residual embodied practices (e.g., transgender individuals), while others are completely disconnected from the dominant understandings of masculinity and femininity (e.g., intersexed individuals). This means that gender identity is experienced within a continuum (Monro S. , 2000).

Obviously, there may not always be perfect harmony among all the social constructions, self-constructions, and lived experiences of gender (Järvinen, 2010). Some scholars (Skeggs, 1997) go even further and discuss cases where individuals protest the simplistic sexual and gender categories and deviate from them. This study agrees that sexual and gender identities are not in themselves a straightforward expression of the socially constructed categories, and thereby ontological or essential, but they must be at least partly constructed (Reeser & Seifert, 2003).

8.1.3 Embodiment as a component of gender identity

As previously discussed, there are obvious correspondences between objective social categories (e.g., male/female) and how individuals identify subjectively with those categories. In addition, there are also correspondences among objective social categories, subjective identifications within those categories, and the embodied nature of

identities. The embodiment of a social category reflects the way that individuals are supposed to act with their bodies (i.e., various aspects of bodily disposition) and how this is naturalized (Bourdieu, 2001). For example, females are conditioned to follow a particular way of using their bodies in terms of facial expressions, gestures, movements, manners, ways of walking, the shape of their bodies, deportment, and even their way of looking at the world. When viewed this way, masculine domination is nothing other than "a somatization of the social relations of domination" (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 23).

However, as this study revealed, embodiment is an even more consequential part of gender identity when it comes to LGBTI individuals. Most transgendered individuals clearly do not conform to the socially prescribed bodily *hexis*, because their self-identified gender often does not correspond with the body they possess. This non-conformance acts as a visual signifier of their identity to the rest of society, often resulting in the objectification of, and discrimination against, transgendered individuals (Bourdieu, 1996-1997).

The identities of sexual and gender minorities have a large degree of embodied content, and social discrimination is frequently sustained and reproduced through regulation of the bodily dispositions and emotions. Seemingly innocuous activities in educational institutions or family settings—such as correcting the ways in which LGBTI individuals act, speak, dress, and so on—are thoroughly political, because an unspoken understanding of how to conduct themselves is being imposed on them. The body and its exterior—such as clothing, gestures, make-up, and so on—are therefore the results of the existing socio-sexual power relations (Moi, 1991).

In social contexts where heterosexuality is the norm, the body possessed can itself be a source of stigma for LGBTI individuals. Individuals not conforming to the prescribed bodily *hexis* are subjected

to several discriminatory practices, such as verbal and physical abuse, and denied their fundamental citizenship rights (Currah & Mulqueen, 2011). In many cases, sexual and gender minorities are forced to modify their bodily dispositions and in extreme cases, the body itself, in a phenomenon known as "pedagogical action" (Bourdieu, 2001). For example, transgendered individuals undergoing hormone therapy just to confirm to the societally prescribed notion of an ideal gendered body may be considered an example of pedagogical action.

From the perspective of LGBTI individuals, the embodied reality of their identities leads to conflicts in various social roles, particularly when there is a strong embodied component to gendered roles, such as a boy being expected to plough the field. Ambiguities in these social roles combine with social stigma to cause self-denigration and feelings of shame that arise from the embodied existence. In fact, LGBTI individuals regulate the social inequalities they face through emotions like shame, humiliation, timidity, anxiety, guilt, and so on (Reeser & Seifert, 2003). Recognizing the significance of embodiment for understanding the social inequalities faced by LGBTI individuals, which this study has identified as one of the most crucial issues, is an important development, because many other sociological approaches, such as feminism and queer theory, have found it difficult to incorporate this element (Nagoshi, Nagoshi, & Brzuzy, 2014).

8.1.4 Pluralized masculinities and femininities

Mainstream feminist approaches portray the gender order in a one-dimensional manner, such that there is only one form of domination (masculine) and one form of subordination (feminine) (Mottier, 2002). In other words, females unitarily and uniformly face discrimination. In contrast, this study points out that the gender order is fragmented and multilayered. Furthermore, our understanding of masculinity and femininity needs to be contextual, because they exist in a continuum

rather than as polar opposites (Monro S. , 2007). The contention of this study is that the domination and social inequality faced by LGBTI individuals are distinct yet intersectional. In reality, the extent of the discrimination directed at different LGBTI individuals is often mediated by masculine domination.

Most well-accepted ideas about sexual and gender identities remain silent about the plurality of masculine and feminine identities (Reeser & Seifert, 2003). This is particularly true when femininity and masculinity are conceptualized as being purely binary, implicitly stable, and homogenous identities (Mottier, 2002), because any analysis of gender relations is then solely based on purely dualistic sexual differences (McNay, 2004). Several scholars have suggested, however, the possibility of a pluralized form of gender with multiple masculinities and femininities occupying numerous positions relative to each other in the overall gender order (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). This study agrees with the view of some scholars (Krais, 2006) in that men and women adopt masculinity and femininity in ambiguous ways and with multiple subjectivities.

In this research, four LGBTI categories were constructed based on two dimensions, namely the sex assigned at birth and the self-identified sexual or gender identity label. The individuals belonging to each category adopt unconventional forms of masculinity or femininity that differ from the traditional polar binary. The results show that the AMGB category represents individuals who identify themselves as conventional "males" even though they may have effeminate bodily dispositions, such as *kothi*, or adopt a receptive rather than insertive role in sexual relationships. Within this category, there are also individuals who consider themselves to be "alpha-males" who adopt the insertive roles in sexual relationships, such as *panthi*.

From a heterosexual male's perspective, neither category, even the

more dominant one, would be considered conventionally "masculine." When we consider individuals in the AMTG category, however, they were born males but identify as female. These individuals may be seen as feminized males and disparaged by both cisgender males and females. They may be considered less masculine and thereby shameful by cisgender males, whereas cisgender females may consider them not "manly" enough.

Similarly, the AFTG category mostly represents FtM transgender individuals. They are considered insufficiently feminine by cisgender males and seen as trying to undeservedly take advantage of the masculine domination structure. AFLG represents cisgender females who are in a non-heterosexual relationship, although the dominant partner in the relationship is supposedly more masculine.

Hence, the purely dichotomous, uniform notion of the "masculine" and the "feminine" seem inapplicable in this context. Masculinity and femininity exist in a continuum rather than distinctly polar opposites (Monro S. , 2000). More importantly, the understanding of masculinity and femininity results from both the objective category one is born into (i.e., sex assigned at birth) and one's self-identified sexual and/ or gender identity labels. Furthermore, the results also show that our understanding of masculinities and femininities is also influenced by culture (Taylor & Rupp, 2005). Whereas Western cultures categorize individuals in terms of sexual orientation alone (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, etc.), indigenous categories like *panthi* and *kothi* in this research context also cover gender role presentation and a person's preferred role in sexual relations (Kapur, 2013; UNDP, Williams Institute, 2014).

8.1.5 The contingency of the socio-historical context

Not only should gender identity involve some form of self-construction—it is also always contingent on the socio-historical context (Chodos &

Curtis, 2002). Any understanding of social categories needs to be based on the existing institutions, the historical context, and the prevailing social order (Krais, 2006). Indeed, the gender order is not isolated from its social context or ahistorical (Chodos & Curtis, 2002; Lane, 2006). The mechanisms that sustain the social inequalities faced by LGBTI individuals in a society do not work in the same way in different times and places.

As this study has demonstrated, sexuality and gender identities are contingent upon the material conditions and particular historical circumstances in which they are constructed (Krais, 2006). For instance, whether "homosexuality" should be considered as being a deviant behavior and a punishable offense in Nepal in the past partly depended upon whether the feudal Hindu monarchy was still in power. Similarly, gender subjectivities can be related to particular social fields—such as the juridical, bureaucratic, and social arenas—in which they are invested, as indicated in this study. In addition, this study also showed that in various social fields, there are different legitimate ways to perceive social categories and the power relations that sustain or subvert the existing relations.

8.1.6 Cultural roots of gender identities

If we were to accept the principle that social nomenclature is not intrinsic but rather a result of a society's general conditions and worldviews, social distinctions should also vary among different societies. A gender taxonomy that is regarded as homogenous in one culture may be seen as naturally heterogeneous in another culture (Järvinen, 2010).

To understand the formation of sexualities and gender identities, it is important to historicize the process through which a gender order is legitimized. For example, it would be problematic to assert that gender relations in different cultures, and indeed during different historical epochs and social contexts, manifest as an expression of the universal

principle of "masculine domination." Indeed, such an assumption would preclude any detailed analysis of the cultural conditions in which gender identities are constructed and reconstructed (Lane, 2006). This is why many scholars have emphasized the importance of relating the formation of sexuality and gender identities to the cultural conditions in which they are constructed (Hull, 2002; Hadas, 2003). The main conclusion of Chapter 3, which examined the literature for sexuality and gender identities in the Global South, was that using universalizing frameworks, categories, and ideas to explain gender relations in different cultural contexts is a form of ethnocentric universalism (Epprecht M. , 2012). This study concurs with the view that gender relations as they exist in Nepal are very closely tied to the historic-cultural milieu, so it is important to suitably theorize gender relations within the particular historic and cultural context.

This study has provided a historic account of the role played by various social institutions in producing and reproducing gender inequalities over time. It has also shown the tight links between social categorization and culture. The legitimacy or "naturalness" of a particular sexual or gender category and the corresponding perception of "perversion" results in discrimination that is largely defined historically and culturally. The available repertoire of gendered practices for individuals is always circumscribed by the particular cultural horizon at the time (Bottero, 2010). One therefore needs to understand the historical relations that exist in political, cultural, and economic contexts and their role in reinforcing the gender order (Lane, 2006).

An initial analysis of the Nepalese context revealed that the earliest legal codes that criminalized homosexual behavior were based on an interpretation of the religious codes of Hindu religious doctrines, and this was sanctioned by successive Hindu monarchs (Höfer, 1979). The punishment for engaging in a homosexual relationship in Nepal's first legal code was directly related to one's position in the Hindu caste

hierarchy: The lower the “assailant’s” position in the caste hierarchy, the more severe the punishment (Fezas, 2000). In the modern era, an all-inclusive constitution and the removal of discriminatory legal provisions directed at LGBTI individuals was only made possible by the fall of the Hindu monarchy and the establishment of a republic that was less influenced by Hindu fundamentalism. In the reality of modern Nepalese society, though, as shown by this study, social inequalities continue to be sustained through family and educational institutions.

Moreover, the acceptable limits and contexts of certain sexually charged or gender-fluid practices, such as crossdressing, are also a matter of cultural perception (Pant, 2015). It seems to be the case that any nominal grouping is in itself a cultural construction (Kapur, 2013). To give an extreme example, the term *hijra* is used to refer to individuals who were born male but tend to carry themselves as “female” in the community. However, they also have their own folklore, legends, and customs, so this largely gender-defined category is also a social grouping with its own culture.

In addition, social categories such as LGBTI, which is portrayed as having universal properties, are not always easily translatable to a different culture (Järvinen, 2010). Cultural variations in lifestyles across different contexts means that the boundaries of these categories can become fuzzy and dynamic, and to use categories from a different context and take it for granted that they still hold true would inappropriately concretize these labels (Epprecht M. , 2012). This study revealed that there many indigenous sexual and gender identity labels, and the use of terms like lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex is a largely imported practice without a cultural equivalent (UNDP, Williams Institute, 2014). Hence, beyond the Nepalese context, it is important to identify the cultural–psychological processes that define the collective experiences of a sexual and gender category that result in shared meanings and behaviors.

The LGBTI movement in Nepal clearly demonstrates that leveraging cultural resources to highlight how society perpetuates sexual and gender discrimination can be a very effective strategy. Cultural resources are symbolic tools that can be used for social change, whether they are used as formal ideologies or symbolic-expressive actions (Williams, 1995). Culture itself is a site for contestation, one where symbols and identities are forged, negotiated, and debated by groups with differing and competing interests (Taylor & Rupp, 2005).

Nepalese activists have succeeded in strategically using cultural resources—such as beauty pageants, music, plays and traditional festivals—as a medium for expressing political ideas. Nowhere is this idea more apparent than in the use of the *Gai-jatra* festival, which is a traditional Newari (an ethnic group in Nepal) festival to commemorate the dead, as Nepal's own indigenous annual "pride day." It is therefore leveraged as a stage for deconstructing gender and sexual categories by highlighting the gender fluidity and ambiguity of the socially constructed categories. The focus of such a cultural performance is to build, reinforce, or renegotiate a collective identity (Taylor & Rupp, 2005).

It should be emphasized that cultural resources differ from other structural resources because they are contextual and highly public (Williams, 1995). The symbolic-expressive nature of culture means that what may be effective in Nepal is not necessarily deeply meaningful in other contexts. Cultural resources are also widely owned, so their meanings are not solely defined by the movement—they should also resonate with the wider public. One implication that can be drawn from the above discussion is that parallel forms of indigenous, contextual, and public forms of symbolic-expressive tools can be used as cultural resources to initiate social change in various contexts. This further highlights why it is critical to understand LGBTI movements in their particular social context, particularly in the Global South, as was the

case with this study.

8.2 Gender identities and social inequalities

8.2.1 Heteronormative domination

The conceptualization of a set definition of masculinity and femininity in turn legitimizes the binary gender order (Mottier, 2002). Such a gender order is clearly insufficient for considering the inequalities faced by those who differ in *either* sexuality or gender (Rubin G. , 1993). Indeed, conflating sexuality and gender puts domination in the blind spot due to the taken-for-granted nature of heteronormativity. Once the intersectional and inseparable nature of sexual and gender identities are taken into consideration, an analysis can easily be extended to not only understand patriarchy (i.e., masculine domination) but also heteronormativity. If we then extend our analysis of masculine domination to understand the social inequalities faced by sexual and gender minorities, we can understand them as a consequence of the heteronormative order.

Like any other form of social inequality, heteronormative domination is a symbolic order sustained by established categories of perception (Bourdieu, 2001). In this case, however, the objective social categorization method, as well as the cognitive perception, is one of heterosexuality versus everything else and the gender binary versus alternative genders rather than just masculinity versus femininity. The mainstream feminist portrayal of masculine domination, in contrast, describes domination purely within the gender binary (i.e., feminine subordination) and ignores sexual identities altogether (Rubin G. , 1993).

When considering masculine domination, it is easy to see how the symbolic gender order is sustained by binary categories like high–low and strong–weak, such that the unflattering option from each pair is

associated with femininity. Adopting such categorizations in different spheres of social life thereby sustains masculine domination (Bourdieu, 2001). On expanding the analysis, albeit at the risk of lumping together the gender binary as one category and thereby diminishing the significant differences within it, it was shown in this study that there are similar categorical pairs that are even more consequential in sustaining heteronormative domination.

Whereas the gender binary is considered “natural” and “human,” those not identifying themselves within the gender binary are considered “unnatural,” “perverse,” or “sub-human.” Similarly, in the civil sphere, whereas those according with the gender binary are regarded as citizens with all the associated citizenship rights, such as marriage equality, those not belonging to the gender binary are considered second-class citizens who are undeserving of various citizenship rights.

Those not confirming to the objective male/female classification altogether, such as intersexed individuals, are even more severely constrained in how they can express their identities. It is possible to mention and discuss several other categorical pairs, but the emphasis remains the same. Naturalized categories of cognition and social arrangements sustain heteronormative domination in perpetuity.

Social inequalities are not just due to the imposition of these objective orders and perception categories but also complicity from the dominated, which is a form of internalized oppression (Bourdieu, 2001). As discussed earlier in the results of this study, the narratives of Nepalese LGBTI individuals clearly show how many have internalized the view that they are somehow perverse, sub-human, and undeserving of citizenship rights. This internalized form of oppression in turn perpetuates the inequalities in the wider society.

8.2.2 Heteronormative domination as mediated by masculine domination

The results of this study revealed that the inequalities faced even within the broad LGBTI community are far from uniform. This study proposes that this difference in the inequalities faced by various LGBTI subcategories is related to the extent of masculine domination in society. Masculine domination and the privilege associated with being a "male" are inherent characteristics of a patriarchal society (Kandiyoti, 1988). As a result, irrespective of their self-identified category labels, individuals who are assigned male at birth continue to enjoy some of the privileges associated with being a "male," although this privilege may be diminished compared to that of a heteronormative male. This also sheds some light on the hierarchies of oppression that are faced among LGBTI individuals, as has been previously discussed.

To illustrate this with a case from the study, both AMTG and AMGB individuals are assigned "male" at birth, yet the AMGB category is the more privileged in various social contexts because they more visibly correspond with what the heteronormative order expects of the "male" sex.

In a patriarchal society, feminine subordination is reflected in the degree of societal control exerted on the bodies and sexuality of females (Kandiyoti, 1988). Hence, individuals in the AFLG category often face double discrimination, first as a female and then as a non-heteronormative individual (UNDP, USAID, 2014). Indeed, the discrimination reported by individuals belonging to the AFLG category can be even greater than that of AFTG individuals, yet both were assigned "female" sex at birth. This is because individuals in the AFTG category adopt a "masculine" identity and therefore benefit from a degree of privilege.

Thus, in addition to those objectively assigned "male" sex at birth, other

individuals adopting a masculine identity can also be more privileged in society. For example, individuals in the AMTG category were assigned "male" at birth but chose to adopt a feminine identity, so they lose some of their privilege. For individuals in the AFTG category, though, they were assigned "female" at birth but chose to adopt a masculine identity. This study demonstrated that despite being assigned "female" at birth, AFTG individuals tend to enjoy more control over their bodies and sexuality than AMTG individuals.

Indeed, of those assigned male at birth, only AMTG individuals project a feminine identity, so they face greater discrimination in different social contexts precisely because they voluntarily relinquished their patriarchal advantages by choosing to identify with the subordinate gender. Hence, AMTG individuals are expected to relinquish all the rights associated with being a "male" in a patriarchal society, including patrilineal inheritance, in addition to being stigmatized as something "abnormal" and "shameful" in society. This study therefore suggests the possibility of inter-masculine domination (Anderson & Cancian, 2002).

Interestingly, this study also suggests that the choice of a masculine or feminine identity may be strategic (Bernstein, 1997). For instance, those who want to ensure the continuity of patriarchal benefits (Kandiyoti, 1988), even while engaging in non-heteronormative conduct, achieve this by maintaining their favored assigned identity at birth and performing their socially sanctioned role, such as AMGB individuals engaging in sham marriages, even though their sexuality conflicts with their prescribed gender roles. However, for individuals with indeterminable sex at birth, such as intersexed individuals, they are often forcibly assigned "male" at birth, sometimes even after corrective surgeries, precisely because of the social capital and patriarchal privilege associated with masculine domination (Bourdieu, 2001).

This study claims that masculine domination is distinct from heteronormative domination, such that the severity of the inequalities faced by various LGBTI categories is mediated by the extent to which masculine domination already exists in society. More generally, this study shows that even the members of the same social group, who all share a common oppression, can still enjoy many kinds of privilege along one social axis, even when they experience serious oppression along others. For example, feminine subordination can also be experienced in varied ways, with some females enjoying privilege along one social axis but oppression along others (Chodos & Curtis, 2002).

8.2.3 Hierarchies of oppression

It has already been established that masculinity and femininity are actually spread over a continuum rather than falling neatly into a dichotomous pole (Monro S. , 2007). Depending on the representative category to which an individual belongs, as well as the adopted form of masculinity and femininity therein, the nature of the social discrimination faced varies.

All LGBTI individuals clearly face an overall heteronormative domination, but it is not faced in a unitary and uniform manner, unlike the largely monolithic system of masculine domination. Instead there are hierarchies in the oppression faced by various categories. Therefore, if one were to speak of the dispositions of LGBTI individuals, they should be considered to be multilayered and nested within each other based on their contribution to the hierarchy of oppression faced. This research clearly showed that even within the broader LGBTI category, the social discrimination faced varies considerably.

Most individuals belonging to the AMGB category are highly educated and report less discrimination across various social contexts. They may not face inequalities partly because they do not need to use various services, such as public transport, which is in itself indicative of a

better economic situation. Most importantly, though, they do not have a highly visible embodied identity, so they do not have to reveal their identities in a particular public context (Currah & Mulqueen, 2011).

On the other hand, people in the AMTG category are often both economically and educationally disadvantaged, and in many cases, they need to engage in some form of sex work for a livelihood. They also face the severest forms of discrimination across all social fields, including verbal and physical abuse. What is more, AMTG individuals are discriminated against even within the LGBTI community, mostly by some AMGB individuals, thus suggesting the possibility of inter-masculine domination (Anderson & Cancian, 2002).

Individuals belonging to the AFLG category also tend to possess less educational and economic capital. They also face several societal restrictions in pursuing non-heterosexual relationships when compared to AMGB individuals. The situation faced by AFTG individuals is similar, but they may also face an even higher degree of verbal and physical abuse in comparison to AFLG individuals. Overall, a greater degree of embodiment leads to visual signifiers for identities, such as with transgender individuals, and this leads to facing a more severe form of social discrimination (Currah & Mulqueen, 2011).

Furthermore, intersexed individuals do not even appear in the categories that were produced in this research, and this is in itself deeply reflective of the broad social categorization processes at work (Das, 2020). The intersexed category is effectively rendered invisible, which is the severest form of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2001), and there is little knowledge about the nature of the social discrimination faced by this category overall.

Overall, the discrimination faced by individuals who were assigned “female” at birth tends to be greater than that of individuals who were assigned “male” at birth (UNDP, Williams Institute, 2014), indicating

that there must be some sort of link between masculine domination and heteronormative domination.

8.3 Gender inequalities and resistance

8.3.1 Lived experiences and identity negotiations

The construction of various social categories in multiple contexts provides all individuals with a legitimate way of perceiving themselves within the order (Järvinen, 2010). When there is a close correspondence between these social constructions and subjective experiences of identity, there is hardly any conflict, so individuals feel no need to reflect on the nature of the categorization scheme. This correspondence can be both embodied and structural (Lane, 2006).

However, when the everyday lived, embodied experience does not closely correspond to the objective social categories, some individuals will inevitably experience identity ambiguity and try to make sense of their predicament (Nagoshi, Nagoshi, & Brzuzy, 2014). For example, an MtF transgender individual may feel trapped in the wrong body and not identify with any of the objectively assigned social categories. Similarly, an intersexed individual may not conform to either the cognitive or embodied ideals of the existing objective gender-categorization scheme. This means there may also be a lived subjectivity that is not always perfectly mapped onto the socially perceived self, and this can trigger identity ambiguity and conflict. Individuals internalize the dominant social values, but we should allow for circumstances where there is not a one-to-one correspondence (Moi, 1991).

Moreover, there are continuous conflicts between embodied experiences and socially constructed definitions of gender and sexuality (Nagoshi, Nagoshi, & Brzuzy, 2014). On some occasions, a transformation of the physical body itself, such as hormone therapy or surgical modification for MtF transgender individuals, can concretely change social reactions

and relations. Individuals in such predicaments need to constantly reinterpret, reconfigure, and self-construct new forms of gender and sexual identity just to maintain a sense of continuity of the self (Rubin H. , 2003). However, many transgender persons continuously perceive identity ambiguity and conflict, because they need to actively negotiate the socially constructed gender roles they are expected to fulfil, as well as the physically embodied basis of their gender identity. However, for some identities, such as for gays and lesbians, their gender roles and sexual orientation may be less affected, if at all, by their embodied gender identity (Roen, 2001).

Once we accept that gender identities are partly constructed by, and contingent upon, their social constructions, we can think of instances where there is no direct correspondence between the objective social category and a subjective understanding of that category (Lane, 2006). In such cases, there may be disjuncture between what is known and what is being felt and what a social actor claims to adhere to and what that person engages in, as well as an overall difference between the consciousness and practice of a social category (McNay, 1999).

In this present study, it was observed how intersexed and transgendered individuals face identity conflicts due to the *doxic* status of the binary gender order and their everyday embodied gender practices in various ways. In such instances of identity ambiguity and conflict, individuals become more reflexive about the constructed nature of the social categories. Thus, gender reflexivity emerges due to the ambiguities in how individuals occupy masculine and feminine roles (Adkins, 2003). Similarly, gender reflexivity can also emerge when individuals need to negotiate the established gender taxonomies in various social contexts with respect to their self-perceptions and experiences of taken-for-granted categories (McNay, 2004).

8.3.2 Gender reflexivity and formation of collective identities

Reflexivity is a lived subjectivity that reflects the social reality of a particular identity, so it helps connect individuals with social structures (Chambers, 2005) and forge links between the social structures of domination and the lived experiences. In addition to becoming aware of the constructed nature of the social categories that pertain to them, individuals may also reflect on their position in the social order and the resulting power differential (McNay, 1999).

Such reflexive experiences of identity negotiation can become narratives of personal empowerment for people as they explore, affirm, or reject the identity they experience (Cashore & Tuason, 2009). It is quite clear from this study that such reflexivity is expressed through the personal narratives of LGBTI individuals.

However, it must be conceded that individual reflexivity alone will never subvert the gender order (Adams, 2006; Hilgers, 2009). While this study established that individuals self-consciously/reflexively construct their own identities through personal narratives, this alone cannot sufficiently explain the formation of collective identities and their mobilization for collective action (Bottero, 2010).

Given the ambiguity and conflict resulting from the constructed and contingent nature of gender identities, there is a discourse between the reflexive and the dispositional identities. This leads to individuals inhabiting gender positions in a more detached or ironic manner, which is indicative of the more reflexive aspects of gender identity (Bottero, 2010). For example, one may be conscious of the performative aspect of being a “man” but continue to act in the same way, and thus do nothing to resist the oppressive gender order.

Hence, an external representation is a prerequisite for initiating a

movement, and this should be perceived as legitimate by the relevant parties. Political activists therefore need to engage in symbolic work to galvanize support. For that to occur, reflexive identifications and their subsequent mobilization must concur with the dispositional practices of individuals if they are to be socially meaningful. In other words, a movement's leader should not just be able to understand the constructed nature of social categories but also the lived experiences of individuals in those categories, so he or she can find the right discourse to facilitate communication among them (Bourdieu, 1987).

Reflexivity is also a group activity, so there is intersubjective coordination in collectively articulating reflexive identities (Chambers, 2005), because when people strategically reflect on their own identities, such categorization necessarily entails that they characterize themselves in relation to others. In other words, identification necessarily involves specifying how one is characterized in relation to other categories within the larger social narrative.

For instance, when transgendered individuals try to make sense of their everyday experiences, they necessarily construct reflexive accounts in relation to the experiences of cisgender individuals, as well as how their experiences differ from those of intersexed individuals, for example. It is only through intersubjective coordination that the elements used for categorization are collectively recognized as common points to organize around (Bottero, 2010).

In addition, each individual is an amalgam of several different dispositional subjectivities. Indeed, an individual is not only gendered but also classed, raced, ethnicized, and so on (Shields, 2008). Given the self-constructed and contingent nature of social categories, it is always possible for individuals to be positioned "objectively" in a certain social space yet still recognize themselves as a part of different practical taxonomies and discourses (Lane, 2006).

As a result, there can be several competing discourses and symbolic representations that apply to the lived experiences of one social group (Bourdieu, 1987). The possibility of many symbolic representations for the same objective position, coupled with individuals perhaps identifying themselves within multiple social positions and discourses, points to opportunities for intersectional identities to form (Nagoshi, Nagoshi, & Brzuzy, 2014). Multiple, relationally intersected identities, some of who may be oppressed in specific areas while others are privileged, can form coalitions to achieve societal change (Shields, 2008). Such coalitions for resisting oppression are based on common experiences of oppression, such as how objective conditions or social forces can coerce individuals into fitting into social identity boxes with prescribed expectations for appearance and behavior (Nagoshi, Nagoshi, & Brzuzy, 2014).

However, the discursive representations of a collective identity can never fully reflect the real living conditions of the represented group (Lane, 2006). Indeed, collective identity does not imply a strong bond between the individuals involved but rather just a willingness to work together to accomplish a task (Stryker & Whittle, 2006). Individuals' reflexive accounts, public discourses, and the positions of actors within networks of influence and obligation can always change. This suggests that there can be differences between dispositional identities (i.e., the actual lived experiences and the reflexive identities) that are born from reflexive articulation (Bottero, 2010). Hence, it comes as no surprise that the commonly agreed *tesro-lingi* category is not representative of all those whom it claims to represent, yet it has still proved to be a successful discursive artifact for collective mobilization.

Wide-ranging social change requires cohesive and collective reflexive practices. Hence, a collective framing by some leader and a collective understanding of a particular lived experience, which has become reflexive and discursive, will both need to be symbolically represented.

Since reflexive identities are collectively agreed and constructed, they need to be regularly maintained at both ends, because they are liable to be challenged for the several reasons discussed earlier (Bottero, 2010).

The form of reflexivity that is germane in everyday interactions is the precise source of variation and upgrade in gendered practices (Krais, 2006). The reflexive experiences of identity negotiations can become narratives of personal empowerment (Cashore & Tuason, 2009). When individuals question the taken-for-granted nature of the social categories, they can begin engaging in personal-empowerment activities. In the Nepalese context, several LGBTI individuals have tried to improve their social positions by taking up meaningful professions (e.g., modelling) or starting a business (e.g., restaurants, fisheries, etc.) as a form of personal empowerment.

Social activism need not, however, be confined to individual empowerment activities. Given that many individuals are aware of the conflict between their identities and social categories, as well as their subordinate positions in the social order, they can share a common narrative of oppression (Shields, 2008). In the Nepalese context, ethnic minorities, feminists, and low-caste individuals also all experience oppression from the dominant order. Such an intersubjective understanding of a common experience of oppression can form the basis for collective intersectional identities, and these in turn can pave the way for joint practices, collective pursuits, and group mobilization (Nagoshi, Nagoshi, & Brzuzy, 2014).

With this added impetus, the work of symbolic representation comprises effective leadership that is focused on building teams based on shared experiences and common goals and a group consciousness that can be translated into collective action. The relationships between dispositional identities, collective identities, inequalities, and social action are presented schematically in Figure 17.

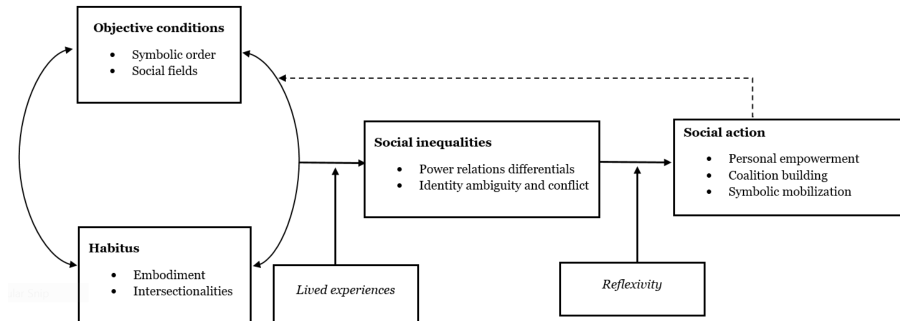

Figure 17 Social identities, inequalities, and action

Figure 17 shows how socially defined taxonomies and logic in different social contexts act as "objective" rules for social categorization. The meaning of categories (i.e., dispositions/habitus) are, however, derived according to the way those "objective" rules are embodied and intersect with other social categories. Based on how social categories are experienced by individuals in their everyday lives, there is bound to be a reflexive understanding of the ambiguities and conflicts in identity and the power differentials and inequalities in society. Such reflexive understandings help individuals to build narratives and engage in acts of personal empowerment. A sense of oppression that is shared with other categories can also pave the way for intersectional coalition building. Through symbolic representation, such as by a leader or collective organization, a social movement can be waged to achieve social justice. Therefore, acts of personal empowerment, intersectional coalition building, and symbolic representation are all elements of action for social justice.

8.3.3 Leadership and political action

The subversion of the dominant gender order requires a collective movement with external representation. Leaders with some degree of

distance from the relevant social group may be viewed as more legitimate representatives and therefore have a better capacity to politicize the oppression faced by the represented groups. The goal of any collective movement is to seek legitimate power to abolish or modify an existing social categorization scheme. Political change presents an opportunity to alter practical taxonomies, which are in turn represented in the social milieu (Bourdieu, 1985).

Change does not always have to originate endogenously due to the actions of the social group itself, however, nor does political action need to be always based on a model of deliberate judgment or rational action (Lane, 2006). Sometimes external structural changes may occur first that provide openings for social groups to reflect on their own situations. Indeed, a new disjuncture in the social construction of categories and the lived experiences of social actors can lead to these social actors becoming more reflexive about their own circumstances.

In the Nepali context, there was very clearly no sign of an LGBTI movement per se before several political–structural changes created the conditions to make such a movement possible. This is clearly exemplified by the activist organization Neel Heera Samaj (NHS), which was founded in 2001 but did not have any agenda to promote LGBTI issues at first due to the prevailing political and legal conditions.

Only after some big changes occurred in the political field—such as the fall of the monarchy, the loosening of state control over the media, the opportunity to set up NGOs, the Maoist insurgency for social inclusion, state violence against sexual and gender minorities, the social movement for democracy, the declaration of a republic, the establishment of a constitutional assembly to write an inclusive constitution, and so on—did Nepal gradually start to see LGBTI discourse permeating the various social fields (UNDP, Williams Institute, 2014).

Obviously, waiting for external structural changes can hardly be

considered a political strategy, but we should not deny that a desired social change may only be feasible after other changes in the external environment. In addition, changes in the macrostructure or structure of a field are intertwined with habitual changes in the agents as well (Hadas, 2003). One also cannot disregard the fact that the impetus for social mobility is not subjective but objective, not agent-directed but structural (Chambers, 2005). This study suggests that the most effective forms of social change may be achieved through a combination of an enforced, structural change and the active promotion of a new set of norms.

In the Nepali context, despite the relatively small overall size of the social group, LGBTI activists have participated in the political field in various ways. They have formed coalitions with other minority groups who share experiences of oppression—such as feminists, ethnic minorities, and the so-called untouchables of the Hindu caste system—in the pursuit of democracy, an inclusive constitution, and the abolition of discriminatory legal provisions. They have also sought cooperation with official political parties who promised to promote their agenda in their election manifestos in order to attract LGBTI votes (UNDP, USAID, 2014; UNDP, Williams Institute, 2014).

What is more, some marginalized social groups may not always be characterized by a lack of cultural capital or symbolic authority, so there is a possibility of forming fruitful coalitions with such social groups (Lane, 2006; Shields, 2008). For instance, in return for the votes they can attract, several high-profile LGBTI activists have sought official membership in representative political parties. Indeed, the founder of Nepal's LGBTI activist organization, Sunil Babu Pant himself, was elected as a member of the Constitutional Assembly under the proportional representation system, so he participated in the first two constitutional assemblies. His notable contribution was to remove gender-specific pronouns, such as he/she and his/her, from

the constitution and other legal provisions, because these were deemed to discriminate against individuals who do not identify with the gender binary (Pant, 2015).

There are several other examples, but it suffices to argue that the political field is more than just a shadow theater where the power struggles of other social contexts are recreated to no effect. Indeed, the political arena is a fertile field for actively contesting the nature of how social categories are constructed (Lane, 2006).

8.3.4 Gendered scripts, social fields, and classificatory struggles

Sociological approaches clarify the formation of gendered subjectivities in broad detail, particularly for "masculine" and "feminine" subjectivities, but they do not always consider how they interact in various social contexts. For some scholars, it is precisely this issue that has been underdeveloped when analyzing gender (McNay, 2004; Chodos & Curtis, 2002).

This study revealed that heteronormative domination is sustained primarily through three sets of categorical binaries, namely natural/unnatural, human/inhuman, and citizen/non-citizen. These are perpetuated across various social fields, mostly the juridical, bureaucratic, and cultural ones. In the juridical field, heteronormative domination is sustained by criminalizing homosexuality as an unnatural and inhuman behavior, even to the extent of equating it with bestiality. The legal codes also support the gender binary by articulating legal provisions in terms like he/she, him/her, and so on.

LGBTI activists were at first successful in removing such articulation from the constitution, but the state reverted to similar terms in the newly amended Criminal and Civil Codes. This clearly shows that a simple matter like the personification of legal provisions is not a trivial issue

but rather the central pillar that sustains heteronormative domination. Indeed, as soon as legal provisions are articulated in the language of the gender binary, loopholes appear for sexual and gender minorities. For instance, the legal codes pertaining to marriage, rape, and adoption are stated in terms of the binary gender, so this automatically denies sexual and gender minorities the right to marry or adopt and leaves them unprotected from sexual assault. Some successful classificatory struggles against heteronormative domination in the Nepali context have used the language of transnational human rights and scientific and rational discourses. Such symbolic strategies eventually erode the legitimacy of the categorization process itself.

In the bureaucratic field, the major categorical dichotomy sustaining heteronormative domination is that of a citizen/non-citizen. LGBTI activists have initiated efforts in the juridical field from the beginning but later sought the implementation of such gains in the bureaucratic field. To be considered a true citizen, one has to be able to obtain identification documents from the state, possess rights on par with the heteronormative population, and have free rights of association.

LGBTI activists have succeeded in forcing the state to grant citizenship certificates with the *anya* category for the non-heteronormative population based on self-identification, but the struggle continues on several fronts to enjoy citizenship rights on par with those of the heteronormative population. Marriage equality, protection from sexual assault, and adoption rights are some such areas that were previously mentioned. In the broad cultural field, heteronormative domination is sustained by labelling sexual and gender minorities as suffering from a mental aberration or being influenced by a perverse and imported foreign discourse. Interestingly, however, indigenous cultural mythologies and customs can be used to support notions of sexual and gender fluidity.

This study has therefore shown that gender operates across all social fields and is not anchored to, or emanating from, one specific field. The notion of gender enters the "game" of various social fields in context-specific ways (Adkins, 2003; Krais, 2006). Each field contains and enforces its own set of gender rules (Chambers, 2005), and gender identities are also perceived with varying degrees of legitimacy according to those gender rules.

This study has also demonstrated that the power relations experienced by a social group are not structurally consistent across all the different fields. At the beginning of the LGBTI movement, sexual and gender minorities occupied marginalized positions in the juridical and bureaucratic fields but a somewhat elevated one in the sociocultural field, but the current situation is the reverse of this. If power relations were constantly the same across different social fields, this could not be the case.

To understand the contextual historical and cultural conditions based on the gender identities that are constructed and reconstructed, it is necessary to conceptualize society as comprising several semi-autonomous fields, such as the juridical, political, cultural, and bureaucratic fields (Crossley, 2003). Consequently, we need to assume that each of these fields will have its own specific gender rules that are often sustained and reproduced by social classification schemes. It should also be further assumed that the power relations across social fields are not structurally consistent. If there are multiple forms of logic occurring across different fields, bearing in mind that there is always a tenuous relationship between the positions adopted by social actors in various fields and the ones they can progress into, there are inevitably going to be contradictions and instabilities across various social fields. These can act as a source of social change rather than support the existing social order (Swartz, 1997; Lane, 2006).

In this study, the various forms of contradiction that are inherent across juridical, bureaucratic, political, and sociocultural fields have been shown to lead to differences in the structuring of gender relations across social fields. Once contradictions and instabilities across social fields become apparent, the emphasis will shift from securing the existing social order to bringing about social change (McNay, 1999; McNay, 2004). Collective mobilization can act as a way of strategically targeting these contradictions to initiate such social changes.

9 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter aims to conclude the study by summarizing the main contributions it makes. To this end, Sections 9.1, 9.2, and 9.3 discuss the steps that were taken to answer the research questions, the justifications for the choices made, and the resulting contributions. Obviously, the contributions largely reflect the choices made in areas of theory, data collection, and data analysis, and the major limitations of the study are discussed in section 9.4, with suggestions for future research being made based on them. Section 9.5 then seeks to generalize the theoretical findings of the study beyond the confines of the empirical case considered in this study. Finally, Section 9.6 concludes the study with a Buddhist story about the empty nature of all compounded things.

9.1 Summarizing the research motivations and approaches

Recent legal and regulatory changes that have positively affected sexual and gender minorities in Nepal have led some to describe Nepal as a "Global beacon for LGBT rights," "a gay travel destination," and even "the gay mecca of the east,"[62] Beyond the hype and interest-laden discourses, though, the narratives of the lived experiences of LGBTI individuals in Nepal highlight persistent discrimination and persecution in their everyday lives. This is an important issue for a small yet significant part of the population.

As a social critic, researcher, and individual observing this discrimination up close, I believe this is an important issue to investigate. It is critical to understand why discrimination and silent suffering persist beneath the progressive banners. It is also important to document the struggles of

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62 https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/08/11/how-did-nepal-become-global-lgbt-rights-beacon, https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/feb/12/trans-rights-meet-the-face-of-nepals-progressive-third-gender-movement

the LGBTI community for equality and understand the effectiveness of various strategies, so the movement can both assess the recent progress (and setbacks) and chart a course for the future. More fundamentally, it is vital to understand why any form of social inequality based solely on an individuals' sexual orientation and gender identity exists in the first place. This is especially baffling given people generally do not consciously choose their sexuality or gender identity, nor does it cause any imminent societal harm. This research project was therefore undertaken with the aim of gaining a better understanding of the social inequalities faced by LGBTI individuals in Nepal and their drive for social justice. Moreover, documenting the struggles of the LGBTI population in Nepal is valuable due to the lack of previous systematic academic studies concerning the movement.

Subsequently, we needed a theoretical lens to magnify and analyze the problem at hand. An initial/preliminary analysis of the narratives of LGBTI individuals, the history of the LGBTI movement in Nepal, and the media discourse surrounding the movement suggested a few potential directions. Social inequalities are exacerbated not only by physical and legal impositions but also the silent acquiescence of the dominated. This passive compliance is not to any authority *per se* but rather to the principles of the existing social taxonomies, which have been historically naturalized without any inherent justification.

Such naturalization is sustained by arrangements in the prevailing social order and the inculcation of embodied and cognitive dispositions in LGBTI individuals that support this social orders. To understand the issues of both social inequality and change, a framework is therefore needed that relates the existing social structures at the sociocultural level to the comparatively minute cognitive and embodied dispositions of LGBTI individuals in their everyday practices.

Thus, to understand the social inequalities faced by LGBTI individuals,

the study used the only available survey of 1,178 such individuals, one that was conducted in Nepal in 2014 (UNDP, Williams Institute, 2014). This survey was deemed reliable and valid for the purposes of this research because it provided extensive information about Nepali LGBTI individuals' ways of defining their own identities, their sociodemographic characteristics, and their experiences of social discrimination.

Due to the aggregated and secondary nature of the data, considerable recoding and methodological innovation were required, as discussed in Chapter 5. Correspondence analysis was performed to identify various analytical groups and relate these groups to their corresponding sociodemographic characteristics and experiences of social discrimination. This procedure was inspired by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical–methodological approach for identifying social classes and their corresponding position in the social space depending upon the degree of capital that social actors hold, whether it be economic, cultural, or social.

Following this, the narratives of LGBTI individuals were used to investigate how they construct and negotiate their sexuality and gender identity in their everyday lives. The narratives were collected from the audio archives of *Pahichan* Radio, a radio program to raise awareness of LGBTI issues in Nepal. This investigation fulfilled the analytical goal of identifying components of the embodied and cognitive dispositions that inform LGBTI individuals' gendered practices.

The statistical analysis of the sociodemographic data for LGBTI individuals in Nepal led to an analytical categorization of this population. Further statistical analysis of the same data then led to an understanding of the statistical characteristics and nature of the discrimination faced by LGBTI individuals. This was complemented by analyzing the available narratives of LGBTI individuals, which in turn

helped understand their subjective experiences. Taken together, these analytical steps deepened our understanding of the social inequalities faced by LGBTI individuals and the sources of social change at three levels, namely individual subjective dispositions, social groups, and various social fields.

Next, a chronological account of the LGBTI movement in Nepal was constructed. The analysis relied on a set of 1,953 LGBTI-related articles, which were published in the Nepalese media but compiled by the news aggregator portal *Pahichan*.[63] Text mining operations, specifically hierarchical text clustering, was performed on the dataset to identify the most fundamental issues raised by the movement.

Thereafter, under the assumption that the inequalities resulting from the particular symbolic gender order are sustained by discriminatory classificatory schemes, several fundamental binary categorical schemes that sustain social inequalities in the Nepalese context were identified based on a wide variety of additional sources. For instance, the legal documents and annual reports of activist organizations were extensively used.

Once these key binary categorical schemes had been identified, the process through which LGBTI activists in Nepal have challenged them in different social fields was charted. The most important social fields in which these discriminatory categorical schemes are sustained were identified as the juridical, cultural, political, and bureaucratic fields. To identify the key actors representing the dominant and dominated voices in several different fields, 49 interviews, which were available from *Pahichan* Radio's archives, with key personalities in the LGBTI movement were analyzed. This was complemented by also analyzing additional sources of data, such as television panel discussions and documentaries. The classificatory struggles of the LGBTI movement

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[63] https://pahichan.com/

in Nepal were then mapped by analyzing how it challenged these classificatory schemes in the key social fields.

9.2 Summary of the major findings

The results of the correspondence analysis performed on the survey data were presented in Chapter 6. They suggested that four distinct analytical groups could be constructed based on patterns of identification among respondents with various identity labels for their sexualities and genders. These groups were AFTG (assigned female at birth, third gender), AFLG (assigned female at birth, lesbian/gay), AMTB (assigned male at birth, third gender), and AMGB (assigned male at birth, gay/bisexual).

Further correspondence analysis suggested that the inequalities faced by LGBTI individuals are not uniform but rather hierarchical and nested. For instance, individuals belonging to the AMTG category have comparatively less educational capital and face more severe discrimination in the form of the denial of social services, physical harassment, and verbal abuse. The AMGB category, in contrast, does not seem to face such severe discrimination in various social contexts because its members do not use various services, do not have to disclose their sexuality, or are simply not subjected to any form of discrimination.

Chapter 7 reported on the subjective lived experiences of LGBTI individuals based on an analysis of their narratives. For most of these people, it is deeply problematic to position themselves within the framework of established gender taxonomies, so they suffer identity ambiguity, both internally in terms of cognitive perceptions and externally in terms of the inequality faced in various social contexts. For example, intersexed individuals may not know how to describe their gender and therefore may not have a proper protocol for obtaining a citizenship certificate. Almost all LGBTI individuals face further

symbolic violence in terms of "invisibilization," where they remain unacknowledged or marginalized in the social sphere. Some examples of this include the loss of paternal inheritance for MtF (male-to-female) transgender individuals and the inability for an intersexed individual to obtain a driver's license.

This study also revealed that embodiment is a major component of sexual and gender identities. The bodily *hexis* (Bourdieu, 2001) or deportment of LGBTI individuals not only enables other members of society to categorize them—it may also perpetuate their discrimination. LGBTI individuals often face imposed practices to inculcate bodily dispositions (i.e., pedagogical actions) from various institutions, including the family and schools. They also find the traditional gendered division of labor constraining because it conflicts with their embodied and cognitive dispositions.

LGBTI individuals often find themselves performing sexual and gender roles and possessing skills that differ from those based strictly on biological sex, and some are ostracized due to this. In some cases, such as for transitioning transgender individuals, the physiological body can itself act as "negative body capital" (Huppatz, 2012) that inhibits their life chances, suggesting that individuals face more social stigma when their embodied gender identity is more visible, such as for transgender individuals.

Most LGBTI individuals also experience being constantly externally "objectified" and needing to comply with the dominant ways of perceiving the body, which may lead them to engage in body-alteration practices. Ultimately, these are all various types of symbolic violence, and they are a recurring theme in the lived experiences of sexual and gender minorities. This leads to them accepting and applying the dominant categorization schemes unquestionably and even feeling ashamed of their life condition (habitus).

The analysis of the media discourses related to the LGBTI movement in Nepal suggested that several issues are significant to the movement. In descending order of frequency, these are collective NHS organization, human rights, cultural inclusivity, the lived experiences of transgender individuals, social discrimination, physical violence, personal empowerment, citizenship rights, political participation, and health and education.

LGBTI activism can essentially be viewed as a struggle to problematize the fundamental social categorization schemes for sexuality and gender, and most symbolic orders or classification schemes can be reduced to a set of binaries. The classificatory struggle of the LGBTI movement in Nepal was therefore reduced to the following set of binaries: natural/unnatural, human/non-human, and citizen/non-citizen. In each binary, one pole is privileged in the social order, while the other is marginalized. LGBTI individuals are generally associated with the "lesser" half of these binaries, thus being seen as perverse, subhuman, and undeserving of basic citizenship rights.

Depending on the social fields being considered, the legitimacy of the accepted classificatory schemes varies. The purpose of LGBTI activism is to identify the nature of these classificatory schemes across various social fields and then delegitimize them before obliterating or transcending them through symbolic action. Symbolic action in this study was defined as any activity that challenges the dominant and naturalized social classification schemes, which we can also call the symbolic order. This study illustrated the classificatory struggles of LGBTI activists in Nepal in various fields, mainly the juridical, political, bureaucratic, religious, and cultural fields. The classificatory struggles were also identified as challenging the three abovementioned binaries predominantly in five social fields. The process for such struggles, along with the historical context of Nepal, was discussed in extensive detail in section 7.3.

The first binary pair, the natural/unnatural dichotomy, predominantly applies in the juridical field. Many national legal codes associate LGBTI individuals with perversion and sometimes class it as criminal behavior. Symbolic action then comprises challenging the legal codes that criminalize homosexual behavior and other legal provisions that discriminate against LGBTI individuals. For example, reference is made to medical–scientific and transnational human rights discourses while petitioning for such changes, eventually seeking to establish the "naturalness" of LGBTI individuals, and this seems to have been effective. The recent backtracking on previous achievements in securing LGBTI rights, however, shows the need to continue directly engaging in the juridical field to safeguard those rights that were previously won.

The natural/unnatural binary is also challenged in the religious and cultural fields, where viewing homosexuality and related behaviors as a form of perversion prevails in different sociocultural contexts, even among some service professionals like physicians and psychiatrists. In such cases, LGBTI activists appropriate local religious and cultural resources—such as festivals, myths, customs, mores, and so on—as the symbolic basis for cultural acceptance of gender fluidity. This study revealed that leveraging cultural resources effectively resonates with the public, thus helping to advance the activist agenda.

The second binary set, the human/non-human dichotomy, predominantly operates in the juridical and political fields. In the juridical field, LGBTI activists effectively mobilize the human rights discourse to argue for the "humanness" of LGBTI individuals and consequently their need to enjoy rights on par with those of other citizens. This is what they did in their petition to the Supreme Court in 2007. Most importantly, LGBTI activists have strategically exploited the developing political context in Nepal to benefit their movement. Following the political chaos after the fall of the monarchy and the end of the decades-long Maoist insurgency, LGBTI activists allied with

other oppressed social groups—such as ethnic minorities, women, the "untouchables," and so on—under the banner of securing human rights. During the constitution-building process in the political field, LGBTI activists collaborated with other contemporary social movements to establish LGBTI rights as basic human rights. An important spokesperson for the LGBTI movement in Nepal, Sunil Babu Pant, directly engaged in the political field as a member of Parliament and the Constituent Assembly, which was tasked with writing the new constitution. Direct political participation by LGBTI activists as part of various political parties in Nepal continues to advance LGBTI issues.

The third binary pair, the citizen/non-citizen dichotomy, primarily operates in the bureaucratic field. The concrete institutionalization of LGBTI rights mandates that individuals belonging to this category are considered citizens on par with any other citizen of the nation. Indeed, considering LGBTI individuals as citizens with all the associated citizenship rights is an important part of the LGBTI movement's classificatory struggle. It has engaged across different social fields but primarily the bureaucratic field, because even after establishing *tesro-lingi* as a separate legal category with equal citizenship rights in the juridical field, the socio-material aspects of citizenship can only be realized in the bureaucratic field. LGBTI activists have repeatedly petitioned for *tesro-lingi* to be used as a separate category in bureaucratic documents, such as citizenship certificates, marriage certificates, passports, driving licenses, and so on. Activities have also been initiated to safeguard other citizenship rights, such as inheritance, marriage equality, and adoption for LGBTI individuals. These activities were also extensively discussed in Section 7.3. In summary, safeguarding the rights won in the juridical field requires following this with further contestation in the bureaucratic field.

The findings related to the subjective experiences of LGBTI individuals and their classificatory struggles in Nepal are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10 **Major findings related to the LGBTI movement in Nepal**

Major themes	Major findings
Sexual and gender minority group (*tesro-lingi* category)	• Four distinct analytical groups of sexual and gender minorities (AFTG, AFLG, AMTG, AMGB) were identified through correspondence analysis. • The socio-demographic conditions facing each different group were identified. • The hierarchical and nested forms of discrimination faced by each sexual and gender minority group in various social fields were revealed.
Gender identities	• Characteristic dispositions of LGBTI individuals were identified based on their narratives, with these comprising identity ambiguity, invisibilization, embodiment, pedagogical action, conflicting gender and sexual roles, objectification, and self-denigration.
Classificatory struggles in various fields	• Ten significant clusters of media discourse surrounding the LGBTI movement were identified through a hierarchical text-clustering procedure (role of the NHS, human rights, cultural inclusion, transgender experiences, social discrimination, physical violence, personal empowerment, citizenship rights and political participation, mental and physical health, education). • The LGBTI movement of Nepal was contextualized within the Global South. • The classificatory struggle was reduced to a set of three binaries (natural/unnatural, human/non-human, citizen/non-citizen) in various social fields (juridical, political, educational, religious, and cultural). • Some effective symbolic strategies were identified: employing scientific and medical discourse, leveraging cultural resources, using the language of human rights, forming networks and allies, pursuing grassroots organization, identifying contemporaneous structural openings, and so on.

9.3 Theoretical contributions

The analysis of the LGBTI movement in Nepal suggests some theoretical extensions related to sexuality and gender issues. The theoretical contributions of this study, which are discussed in this section, are summarized thematically in Table 11.

First, gender should be considered as both a multi-dimensional and dynamic construct.–Gender order is often discussed in a one-dimensional manner, something dualistic and static, where there is only one form of domination (masculine) and one form of subordination (feminine) (Mottier, 2002). In other words, discrimination is unitarily and uniformly perpetrated and faced by males and females. This research, in contrast, points out that the gender order is actually fragmented and multilayered. Masculinity and femininity themselves are also not uniform, so they exist in multiple contextual forms and are not cohesive polar opposites. Furthermore, this study suggests that both masculinity and femininity are spread over a continuum, and it confirms the idea of a gender order comprising multiple masculinities and femininities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Second, gender relations should not just be seen as purely dualistic differences between the biological sexes. This may seem like well-established common knowledge or received wisdom, but Mottier (2002) points out that such deeply ingrained assumptions can lead to a problematic analysis of the gender order. For instance, mainstream feminist frameworks strongly conflate sexuality and gender and overlook the inequalities faced by individuals due to their unconventional gender identities and/or sexualities. Indeed, the intersectionality of sexual and gender identity is somewhat absent from feminism's analysis of the gender order (Mottier, 2002). In contrast, the exercise in categorization undertaken among LGBTI individuals, as shown in this research, clearly demonstrates that sexuality and

gender labels are distinct. Going further, this study also suggests that one possible way of understanding such intersectional identities may be to categorize sexual and gender minorities based on their assigned sex at birth combined with their self-identified sexual and/or gender identity labels, as was the case in this study. Thus, this study offers a methodological solution for understanding intersectional identities related to both sexuality and gender.

Third, this study revealed that gender identity is, to a large degree, constructed by the self. The assertion that there is an almost perfect correspondence between objective/available social categories and their subjective identifications is tenuous at best. Indeed, this research shows that there need not be such a one-to-one correspondence between objective social categories and personal identification with those categories. The choice need also not be confined to solely binary (male and female) or even ternary (male, female, and third gender) categories. For example, Bourdieu's analysis succumbs to this fallacy by conceptualizing gender inequalities purely in terms of masculine domination.

This study showed that individuals exhibit varying degrees of identification with several different gender categories, and identification with even the most established social categories can include an element of self-construction (Lane, 2006). In other words, the existing social categorization schemes, which shape social identities, should be considered together with the "agency" of sexual and gender minorities to recognize, understand, express, and generally frame their own understanding of their identities (Chambers, 2005). In fact, more fundamentally, this study suggests that the process through which the established categories have been historically naturalized should itself be problematized.

Fourth, gender identity is not just partly constructed by the self but

also contextually influenced to a large degree. Thus, gender identities not only assimilate some aspect of self-construction—they should also be regarded as being contingent upon the social context (Chambers, 2005; Lane, 2006). Indeed, gender identity is never isolated from the socio-historical context (Chodos & Curtis, 2002) but rather influenced by the existing institutions, historical context, and social order. Both the feminist and queer approaches explain the formation of gendered identities, particularly masculine and feminine identities, in broad detail, but such analyses do not consider how they interact with the social arenas in which they operate (McNay, 1999). One needs to understand the historical relations that exist among the political, cultural, and economic fields, as well as the contradictions therein, to understand the reproduction of the gender order.

Additionally, this study revealed the strong linkages between social categorization and culture. The legitimacy or "naturalness" of a particular sexual or gender category, or conversely the perception of perversion and resulting discrimination, is in large part defined both historically and culturally. Indeed, the repertoire of available gendered practices for individuals is always circumscribed by the particular cultural horizon (Bottero, 2010). As this study showed, some nominal sexual and gender minority groups, such as *hijra,* are cultural constructions themselves.

Fifth, accepting gender identity as being largely self-constructed allows us to explain the process of social change rather than the process of social reproduction alone. For example, only once we concede that gendered identities are partly self-constructed can we think of many instances where there is no direct correspondence between the objective social categories and individuals' subjective understanding of those categories. It is from these instances of identity ambiguity and conflict that gender reflexivity can emerge. Such germane gender reflexivity leads to the possibility of intersubjectively framing a common

experience of oppression (Bottero, 2010), which can in turn pave the way for collective movements to coalesce.

The above argument suggests that collective identities are negotiated consciously and collectively. If we allow for this possibility, it is not necessary for a symbolic representation of a social group to always communicate the lived experiences of that group's members. Instead, we dismiss the view that there is always a one-to-one correspondence between lived experiences and a discursive framing of those experiences for a collective movement. A collective identity, such as that of the *tesro-lingi* category, is formed out of strategic necessity, so it is a discursive construct rather than an ontological one.

Similarly, considering gender identity as being contextually influenced also opens up possibilities for social change. For instance, in this study, the various contradictions that are inherent across the juridical, political, bureaucratic, religious, and cultural fields has led to changes in the structuring of gender relations across the various social fields. For example, whereas the dominant understanding of the classificatory schemes in a particular field may regard LGBTI movements positively, in others an attitude of adversity may be ingrained. For instance, the dominant classificatory schemes for LGBTI individuals in the juridical field may be strongly institutionalized and discriminatory, while in the religious and cultural fields, they may be more tolerant and amenable to change. As this study revealed, symbolic action has much to do with exploiting the contradictions in the classificatory schemes that exist across various fields. In contrast, assuming that gender order manifests uniformly across the different semi-autonomous fields would risk excluding any detailed analysis of the particular historical conditions in which gender identities are constructed and reconstructed (Lane, 2006).

Sixth, with regards to the mechanisms for social change, this study

revealed that some additional claims can be made. As the analysis of the LGBTI movement in Nepal shows, contemporaneous structural changes, in the form of political changes in the country, played a very significant role in improving the living conditions of LGBTI individuals. This suggests that social change does not always need to be directed by invested agents (i.e., the oppressed parties) alone, because structural changes in the various fields may intertwine with the efforts of those agents (Hadas, 2003).

Even when we consider deliberate symbolic action in the political field, just because a certain social group is disadvantaged in certain fields does not mean they are uniformly disadvantaged in all the other fields as well. Thus, the notion that the power positions occupied by disadvantaged groups are reflected across all the fields uniformly should be abandoned (Bourdieu, 1985). If we were to instead adopt this notion, actions in the political field would merely reflect the structural positioning of other fields, thus rendering autonomous political action impotent. In contrast, this study reveals that LGBTI individuals in Nepal, despite being structurally disadvantaged in various social fields, have actively challenged the discriminatory gender classification schemes in the political field. Indeed, the political field has its own logic that exists independently of the power relations in other social fields. Now, because there are dissimilarities in the power relations across various social fields, these contradictions can be leveraged to initiate social change.

Seventh, it should be recognized that there are multiple operational dimensions of heteronormativity. Feminist analysis can, and must, be extended beyond patriarchy (masculine domination) to reach an understanding of heteronormativity and heteronormative domination. This study showed how gender as a symbolic order is sustained by binary categories like high/low, strong/weak, and so on, such that the unflattering option is associated with femininity in different spheres of

social life in order to sustain masculine domination. This study further extends this analysis and shows that there are similar categorical pairs, even more consequential ones, sustaining heteronormative domination. Whereas the gender binary is considered "natural" and "human," those not identifying within it are considered "unnatural," "perverse," or "subhuman." Similarly, in the civil sphere, whereas citizens who identify with the gender binary are regarded as being entitled to citizenship rights like marriage equality, those not identifying with it are considered second-rate citizens who are unworthy of several normal citizenship rights.

Furthermore, most importantly and *uniquely*, this study revealed that masculine domination and heteronormative domination are distinct but intersecting. All LGBTI individuals face an overall heteronormative domination, but unlike masculine domination, it is not experienced in a unitary and uniform manner. Instead there are hierarchies of oppression faced by each of the categories within the broader LGBTI community. This study posits that the differences in the inequalities faced by various categories of sexual and gender minorities is somehow related to the extent of the masculine domination that exists in a society. Irrespective of self-identified sexuality and gender labels, individuals who are assigned "male" at birth continue to enjoy some of the privileges associated with being a "male," although they may be diminished compared to those enjoyed by a "heteronormative male."

Table 11 Summary of the theoretical contributions

Core concepts	Extensions suggested
Gender identities	• The notion of a one-to-one correspondence between social constructions of gender and subjective identifications should be dismissed. • Identity involves self-construction and varying degrees of identification. • Intersectionality exists among sexuality and gender. • Distinguish between lived experiences, reflexive identities, and collective identities. • The identity-construction process involves intersubjective understandings and is therefore a group activity. • Allow for a greater degree of gender reflexivity resulting from identity ambiguity. • Consider identities as contingent upon the socio-historical context without any form of a-priori existence.
Gender order	• Gender order is fragmented and multilayered rather than binary and static. • Consider fragmented masculinities and femininities in a continuum rather than polar opposites.
Social oppression	• Need to go beyond understanding patriarchy (i.e., masculine domination) to understand heteronormativity and heteronormative domination. • Heteronormative domination is mediated by masculine domination in society. • Oppression does not take the form of just feminine subordination—it is multifaceted, hierarchical, and nested.
Social change	• The role of structural and other exogenous changes should be emphasized. • The great role of the political field should be recognized rather than considering it as merely a reflection of power relations in other fields. • Cultural resources should be applied as symbolic tools in alternative sociocultural contexts. • Positions in the "social space" and power relations within different autonomous social fields do not always correspond. • A discursive construction of a collective identity may be strategic without needing to correspond with all lived experiences.

9.4 Limitations and suggestions for further research

Whereas choices regarding theory and methods were deliberately made in order to answer the research questions in the given context, the choices themselves can obviously lead to limitations. This section explores some suggestions for further research based on the insights gained from this study. Table 12 summarizes these limitations and suggestions for future studies to consider.

First, the bibliometric review of studies related to sexuality and gender in the Global South identified a number of issues that warrant further exploration. Indeed, there is clearly a very limited number of studies that consider LGBTI populations in the Global South (Tan, 2015). This study helped fill some of this gap by exploring issues related to sexuality and gender in a particular local context in the Global South, namely that of Nepal. Some issues were not the focus of this study, however, and our understanding of them in the context of the Global South remains limited.

For instance, there is a need for studies in multiple contexts in the Global South that look at how structural factors, gender norms, and sociocultural practices sustain and reproduce gender-based violence, as well as cause disparities in mental and physical health (Watkins-Hayes, 2014). This phenomenon could be explored in the three different ways explained below.

First, researchers could try to understand the considerable diversity among indigenous constructions of masculinity, sexuality, and gendered behavior across the Global South. The resulting dialectic and the hybridization of notions of sexualities and masculinities based on their traditional and modern conceptions would be a fascinating topic to explore (Cheney, 2012). This study has shown that there is clearly a tight linkage between social identity and culture. The terms used to denote a particular sexual or gender category, combined with corresponding

perceptions of perversion and the resulting discrimination, is to a large extent understood as an interaction between the extant culture and modern definitions.

Second, researchers could try to understand the wide variety of identity markers and the resulting intersectional oppressions that are faced by minority populations in the Global South in various specific contexts, because this may enable a deeper theoretical understanding of the nature of how social categories are constructed and the resulting inequalities (Haldar, 2019). For example, research related to intersex issues is seriously lacking (Das, 2020). Overall, this suggested research avenue would entail in practice a study of the queer population and their intersecting ethnic, linguistic, and religious identities in various contexts in the Global South (Tan, 2015).

The current study revealed that the nature of the marginalization experienced by LGBTI individuals depends upon the intersectional social spaces they occupy. For example, those who are educated abroad and are economically well off, such as urban gays, occupy a privileged position compared to the indigenous *métis* who often need to engage in sex work on the streets. Similarly, the LGBTI rights movement considered in this study is largely an urban movement, with activities limited to key metropolitan cities. People in the rural areas, whether they belong to the LGBTI community or not, are not exposed to the debates raised by the movement. This study did not investigate the intersectionality of various attributes—such as ethnicity, profession, geographical location, education, beliefs, and so on—to determine how they may shape sexual and gender identities.

In addition, this study also somewhat glosses over the processes through which individual subjectivities coalesce into collective identities that in turn can be mobilized for popular movements, despite acknowledging the potential of intersectional identities in coalition building. The

intersectionality of various identity attributes—such as ethnicity, profession, domicile, educational level, and so on—with sexual and gender identity can lead to overlapping identity categories, hierarchies of oppression, and potential for coalition building, and this seems a very rich area for further investigation, both for the Nepalese context and the wider Global South.

Third, many territories in the Global South are still dealing with colonial and neo-colonial influences, although it is not highly relevant to the Nepalese context. Nevertheless, it is important to understand how colonial legacies shape socio-legal frameworks that pertain to sexuality and gender, as well as the contradiction that is inherent between local understandings and externally imposed frameworks in various other post-colonial contexts in the Global South (Chinwuba, 2015). Indeed, using a colonial or post-colonial perspective to understand sexuality and gender in the Global South seems like a promising research area.

Once we can understand how sexuality and gender relations and the related inequalities are shaped due to (a) the combination of tradition and modernity producing hybridized notions of sexuality and gender, (b) the intersection of multiple existing social categories producing gender inequalities, and (c) colonial and neo-colonial influences shaping socio-legal frameworks in a wide variety of contexts in the Global South, it may lead to two important outcomes.

Firstly, based on this understanding, we can design culturally and contextually relevant multi-stakeholder-initiated intervention programs to understand and address gender-based violence and health at various levels (Ibragimov & Wong, 2018). This is about developing gender empowerment practices that are ethically and contextually relevant without being perceived as a form of external coercion or ethnocentric universalism.

Secondly, for the initiation of social change, it can help us to understand

how LGBTI organizations across the Global South can, if not already, utilize hybrid frameworks to legitimize LGBT activism by using both supposedly universal transnational principles in addition to the local cultural elements and logic. A related avenue for further research would be to identify the cultural–psychological processes that define the collective experiences of a sexual and gender category and thus lead to shared meanings and behaviors. The current study has also demonstrated that leveraging cultural resources to reveal how society perpetuates sexual and gender discrimination is very effective. The processes through which cultural resources and performances are used to enact, reinforce, or renegotiate collective identity in different contexts (Taylor & Rupp, 2005) present a very rich and fruitful area for investigation.

The second major limitation of this study was a lack of emphasis on developments in the broader "social movement" literature and the methodological principles therein, despite their obvious implications for a study that considers LGBTI activism (McAdam & Tarrow, 2019). Whereas the creation of the *tesro-lingi* identity and the initiation of social justice through classificatory struggles across various social fields has been discussed in this study in considerable detail, a discussion of the organizational aspects of LGBTI movements was not the focus of the study. The potential for collective action depends not only on shared experiences of oppression but also on their symbolic representation (Bourdieu, 1987). Political groups only emerge if symbolic work is performed to form a group identity. Without appropriate delegation, leadership, symbolic representation, and mobilization, a social group cannot form and act collectively for social justice.

For instance, the NHS has been actively involved in collective organization, from acting at the grassroots level to setting up a network of LGBTI activist organizations that are geographically dispersed in Nepal, and this is called the Federation of Sexual and Gender Minorities

(FSGMN). The collective organization process itself, despite being highly relevant and interesting, was not explored in detail in this study. The NHS is a civil society organization, as are other organizations in this arena, including those who oppose LGBTI activism.

This study also revealed that despite having very different goals, the Maoist insurgency, the untouchables' movement, some ethnic groups, and the women's rights movement in Nepal developed "more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) in the collective movement for democracy. These contemporary political movements provided LGBTI activists with the opportunity to forge new networks, improve their access to resources, and establish their legitimacy. The processes for network mobilization in identity movements (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) and the role that networks of civil society organizations play in social movements was not a focus of this study, however.

Similarly, in the case considered in this study, the founder and CEO of the NHS played a large role in the LGBTI movement of Nepal for a decade by all accounts. Leadership plays a strong role in mobilizing collectively and institutionalizing delegation. The dedication and skills of a leader and the process for collective organization were not issues that were focused on in this study, however.

Hence, the process of collective organization, the role of civil society organizations, and the mobilization of inter-organizational networks in LGBTI movements, both in the Nepalese context and beyond, presents a potential avenue for further research. The role and skills of a leader, as well as leadership in general, in LGBTI movements is another issue that could be further studied. An effectiveness assessment of various strategies for achieving social justice in LGBTI movements, such as strategic use of the media and other cultural resources, is another related area that warrants further understanding in the Nepalese

context and beyond. The mechanisms behind most of the above issues are extensively discussed in the social movement literature, and this should provide a theoretical and methodological basis for any such future studies.

Third, as must be apparent by now, this study was greatly influenced by Bourdieu's theoretical and methodological approach. This study extensively applied Bourdieu's ideas to understand gender relations and, more specifically, LGBTI movements, which is in itself a significant achievement. Bourdieu himself never developed his ideas extensively in the case of gender relations, barring in his monograph *Masculine Domination*, or extended them to the case of LGBTI issues, except for in the appendix of the same book. Thus, applying Bourdieu's ideas required considerable theoretical and methodological innovation in this study. However, this study suggests there are several possibilities for not only extending Bourdieu's ideas to LGBTI issues but also complementing them with those from other theoretical streams to develop more novel approaches.

For instance, complementing Bourdieu's sociological theory with the social movement literature to explain LGBTI movements is one area where further development is possible. Several recent studies (Crossley, 2002; Crossley, 2003; Samuel, 2013; Husu, 2012) highlight the compatibility of Bourdieu's concepts with existing theories in the social movement literature. For instance, it is suggested that Bourdieu's concept of the "field" complements the political process theory in social movement studies (McAdam & Tarrow, 2019). Jasper and his co-authors (Goodwin & Jasper, 2003; Jasper & Polletta, 2019) suggest that Bourdieu's concept of the "field" helps to extend the political process theory in the social movement literature by integrating cultural and social processes into different autonomous fields, such as the bureaucratic and judicial ones, in addition to the political field.

Additionally, “frames” in the social movement literature have been defined as an interpretative schemata that allows agents “to locate, perceive, identify and label occurrences within their life space and the world at large.” Conceptually, “frames” and “habitus/dispositions” seem compatible, which suggests a possibility for some degree of synthesis (Husu, 2012) in future research.

The resource mobilization perspective of social movements (Edwards, et al., 2019) considers material, cultural, human, moral, technological, and time-related resources and how they can be mobilized to achieve a social movement’s goals. In Bourdieu’s theory, resources are understood as “capital” of four different types—namely economic, cultural, social, and symbolic—and they exhibit varying degrees of interchangeability with respect to each other. Some (Crossley, 2003) suggest that Bourdieu’s concept of “capital” can help formalize different types of resources in identity movements, including those that are embodied.

Similarly, how gender operates as a source of various forms of capital, or “negative” capital, across social fields for an LGBTI individual is another issue that warrants further elaboration. Due to all these reasons, when dealing with a multidimensional issue such as social movements, Bourdieu’s concepts can be complemented with rich ideas from the social movement literature. This could prove to be a highly fruitful avenue for future researchers who engage with both Bourdieu’s theory and the social movement literature.

Fourth, despite achieving some legal victories, the ambitions of LGBTI movements have languished due to several inherent antinomies in the movement due to the “paradox of recognition” (Aboim, 2020). In some cases, LGBTI individuals have faced a backlash from society after securing their legal rights. In many cases, the visibility and recognition of LGBTI movements in promoting the plights of LGBTI individuals has also had the ironic result of exacerbating the discrimination faced

by these individuals. The bibliometric literature review of studies about sexuality and gender in the Global South, including in Nepal, also supports this observation. Hence, future researchers may want to look beyond the initiation and organization of LGBTI movements and examine the results, such as the "antinomies" and "paradox of recognition" that can actually increase the discrimination faced by LGBTI individuals. Furthermore, such studies need not necessarily be confined to LGBTI movements—they could consider social/identity movements in other areas as well.

Fifth, and more practically, the first comprehensive survey of sexual and gender minorities in Nepal was conducted in 2014, so it would be valuable to again survey these sexual and gender minorities given some recent positive changes in their situation, perhaps also utilizing more methodologically sophisticated techniques. The existing survey also succumbed to sampling bias by over-representing the "assigned male at birth" population, and this could have had a distorting effect on the results and the overall representation of the entire LGBTI population in Nepal. Furthermore, the plight of intersexed individuals as a minority, even within the LGBTI community in Nepal, requires further research. Hence, any future survey should ensure that the intersex and "assigned female at birth" populations are faithfully represented.

Table 12 Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

Limitations	Suggestions for further study
Limited past research on sexuality and gender in the generalized Global South regarding: • Intersex issues • Influence of structural and sociocultural factors on gender inequality • Indigenous constructions of sexuality, masculinity, and gendered behavior • Colonial and neo-colonial influences and the hybridization of sexuality and gendered behavior • Policies for contextually relevant intervention policies Limited engagement with: • The social movement literature • The collective organization process in terms of the role of institutionalized representations and leadership in symbolic mobilization • Network mobilization and coalition building • Intersectional identities and intersectional coalition building	• Fulfill the research gaps for sexuality and gender relations in the generalized Global South • Integrate Bourdieu's sociology with the social movement literature • Study the role of leadership, collective organization, institutional representation, and symbolic action in LGBTI movements • Investigate network mobilization in LGBTI movements • Establish the role of culture and cultural resources in forming gender identities and their symbolic representations • Identify societal intersectional issues with sexual and gender identities and gender as capital • Study the antinomies of social movements and the paradox of recognition: When is success a failure? • Conduct a new survey of sexual and gender minorities in Nepal and include intersexed individuals

9.5 Assessing the LGBTI movement in Nepal and this study's relevance beyond its empirical context

It is undeniable that, to a large extent and in various ways, the "third-gender" *(tesro lingi)* movement in Nepal has successfully problematized the gender binary. However, these significant achievements are still limited. Table 13 supplies a summary of the key successes that the LGBTI movement in Nepal has been able to secure together with their limitations.

The movement has in many ways been successful. It has established that there are individuals who do not necessarily identify as either "male" or "female" (sex) or either "masculine" or "feminine" (gender roles). The movement's success in raising awareness about alternate gender categories in the public psyche is perhaps its most important achievement. Moreover, it has been largely successful in making the discrimination toward the LGBTI population of Nepal highly visible to the international community.

The movement has been successful for several other reasons, however. It has combined HIV interventions with grassroots protests against several instances of violence and discrimination against LGBTI individuals. It has also explored legal options alongside social advocacy. The movement has also succeeded in leveraging traditional cultural resources like festivals and "queering" them up. It has also managed to form coalitions with other civil society movements that advocate democracy, human rights, and citizenship equality. Overall, this has made it possible for LGBTI individuals to live empowered lives. In these regards, the Nepalese LGBTI movement may provide a template for other movements working to secure LGBTI rights in different contexts. However, despite these significant achievements, the successes of the movement have also been limited.

First, the movement, despite its success in achieving numerous

legal and administrative reforms for sexual and gender minorities, has not fundamentally challenged the inherent essentialism in the categorization schemes for sexuality and gender. The movement still describes gender in a categorical context through the “third gender” (*tesro-lingi*), because it is just another category in addition to gender binary. It does not fundamentally problematize a social order based on gender and its necessity in the first place (Monro, 2007). The movement thus fails to fundamentally question the arbitrary nature of the gender order and consequently gender as a social construct.

Second, the adoption of terms like “tesro-lingi,” “anya,” and “others” to categorize the LGBTI population on official documents has also proved to be problematic. While the use of *“anya”* recognizes that there is more than just the gender binary, it is nonetheless a category that keeps the existing binary intact, because it derives from the fact that someone does not fit into the binary. The use of *tesro-lingi*, however, recognizes that there are two other genders, so it is not a binary category based on strict biological correspondence. However, describing gender in a categorical way, even in a ternary (e.g., male, female, and others) rather than binary system, reinforces the simplistic binary view of gender and the naturalness of the binary gender order. There is also ample evidence that LGBTI individuals themselves have not been satisfied with this classificatory scheme. For instance, the all-encompassing *tesro-lingi* term is not so readily accepted by cisgender gays and lesbians.

Third, the movement has not been successful in articulating gender fluidity. The term *tesro-lingi* has come to be used as an umbrella term, one that is *supposed* to include a range of diverse gender identifications. The all-embracing use of *tesro-lingi* as a political concept, however, is contentious. In the Nepalese context, the term *tesro-lingi* is often used to exclusively refer to non-binary transwomen and transmen (i.e., those who were assigned male at birth but identify as female and vice versa). Those who identify themselves as belonging somewhere within

a spectrum of “maleness” and “femaleness”—such as intersexed, bi-gendered, androgyne, and various other individuals—find it difficult to articulate their identity with the current framework. This category cannot assimilate all non-binary people, specifically those who do not identify (exclusively or at all) as women or men. The movement is therefore unable to account for the full spectrum of gender diversity, and this has the effect of marginalizing those who cannot, or will not, define themselves through essentialist terms any longer.

Fourth, the LGBTI movement in Nepal conflates sexual identity (sexuality) with gender identity. Conventionally, the desire to transition to another gender is termed transsexuality, whereas same-sex desires in cisgender individuals is understood as homosexuality (Valentine, 2004). However, the *tesro-lingi* movement also categorizes distinct cisgender sexual identities—such as gay, lesbian, and bisexual—as third-gender individuals, despite sexual orientation not being the same as gender identity. As a result, the movement fails to consider the intersectionality of gender and sexual identity. For transgender individuals, the fluidity of the gender identity necessitates a degree of intersection with sexual identity, while for bisexuals, the fluidity of the sexual identity necessitates some intersectionality with gender identity. Such intersections are inadequately understood within the current framework.

Fifth, the LGBTI movement in Nepal fails to recognize that gender identity is not just fluid across a continuum but also malleable (Bornstein, 1998). Gender identity may change over the lifespan of an individual and need not necessarily be categorically fixed to ternary categories. The narratives of the LGBTI individuals in Nepal revealed that changes in their gender identity, gender roles, and sexual orientations over time often reveal complex interactions among these domains. Within the current framework, the unarticulated assumption is that despite there being multiple sexual and gender identities, gender transition

is nevertheless seen as having culminated when someone becomes a conventional “man” or “woman.” Yet several narratives, even those of Nepalese transgender individuals, show that for most individuals, their understanding and experiences of gender shift throughout their transition and even their lives. The essentialist categorization of sexual and gender identities and the corresponding static signification in legal documents cannot possibly account for such identities in transition.

Sixth, the LGBTI movement in Nepal is clearly biased toward MtF transgender issues. By design or accident, the LGBTI movement was primarily conceived as a transgender (*tesro-lingi*) movement. Even the textual analysis of the media output for the movement clearly demonstrates that it is mainly preoccupied with transgender issues. By using the false unifying umbrella of “*tesro-lingi*,” the movement attempts to establish a collective identity at the expense of understanding individual gender identities and/or sexualities. Transgender individuals and gays/lesbians share experiences of oppression when conforming to the heteronormative gender order and sexual identity constructs. However, gay and lesbian individuals differ from transgender individuals in terms of their embodiment as a basis for gender and sexual identity. This study already demonstrated how there is a hierarchy of oppression among various sexual and gender minorities. The LGBTI movement, however, homogenizes the lived experiences of fragmented sexual and gender identities, leading to the unintended consequence of prioritizing transgender experiences while marginalizing those of others.

Seventh, the LGBTI movement in Nepal has not adequately addressed intersectional societal issues. By essentializing “third-gender” as a category, the movement universalizes the diverse experiences of individuals who are subjected to multiple levels of oppression due to their intersectional gender and sexual identities. Indeed, someone’s identity is not just about his or her own self-identification

but also the intersections with larger social structures and the power differentials that are associated with belonging to a certain group or groups (Shields, 2008). While individuals may come together because they do not belong to the heteronormative order, they may still not share many other social traits. Intersections with any other number of social variables—such as ethnicity, race, and class—can result in varying degrees of social inequality. The implication of these many intersectionalities is that there are numerous forms of identity and oppression even within a collective social category like the *tesro-lingi* group. While it is important to recognize and draw strength from the commonalities of individuals with multiple intersectional, oppressed social identities, it should not be at the expense of understanding the individual lived experience (Sullivan, 2003). The LGBTI movement's uniform portrayal of the oppression faced by sexual and gender minorities in Nepal is far from the truth.

Eighth, despite the numerous successes of the LGBTI movement in Nepal, it is clear that there was never a strategic vision or plan beyond securing legal recognition of the *tesro-lingi* category. This is clear from the movement's failure to address the corresponding antinomies in the LGBTI movement (Bernstein, 1997; Bourdieu, 2001), such as the essentialization of the *tesro-lingi* category, the ghettoization of certain identities, and the indirect exacerbation of the discrimination faced due to elevating the visibility of LGBTI identities, even after the goals of the movement had been largely achieved. As was stated earlier, the *tesro-lingi* issue is equated with transgender issues in the LGBTI movement of Nepal, leading to the invisibilization of intersex, bisexual, and lesbian communities from under the banner. Similarly, some sexual and gender minorities object to assimilating into an incomprehensible ternary gender system, pointing out that it will only exacerbate instances of persecution. This has been referred to as the paradoxical "cost of recognition" (Richardson, 2015; Aboim, 2020) in the literature. The LGBTI movement in Nepal does not seem to have

any strategic plan to counter this paradoxical "cost of recognition," nor has it in the past.

The successes and failures of the LGBTI movement in Nepal may prove to be relevant beyond this context. First, for all social activists contesting the established social categories, there is always a dilemma as to whether to consider identity categories as being open to interpretation or fixed (McPhail, 2004). Conceptualizing identity categories as being fixed can help oppressed individuals to recognize their disempowered status as qualifying them to belong to a group, thus allowing for a group consciousness to emerge. However, going too far in this direction can also reinforce the "natural" foundation for oppressing a social group. For LGBTI activists, there is also a need to recognize the tensions between the essentialist and social constructivist natures of identity categories and skillfully articulate the nature of these social categories. The central issue here is how to create and legitimize a joint identity to represent a multiplicity of sexual and gender subjectivities without falling into the trap of relativism. All these issues indicate the complexity of identity categories and social taxonomies. No matter how progressive they may seem, all classification schemes can ultimately turn out to be a means for misclassification, resulting in further marginalization of the oppressed.

Second, to understand the social inequalities faced by LGBTI individuals, it is necessary to understand how multiple oppressed social identities can interact dynamically. The simple intersectionality of gender identity and gender roles shows us how individuals can have conflicting gender identity and gender roles, such as effeminate males, and face social discrimination as a result. Similarly, as previously discussed, many identities can be conceived by considering the intersection between gender and sexual identities. If one were to further add a temporal element to the identity-construction process—such as past, current, and future identities—there are even more possibilities. One may also

consider the embodiment and visibility of identities as triggering social inequalities. Furthermore, intersections with all manner of other social categories—such as ethnicity, race, and class—can result in different forms of social inequality. One must always take into consideration the multiple dimensions of social categories to recognize the multitude of experiences and identities (Shields, 2008). It is indeed a difficult task for social activists to achieve group solidarity without marginalizing anyone within the group.

Third, the LGBTI movement in Nepal clearly demonstrates that it is important to leverage cultural resources to make the way in which society institutionalizes gender discrimination more apparent. Nepalese activists have been successful in strategically using cultural entertainment—such as beauty pageants, music, plays, and festivals—as a medium to express political ideas. Culture itself is a site of contestation, one where symbols and identities are forged, negotiated, and debated by groups with different and competing interests. Such cultural performances can be used to present and deconstruct gender and sexual categories and make gender and sexual fluidity and oppression more visible (Taylor & Rupp, 2005). Cultural resources are clearly symbolic tools that can be used to achieve social change, whether they are used as formal ideologies or symbolic-expressive actions (Williams, 1995).

Finally, anyone engaged with initiating identity movements, including LGBTI movements, should always be clear from the outset about the inertia of habitus and the staying power of culture. Even after a decade-long movement in Nepal, many people in society perceive the LGBTI movement in Nepal as being "fed" to the public in a relatively short period, with it being funded by international LGBTI networks. As one interviewee in this study stated, *"Social change does not occur through the waving of a magic wand; it occurs only through the change of 'minds.'"* It is there necessary to understand from the outset that

changing "minds" is an unpredictable, gradual, and grueling process.

Table 13 **The key successes and failures of the LGBTI movement in Nepal**

Assessing LGBTI movement in Nepal	
Successes	**Failures**
• Greater awareness of sexual and gender minority issues • International visibility • HIV interventions • Grassroots organization • Legal and administrative reforms • Appropriation of cultural resources • Coalition building with other marginalized communities	• Essentialization of categories (sex/gender/gender identity/sexuality/sexual orientation) • Failure to consider the intersectional nature of sexual and gender identity • Failure to consider societal intersectional issues • Not inclusive of all forms of gender identity (limited gender fluidity) • No consideration for identities in transition • Exclusive focus on transgender issues • Antinomies of success: Various costs of recognition and elevated persecution

9.6 Epilogue

I will end this journey, and signal the next, with a story from the Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra that is told in Mahāyāna Buddhism (Watson, 1996). In this story, there is a conversation between Śāriputra, a chief disciple of the Buddha, and a goddess:

> Śāriputra: Goddess, what prevents you from transforming yourself out of your female state?
>
> Goddess: Although I have sought my "female state" for these twelve years, I have not yet found it. Reverend Śāriputra, if a magician were to incarnate a woman by magic, would you ask her, "What prevents you from transforming yourself out of your female state?"
>
> Śāriputra: No! Such a woman would not really exist, so what would there be to transform?
>
> Goddess: Just so, Reverend Śāriputra, all things do not really exist. Now, would you think, "What prevents one whose nature is that of a magical incarnation from transforming herself out of her female state?"
>
> Thereupon, the goddess employed her magical power to cause Śāriputra to appear in her form and to cause herself to appear in his form. Then the goddess, now transformed into Śāriputra, said to Śāriputra, now transformed into a goddess, "Reverend Śāriputra, what prevents you from transforming yourself out of your female state?"
>
> And Śāriputra, now transformed into the goddess, replied, "I no longer appear in the form of a male! My body has changed into the body of a woman! I do not know what to transform!"
>
> The goddess continued, "If the elders could again change out of the female state, then all women could also change out of their female states. All women appear in the form of women in just the same way as you appear in the form of a woman. While they are not women in reality, they appear in the form of women." With this in mind, the Buddha said, "In all things, there is neither male nor female."
>
> Then the goddess released her magical power, and each returned to their

> usual form. She then said to him, “Reverend Śāriputra, what have you done with your female form?”
>
> Śāriputra: I neither made it nor did I change it.
>
> Goddess: Just so, all things are neither made nor changed, and they are not made and not changed; that is the teaching of the Buddha.

Gender, sexuality, and all other categories are arbitrary and misrecognized social constructs without any inherent ontological substratum, yet they have very real consequences for many people’s lives, bodies, and destinies. By discarding ignorance and understanding the constructed nature of social categories, it may become possible to transcend dualities, break free of the binary, and reach a state of heightened awareness and compassion. Eventually, it may even become possible to realize that not just are the social categories misrecognized constructs but also that, in reality, no ontological “self” exists.

Sarva-dharmāḥ śūnyatā-lakṣaṇā (All things have the characteristic of emptiness).

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APPENDIX 1 RESEARCH CLUSTERS AND REFERENCES IDENTIFIED FROM BIBLIOMETRIC STUDY

Cluster	Articles (%)	Theme	References (figure 4)	Source	Local citations	Main issue
1	23	Gender based violence	9	Dunkle K, 2004, V363, P1415, Lancet, Doi 10.1016/S0140-6736(04)16098-4	28	Sexual violence
			2	Pronyk P, 2006, V368, P1973, Lancet, Doi 10.1016/S0140-6736(06)69744-4	22	Inter Partner Violence (IPV)
			10	Jewkes R, 2010, V376, P41, Lancet, Doi 10.1016/S0140-6736(10)60548-X	18	Gender based violence
2	8	MSM and sexual Health	6	Baral S, 2009, V4, Plos One, Doi 10.1371/Journal.Pone.0004997	22	HIV among MSM in Sub Saharan Africa
			16	Fay H, 2011, V15, P1088, Aids Behav, Doi 10.1007/S10461-010-9861-2	17	Discrimination against same sex partners
			78	Epprecht M, 2012, V111, P223, Afr Affairs, Doi 10.1093/Afraf/Ads019	11	Secretive sexual behaviors and HIV risks
3	14	Indigenous masculinities and sexualities	12	Connell R, 2005, V19, P829, Gender Soc, Doi 10.1177/0891243205278639	25	Social constructions and historical specificity of masculinities
			62	West C, 1987, V1, P125, Gender Soc, Doi 10.1177/0891243287001002002	18	Gender as routine accomplishment in everyday interaction
			21	Courtenay W, 2000, V50, P1385, Soc Sci Med, Doi 10.1016/S0277-9536(99)00390-1	12	Construction of masculinity in a relational context
			40	Morrell R, 2012, V15, P11, Men Masc, Doi 10.1177/1097184X12438001	11	Hegemonic masculinity
4	20	Intersectionality	39	Crenshaw K, 1989, P139, Univ Chicago Leg For, Doi Doi 10.1525/Sp.2007.54.1.23	16	Black feminist criticism
			77	Mohanty C, 1988, V30, P61, Feminist Rev, Doi [Doi 10.1057/Fr.1988.42, 10.1057/Fr.1988.42]	23	Third world' women
			50	Mccall L, 2005, V30, P1771, Signs, Doi 10.1086/426800	18	Separability of analytical and identity categories
			14	Cho S, 2013, V38, P785, Signs, Doi 10.1086/669608	16	Intersectional mobilization
5	10	Ethnocentric Universalism	73	Puar Jasbir K, 2007, Terrorist Assemblage	31	Homonationalism and cultural superiority
			38	Murray S, 1998, Boy Wives Female Hus	17	Homosexuality and gender diversity in traditional African societies
			30	Hoad N, 2007, African Intimacies R	15	Incommensurateness of western sexual categories with the various forms of corporeal intimacy practiced in Africa
			43	Awondo P, 2012, V55, P145, Afr Stud Rev, Doi 10.1017/S0002020600007241	10	Homosexuality as Western intrusion or homophobia
6	5	Minority stress and stigma	4	Meyer I, 2003, V129, P674, Psychol Bull, Doi 10.1037/0033-2909.129.5.674	17	LGBTI population and minority stress
			48	Link B, 2001, V27, P363, Annu Rev Sociol, Doi 10.1146/Annurev.Soc.27.1.363	13	Cognitive categories, stereotyping and stigma

			20	Parker R, 2003, V57, P13, Soc Sci Med, Doi 10.1016/S0277-9536(02)00304-0	11	HIV and AIDS related stigma
7	7	De-colonial feminism	51	Mohanty C, 1984, V12/13, P333, Boundary Two	21	Colonization and the construction of a 'third world' subject
			57	Grewal I, 1994, Scattered Hegemonies	12	Neo and post-colonialism and feminist perspective
			68	Lugones M, 2010, V25, P742, Hypatia, Doi 10.1111/J.1527-2001.2010.01137.X	12	Colonialization and modern gender system
8	4	Cultural imperialism and relativism	27	Chakrabarty D, 2000, Provincializing Euro	11	Northern vs. Southern perspective
			28	Connell R, 2007, So Theory Global Dyn	19	Universalization of Northern theories and viewpoints
			67	Smith L, 2012, Decolonizing Methodo	10	Western gaze and the 'othering' process
			91	Oyeronk O, 1997, Invention Women Maki	14	Gender and sexuality as a 'western' construction
9	4	Institutional differences, transnational solidarity networks & gender politics	34	Msibi T, 2012, V24, P515, Gender Educ, Doi 10.1080/09540253.2011.645021	14	Marginalization education sector
			35	Nel J, 2008, V21, P19, Acta Criminologica	12	Legislative and policy responses to homophobic discrimination
			69	Cock J, 2003, V26, P35, Women Stud Int Forum, Doi 10.1016/S0277-5395(02)00353-9	11	Minority coalition, democratization and rhetoric mobilization
			70	Tucker A, 2009, Queer Visibilities S	9	Social categorization and mobilization
10	5	Gender equity and development	81	Kabeer N, 1994, Reversed Realities G	13	Gender focused development theories
			74	Mcclintock A, 1995, Imperial Leather Rac	11	Materialist feminist perspective
			54	Mohanty C, 1991, P51, 3 World Women Politi	15	Third world' subject and neoliberal globalization
TOTAL	100					

APPENDIX 2 SOURCES OF DATA AND THEIR PURPOSES FOR RESEARCH

Uses	Types of data	Sources
Statistical analysis	• Survey of gender minorities in Nepal (N=1178)	Conducted by NHS, Williams Institute and UNDP in 2014
Used to develop the case narrative and instances of symbolic struggles	• For the community by the community, Annual Report 2008 • Blue Diamond Society, Colours of Life, Annual Report 2009 • Blue Diamond Society, 10 years of making a difference: Milestones the BDS- Journey, Annual Report 2010. • Brief history of Blue Diamond Society (2010) • Documentation of Human Rights Abuse and Media Report: A Review, prepared by Raju Ram Bhandari, advocate; for Global Fund / FPAN Project (2010).	Obtained from Parashuram Rai, Deputy Director of NHS
Cited for illustrative purposes	• "The loudest whisper in society: Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice in regard to sexual health of transgender male to female in Kathmandu, Nepal" (Dalia Nori, 2012) • "Legal, political and social change: The case of sexual and gender minorities in Nepal" conducted by (Eirin Winsnes Isaksen, 2011) • "The Violations of the Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Persons in Nepal" submitted by Blue Diamond Society (BDS) and Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights (2013) • "Bridges to justice: Case study of LGBTI rights in Nepal" conducted by (Kylie Knight, 2015)	Available on the web
Cited for illustrative purpose	• 'Stories of Intersex People in Nepal' (Eshan Regmi, 2016).	Received from Neel Heera Samaj
Writings and reflections of Sunil Babu Pant, the lead figure for sexual and gender minorities in Nepal	• Pahichan Online news portal (Pahichan.com) • Pahichan YouTube Channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCE80a3UYX576OWdW7EVggaQ • Medium Daily Digest (Sunil Babu Pant's personal blog) (https://medium.com/@sunilbabupant)	Available in the web
To develop narrative of symbolic struggles in the juridical field	• All legal provisions currently operational or amended in Nepal, available in the archive maintained by The Nepal Law Commission (NLC). (www.lawcommission.gov.np.) • Original unredacted version of the first country code (Muluki Ain 1854 AD) available at the physical National Archives of Nepal, Kathmandu • *Nepal Kanun Patrika* (Nepal Law Journal) archive of all Supreme Court verdicts since 1958 AD, available in Nepali only, archived online at http://www.supremecourt.gov.np/nkp/browse	Available on the web and physically in the National Archives of Nepal

All radio programs (52 in total) were transcribed and translated from Nepali to English, producing altogether 78 pages of key extracts that were used as the basis for the final analysis[64].	• Radio Pahichan Programs from 11.06.2014 to 26.9.2014, altogether 41 episodes, ranging from 17.58 minutes to 54.58 minutes • Radio Pahichan Program from 5.7.2018-22.7.2018 upon request to Madhav Dulal, correspondent of Pahichan Media	Available from Neel Heera Samaj and additional request to Madhav Dulal, corresponde nt of Pahichan Media
To identify significant clusters of media discourse	• Collection of media items consisting of 1953 news articles of various lengths retrieved from Nepal's only LGBTI news aggregator portal, pahichan.com. The earliest article retrieved was from 5.8.2014 and the latest article retrieved from 1.6.2020.	Pahichan.co m
Documentari es of the sexual and gender minorities movement	• Journey of a decade (broadcasted on 10.2.2011) • *Pahichan ko yatra: Sangarsha Ka 14 Barsa* (The journey of identity: 14 years of struggle), published on 12.09.2014	Available online
Various televised panel debates on Nepalese TV channels	• *Samakon* panel discussion, episode 59 broadcasted on 08.14.2015 and hosted by Nirmala Sharma. • *Sajha Sawal* (Public debate) episode 457, hosted by Vidha Chapagain, published on 18.11.2016 • "Nepal Minds" broadcasted by Ramsar Media Pvt. Ltd. in AP1 HD Channel on 9.1.2018 • "Focus of the Day" program aired by Himalayan Television, organized as part of International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO), 17.5.2012 and hosted by Sunil Babu Pant • *"Nepal Aja"* (Nepal Today) program with the first transgender couple of Nepal as guests • 9 different televised episodes called 'Pahichan' (Identity) hosted by Sunil Babu Pant (2012)	Recorded versions available on YouTube

[64] Since this was the primary source of data for this research project, it is presented in more detail in Appendix 2.

APPENDIX 3 THE LIST OF INTERVIEWS USED IN THE RESEARCH

Interview details	Duration (in minutes)	Date (dd.mm.yy)	Host of the episode
1. Richa Ghimire, popular actress 2. 2 anonymous Nepali students	39:46	7.6.2012	Sunil Babu Pant, Pahichan TV program (Episode 8)
3. Prem Bahadur Thapa, Lawyer	23:52	15.06.2014	Gauri Nepali
4. Ramhari Neupane, District Level Program Coordinator, Chitwan (Interviewed by Indira Neupane) 5. Bharatmani Poudel, Local Development Officer, Chitwan (Interviewed by Indira Neupane, Journalist)	23:06	1.07.2014	Bishnu Adhikari
6. Nur Prasad Khatiwada, Jhapa Damak Metropolitan City (Interviewed by Laxmi Nepal, journalist) 7. Dambar Baral, City town collaboration program coordinator, Damak (Interviewed by Laxmi Nepal, Journalist) 8. Damak NHS District Incharge (Interviewed by Pranita Chheetri, journalist) 9. Sapana, Dancer, Mahottari (Interviewed by Pradip Yadav, Journalist)	48:34	15.07.2014	Gauri Nepali
10. Rakesh Upadhyaya, Far Eastern Society, Health Assistant (Interviewed by Raj Chaudhari, journalist) 11. Birendra Chaudhari, Dhangadi Municipiality (interviewed by Raj Chaudhari, Journalist)	45:32	16.07.2014	Gauri Nepali
12. Binod Mohra, INSEC (Informal Sector Service Centre), Janakpur Chief (Interviewed by Pradip Yadav, Journalist)	31:25	21.07.2014	Bishnu Adhikari
13. Jay Bahadur Chaudhari, Media worker, Subarnapoor, and other LGBTI community members (Interviewed by Raj Chaudhari, Journalist)	17:58		
14. Gyanu Gaire, MP, Nepal CPN-UML, MP, Far-West Dadeldhura, Untouchable (Dalit) women activist	46:22	23.07.2014	Bishnu Adhikari
15. Binod Sharma, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) (Interviewed by Laxmi Nepal, Journalist) 16. Taranath Baral, Local teacher, Itahari 7	25:25	24.07.2014 (Part 1)	Bishnu Adhikari
17. Pashupati Khadka, City Councilor (Interviewed by Laxmi Nepal, Journalist)	23:09	24.07.2014 (Part 2)	

18. Ganga Sitaula, Regional Chairman, Hotel Proprietors' Association, Jhapa (Interviewed by Laxmi Nepal, Journalist)			
19. Durga Poudel, Deputy Chairman, Rastriya Janamorcha Party, MP	48:39	25.07.2014	Bishnu Adhikari
20. Gangadhar Parajuli, Media Worker, Pokhara Sunaulo Publication (Interviewed by Bipana Paneru, Journalist)	21:23	29.07.2014 (Part 1)	Bishnu Adhikari
21. Anonymous, Officer, Neel Heera Samaj (NHS) Makwanpur branch (Interviewed by Suraj Thapa)	25:18	29.07.2014 (Part 2)	
22. Students, Subekshya, (Nepal) & Kripa (studying abroad)	47: 43	31.07.2014	Bishnu Adhikari
23. Surendra KC, Health volunteer, Public healthcare branch, Lalitpur sub-Metropolitan, (Interviewed by Ambika Dahal, Journalist) 24. Laxmi Shrestha, Hotel operator, Makwanpur (Interviewed by Indira Neupane, Journalist)	21:12	1.08.2014	Bishnu Adhikari
25. Abhinash Karna, Terai Human Rights Network, Third Alliance, Janakpur/Bhairawaha: (Intervieweed by Pradip Yadap, Journalist)	16:11	4.08.2014	Bishnu Adhikari
26. Deepak Karki, National Human Rights Association, Regional office (Interviewed by Binod B.K, Journalist)	32:17		
27. Karuna Bajracharya, public health care officer, Lalitpur Sub metropolitan, public health care office (Interviewed by Ambika Dahal, Journalist)	47:45	5.08.2014	Bishnu Adhikari
28. Muna Magar,Program Coordinator, NHS branch office, Morang Patthari (Interviewed by Laxmi Nepal)	28:23	6.08.2014 (Part 1)	Bishnu Adhikari
29. Ishwari Prasad Sigdel, (Interviewed by Laxmi Nepal)	18:01	6.08.2014 (Part 2)	
30. Gauri Nepali (Host of 'Hamro Sawal Hamro Sahabhagita Program' run by Unicef and Federation of Sexual and Gender Minorities) 31. Sudip Gautam (Peer leader, 'Hamro Sawal Hamro Sahabhagita Program' run by Unicef and Federation of Sexual and Gender Minorities)	47:33	7.08.2014	Bishnu Adhikari
32. Bhakti Shah, Chairman, LGBTI Student Forum	43:37	8.08.2014	Bishnu Adhikari

<table>
<tr><td>33. Pinky Gurung, Transgender activist
34. Dr. Baburam Bhattarai (renowned politician)</td><td>17:38</td><td>4.09.2014
(Part 1)</td><td rowspan="2">Bishnu Adhikari</td></tr>
<tr><td>35. Bhumika Shrestha, Transgender activist
36. Jyoti Thapa, Student</td><td>29:56</td><td>4.09.2014
(Part 2)</td></tr>
<tr><td>37. Pinky Gurung, Transgender activist</td><td>23:16</td><td>5.09.2014</td><td>Bishnu Adhikari</td></tr>
<tr><td>38. Nabin Kumad Baiba/Anjali Lama (adopted name), transgender model</td><td>20:53</td><td>19.09.2014
(Part 1)</td><td rowspan="2">Bishnu Adhikari</td></tr>
<tr><td>39. LGBTI community members (Interviewed by Ambika Dahal, journalist)</td><td>23:05</td><td>19.09.2014
(Part 2)</td></tr>
<tr><td>40. Aditya Bandhu Upadhya, Indian Lawyer, Sexual and gender minority rights activist</td><td>47:20</td><td>22.09.2014</td><td>Bishnu Adhikari</td></tr>
<tr><td>41. Sunil Adhikari, Physiotherapist, Sambhav Physio Clinic, Central Baneshwar (Interviewed by Naresh Fuiyal, Journalist)</td><td>21:35</td><td>23.09.2014
(part 1)</td><td rowspan="2">Bishnu Adhikari</td></tr>
<tr><td>42. Bishnu Karki, District Land Rights Forum, Rupandehi (Interviewed by Binod BK, Journalist)</td><td>25:41</td><td>23.09.2014
(part 2)</td></tr>
<tr><td>43. Yagyaraj Sunuwar, MP, Nepal Communist Party (UML), Okhaldhunga, Electoral area 1, (Interviewed by Ramesh Wagle, Journalist)</td><td>48:46</td><td>26.09.2014</td><td>Bishnu Adhikari</td></tr>
<tr><td>44. Mitrasen Dahal, Nepal Congress Party leader (Interviewed by Ramesh Wagle, Journalist)</td><td>42:32</td><td>29.10.2017</td><td>Naresh Fuyal</td></tr>
<tr><td>45. Parasuram Tamang, Nepal Communist Party, Maoist Central Faction, Proportional Representation System Candidate on behalf of adhivasi/ janajati ethnic community (Interview taken by Madhav Dulal)</td><td>43:45</td><td>27.11.2017</td><td>Ambika Dahal</td></tr>
<tr><td>46. Dr. Laxmi Raj Pathak, Committee member to study the possibility of same sex marriage
47. Sujan Pant, LGBTI lawyer</td><td>42:20</td><td>5.04.2018</td><td>Madhav Dulal</td></tr>
<tr><td>48. Angel Lama, Miss Pink 2018</td><td>54:59</td><td>27.5.2018</td><td>Madhav Dulal</td></tr>
<tr><td>49. Anonymous LGBTI community member</td><td>38:56</td><td>23.6.2018</td><td>Naresh Fuiyal</td></tr>
</table>

APPENDIX 4 THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Blue Diamond Society and Williams Institute Nepal LGBT Survey

SECTION 1

General information about the interviewee (and his or her household)

1. What is your age? ___________

2. What is your current sex/gender?*

   Female ☐ Male ☐ Other ___________

3. What sex/gender were you assigned at birth, as on your birth certificate?*

   Female ☐ Male ☐ Intersex ☐

4. What is your caste/ethnic group? ___________

5. What is your religion? ___________

6. What language do you speak? ___________

7. Do you have a citizenship certificate?*

   Yes ☐ No (Skip to #12) ☐

8. What is the sex/gender on your citizenship certificate?*

   Female ☐ Male ☐ Other ☐

9. Have you ever attempted to change the sex/gender on your citizenship certificate?

   Yes ☐ No (Skip to #12) ☐

10. Were you successful?

Yes (Skip to #12) ☐ No ☐

11. Why were you not successful? ___________

12. Can you read and write?*

Read and write ☐ Read only ☐ Cannot read or write ☐

13. What is the highest class or degree you completed?* ___________

14. Are you currently attending school/college?*

Yes ☐ No ☐

15. What is your relationship status?*

Never Married/currently single ☐	Once married ☐
Multiple spouse ☐	Re-married ☐
Widow/widower ☐	Divorced ☐
Separated ☐	Partner (not legally married) ☐
Boyfriend/girlfriend (non-cohabiting) ☐	Boyfriend/girlfriend (cohabiting) ☐
Other (Specify) ____________	

SECTION 2

Information related to sexual orientation and gender identity of the interviewee (and sexual partners)

16. There are many terms people use to identify their sexual orientation and gender identity. Now I am going to read some terms to you and I'd like to know to what degree do the

following terms apply to you? For each term you must answer “not at all,” “somewhat,” or “strongly”(circle answers)*

	Not at all	Somewhat	Strongly
*Méti**	☐	☐	☐
*Ta**	☐	☐	☐
*Kothi**	☐	☐	☐
*Panthi**	☐	☐	☐
*Hijara**	☐	☐	☐
*Fulumulu**	☐	☐	☐
Transgender*	☐	☐	☐
Gay/lesbian*	☐	☐	☐
Heterosexual/straight*	☐	☐	☐
Bisexual*	☐	☐	☐

What is the primary term you use to refer to your sexual orientation/gender identity? *

____

17. People are different in their sexual attraction to other people. Which best describes your feelings? Are you attracted to (multiple answers possible)*

Métis ☐ *Kothis* ☐

Panthis ☐ *Hijaras* ☐

Males ☐ Females ☐

Transgender men ☐ Transgender women ☐

Other ___________

18. In the past 12 months, who have you had sex with? (multiple answers possible)

Métis ☐ *Kothis* ☐

Panthis ☐ *Hijaras* ☐

Males ☐ Females ☐

Transgender men ☐ Transgender women ☐

I have not had sex ☐ Other ___________

19. [This question only for those whose answer in #15 indicates they are in a relationship.] If in a relationship, to which degree do the following terms about sexual orientation and gender identity apply your spouse/partner?

	Not at all	Somewhat	Strongly
Méti	☐	☐	☐
Ta	☐	☐	☐
Kothi	☐	☐	☐
Panthi	☐	☐	☐
Hijara	☐	☐	☐
Fulumulu	☐	☐	☐
Transgender	☐	☐	☐

Gay/ lesbian	☐	☐	☐
Heterosexual/straight	☐	☐	☐
Bisexual	☐	☐	☐

20. How many people know you are __________ (sexual orientation/gender identity as indicated in #16.1)

	None	A few	Some	Most	All	Not applicable
At home?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
At work?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
At school?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

21. Does your boss or supervisor know that you are ________?

Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know ☐

22. The following series of questions considers your experiences of various forms of abuse and discrimination in different settings when you try to access commercial or governmental services. We are trying to gather information about abuse and discrimination that happened only because of your sexual orientation or gender identity, so try to think of those cases specifically. For each setting, we ask that you identify whether you have had any of the following experiences: Denied treatment or service; verbally harassed; or physically assaulted. You can select more than one answer.*

FOR INTERVIEWERS: If the participant answers 'no' to any of the scenarios, please ask them to clarify why it is not applicable.

	Denied treatment or service	Verbally harassed	Physically assaulted	No
At a store or supermarket, or market*	☐	☐	☐	☐

Bus, micro-bus, taxi or airplane*	☐	☐	☐	☐
Hospital or health clinic*	☐	☐	☐	☐
Police officer/station*	☐	☐	☐	☐
Judge or legal system (CDO)*	☐	☐	☐	☐
Government office/agency*	☐	☐	☐	☐
School, college or other education institution*	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION 3

Information about the living situation of the interviewee

23. What is your current living situation?

Family home ☐ Home with friends or others ☐

Homeless (skip to #31) ☐ Home/room alone ☐

24. If you live in a home, what is the type of house occupied by the household?

Owned ☐ Rented ☐

Institutional ☐ Other (Specify) ___________

25. If you live regularly in a structured dwelling, what is the structure of the house?

Foundation

Mud-bonded bricks/stone ☐ Cement-bonded bricks/stone ☐

Concrete with pillar ☐ Wooden pillar ☐

Other ___________

Outer wall

Mud-bonded bricks/stone ☐ Cement-bonded bricks/stone ☐

Wood/planks ☐ Bamboo ☐

Unbaked bricks ☐ Other ___________

Roof

Straw/thatch ☐ Galvanized iron ☐

Tile/slate ☐ Concrete/cement ☐

Wood/planks ☐ Earth/Mud ☐

Other ___________

26. What is the main source of drinking water in your home?

Tap/pipe ☐ Tube-well/Hand pump ☐

Covered well/*Kuwa* ☐ Uncovered Well/*Kuwa* ☐

Spout water ☐ River/stream ☐

Other (Specify) _______________

27. What is the type of cooking fuel usually used in the home?

Kerosene ☐ LP Gas ☐

Cow Dung ☐ Biogas ☐

Electricity ☐ Other (Specify) ___________

28. What is the usual source of lighting in the home?

Electricity ☐ Kerosene/lantern/candle ☐

Biogas ☐ Solar ☐

Other (Specify) __________

29. What type of toilet facility are you using in the home?

Flush ☐ Pit toilet ☐ No toilet ☐

30. Do you have the following facilities in the house? (mark all that apply)

Radio ☐ TV ☐ Cable TV ☐

Computer ☐ Internet ☐ Telephone ☐

Mobile phone ☐ Motor ☐ Motorcycle ☐

Bicycle ☐ Other type of vehicle ☐ Refrigerator ☐

None of these ☐

31. If you are homeless, where do you normally sleep at night?

Park ☐ Street ☐ Sex work ☐

Client's home ☐ | Different place every night ☐ | Friend's home ☐

Other (Specify) ___________

SECTION 4

Information about the economic situation of the interviewee

32. What was your total income in the past 12 months?* ___________

33. What was your total income over the past one month?* ___________

34. Concerning your personal total income over the past one month, which of the following is true?*

    It was less than adequate for your personal needs ☐

    It was just adequate for your personal needs ☐

    It was more than adequate for your personal needs ☐

    Not applicable ☐

35. If you live with other people, how many other people? (If alone/zero skip to #38) ____________

36. If you live with other people, who earns the most income?* ___________

37. What is your relationship to this person? ___________

38. Have you lived outside your current district for more than 2 continuous months over the past 5 years?

    Yes ☐ No (skip to #42) ☐

39. Where was the place? (district or country)

40. Did you work there?

Yes ☐ No ☐

41. What primary activity (work) did you do when in that place?

This section is now going to ask questions about your current situation.

42. Do you currently legally own a house in any part of Nepal?

Yes ☐ No ☐

43. Do you currently legally own land in any part of Nepal?

Yes ☐ No ☐

44. What paid work did you usually do in the last 12 months? (indicate how many months for each type of work)

Agriculture ☐ months

Salary/Wage ☐ months

Own Economic Enterprise ☐ months

Extended Economic Activity ☐ months

Social Work ☐ months

Household work ☐ months

Study (student) ☐ months

No work ☐ months

Daily labor work ☐ months

Sex work ☐ months

Other ☐ months (Specify) __________

45. If you did not work during the last 12 months, what was the reason for usually not working during the last 12 months?

Student ☐ Housework ☐

Aged ☐ Pension/Retired ☐

Disability ☐ Sickness or chronic illness ☐

Unable to get employment ☐ Other ____________

SECTION 5

Experiences of discrimination. This section contains a number of open-ended narrative response questions. Remind the person you are interviewing that it is important for you to record the details of their responses, so they should speak slowly and clearly, and you should write clearly and in detail. Use the extra narrative response form if you need extra space, noting the question number.

46. Have you ever in your life been denied a job or been fired from a job because you are or were perceived to be_________ [from #16.1]?*

Yes ☐ No ☐

47. Have you ever in your life been harassed verbally or in writing on the job by a coworker because you are or were perceived to be _______?*

Yes ☐ No ☐

48. Have you ever in your life been physically harassed or assaulted by a co-worker because you are or were perceived to be________?*

Yes ☐ No ☐

49. Have you ever left a job because the environment was not very accepting of LGBTI people?*

    Yes ☐ No ☐

50. Have you ever in your life been evicted by a landlord or realtor because of your sexual orientation or gender identity or because you were perceived to be _________?*

    Yes ☐ No ☐

51. Have you ever in your life been prevented from buying or moving into a house or apartment by a landlord or realtor because you are or were perceived to be LGBT?*

    Yes ☐ No ☐

52. If you have experienced discrimination or a human rights violation based on being perceived as LGBT, to whom did you report it?*

    Lawyer ☐ NGO ☐

    Police ☐ Court ☐

    National Human Rights Commission ☐ Did not report (skip to #54) ☐

53. What was your reporting experience? ___________

54. Why did not you report it to anyone? ___________

55. In your opinion, has the situation for sexual and gender minority people in Nepal gotten better over the past 10 years? * ___________

SECTION 6
Information about HIV services, information, and discrimination

Some of the questions in this section deal with private health information. All of this information will be kept confidential. However, if the interviewee is uncomfortable answering any of the questions, he or she may choose to pass.

56. Have you heard about HIV?

Yes ☐ No (end survey; go to quality check section) ☐

57. How did you first hear about HIV?

Radio ☐ Television ☐ Newspaper/leaflets/brochures ☐

Friends ☐ Organizations ☐ Health workers ☐

Textbooks ☐ Other (Specify) ___________

58. How many times have you been tested for HIV?

Never (end survey; go to quality check section) ☐ Once ☐

Twice ☐ Three times ☐

More than three times ☐

59. When was your most recent HIV test?

Within the last three months ☐ Within the last six months ☐

Within the last year ☐ More than one year ago ☐

60. Where was the test performed?

Hospital ☐ VCT Center ☐ other government ☐

Private hospital/clinic ☐ NGOs ☐ other private setting ☐

BDS/CBO ☐ Other (Specify)___________

61. What was the outcome of your HIV test?

Positive (go to #62) ☐

Negative (interview is finished; go to quality check section) ☐

Prefer not to answer (interview is finished; go to quality check section) ☐

I don't know (interview is finished; go to quality check section) ☐

62. How many people know about your HIV status at home? ___________

63. How many people know about your HIV status on the job?

    Unemployed ☐ Number ___________

64. How many people know about your HIV status at school?

    Not in school ☐ Number ___________

65. Think about the last time you went to the doctor/hospital/clinic for a non-HIV related issue, did the doctor or other medical professional who treated you know your HIV status?

    Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know ☐

66. Are you currently taking anti-retroviral treatment?

    Yes ☐ No ☐

67. Do you currently have any health problems?

    Yes ☐ No ☐

68. Are you currently treating those health problems?

    Yes ☐ No ☐

69. Where do you go for these services?

Hospital ☐ VCT Centre ☐

Other government ☐ Private hospital/clinic ☐

NGOs ☐ other private setting ☐

BDS/CBOs ☐

70. About how many of your co-workers know that you are HIV positive? I will read you some options to consider.

All of my co-workers ☐ Almost all ☐

About half ☐ Less than half ☐

None of them ☐ I am not employed ☐

71. Does your boss or supervisor know that you are HIV positive?

Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know ☐

72. The following series of questions considers your experiences of various forms of abuse and discrimination in different settings when you are trying to access commercial or governmental services based on your HIV status. For each setting, we ask that you identify whether you have had any of the following experiences: Denied treatment or service; Verbally harassed; or Physically assaulted You can select more than one answer.*

FOR INTERVIEWERS: if the participant answers "no" to any of the scenarios, please ask them to clarify why it is not applicable.

	Denied treatment or service	Verbally harassed	Physically assaulted	No
At a store or supermarket, or market*	☐	☐	☐	☐

Bus, microbus, taxi, or airplane*	☐	☐	☐	☐
Hospital or health clinic*	☐	☐	☐	☐
Police officer/station*	☐	☐	☐	☐
Judge or legal system*	☐	☐	☐	☐
Government office/agency*	☐	☐	☐	☐
School, college, or other education institution*	☐	☐	☐	☐

73. If you are HIV positive and have experienced discrimination based on your status, how has your behavior changed as a result?* ___________

74. If you have experienced discrimination or a human rights violation based on being HIV positive, to whom did you report it?*

Lawyer ☐	NGO ☐	Police ☐
Court ☐	National Human Rights Commission ☐	Other (Specify) __________
Any/all above answers (go to #75) ☐	Did not report (skip to #76) ☐	

75. What was your reporting experience?*

76. Why didn't you report it to anyone?*

NOTE: All questions used from the survey are denoted by asterisk (*)

APPENDIX 5 SEXUAL AND GENDER IDENTITY LABELS AND RESPONDENTS' PATTERNS OF IDENTIFICATION

	Primary term_sample[65]	Assigned male_multiple[66]	Assigned female_multiple	Male_one indentity[67]	Male_strong[68]	Male_somewhat	Male_no	Female_strong[69]	Female_somewhat	Female_no
Gay /Lesbian	25.19 %	12.11 %	51.92 %	61.27 %	9.49 %	10.10 %	11.00 %	49.41 %	35.27 %	3.59 %
Third gender	56.30 %	22.66 %	48.08 %	18.14 %	5.01 %	9.30 %	20.49 %	44.87 %	7.42 %	5.61 %
Ta	0.00 %	3.91 %	0.00 %	1.96 %	13.44 %	9.00 %	3.48 %	2.27 %	4.41 %	11.29 %
Heterosexual	0.11 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.49 %	12.84 %	12.66 %	2.92 %	1.18 %	20.65 %	10.60 %
Panthi	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.49 %	14.17 %	7.17 %	2.88 %	1.14 %	2.90 %	11.51 %
Bisexual	5.37 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	9.31 %	13.08 %	13.47 %	2.07 %	0.54 %	17.63 %	10.84 %
Kothi	4.16 %	21.09 %	0.00 %	0.49 %	5.24 %	11.13 %	19.16 %	0.59 %	1.51 %	11.65 %
Méti	8.54 %	24.22 %	0.00 %	7.35 %	4.15 %	9.96 %	21.90 %	0.00 %	4.41 %	11.58 %
Fulumulu	0.00 %	16.02 %	0.00 %	0.49 %	7.83 %	10.03 %	14.41 %	0.00 %	4.41 %	11.58 %
Hijara	0.33 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	14.76 %	7.17 %	1.69 %	0.00 %	1.39 %	11.74 %

65 Respondents were asked to state the term that describes their primary gender and/or sexual identity (open-text response).
66 Respondents identified with multiple identity terms, some of which refer to sexual behaviour as well as sexual orientation and gender identity (multi-selection response).
67 Terms by respondents (assigned male at birth) who only identified strongly with one term.
68 Degree of identification with each identity term (strongly/somewhat/not at all) for male-assigned sample.
69 Degree of identification with each identity term (strongly/somewhat/not at all) for female-assigned sample.

APPENDIX 6 NATURE OF CORRESPONDENCES BETWEEN CONSTRUCTED LGBTI GROUPS, SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES, AND EXPERIENCES OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY

GENDER GROUPS		AMTG[70]	AMGB[71]	AFTG[72]	AFLG[73]
Reading abilities					
l1	Read and write	58.40 %	25.53 %	8.40 %	7.66 %
l2	Read only	80.95 %	9.52 %	7.14 %	2.38 %
l3	Cannot read or write	90.67 %	7.77 %	0.52 %	1.04 %
Education level					
e1	Informal primary	71.03 %	17.06 %	5.16 %	6.75 %
e2	SLC	61.54 %	21.43 %	9.52 %	7.51 %
e3	Higher education	37.57 %	46.41 %	8.84 %	7.18 %
Enrollment age					
eage1	Below 35	35.00 %	44.29 %	10.00 %	10.71 %
eage2	Above 35	50.00 %	50.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Relationship status					
r1	Single	53.20 %	31.99 %	8.75 %	6.06 %
r2	Relationship	77.31 %	21.39 %	0.49 %	0.81 %
r3	Widow	80.00 %	20.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
r4	Separated	55.56 %	7.41 %	22.22 %	14.81 %
r5	Cohabitation	50.00 %	16.18 %	16.91 %	16.91 %
r6	Other	38.20 %	5.62 %	28.09 %	28.09 %
Income (in NPRS)					
i1	No income	68.83 %	23.38 %	4.55 %	3.25 %
i2	25,499	64.33 %	22.93 %	7.64 %	5.10 %
i3	41,499	64.84 %	22.26 %	6.18 %	6.71 %
i4	116,999	62.02 %	20.56 %	9.76 %	7.67 %
HIV status					
hiv1	Denial	64.32 %	22.37 %	6.88 %	6.44 %
hiv2	Verbal harassment	81.82 %	4.55 %	9.09 %	4.55 %
hiv3	Physical harassment	42.86 %	28.57 %	28.57 %	0.00 %
Discrimination in bus. microbus. taxi. airplane					
b1	Denial	96.02 %	0.00 %	1.99 %	1.99 %
b2	Verbal harassment	85.80 %	8.48 %	4.45 %	1.27 %
b3	Physical harassment	87.09 %	6.46 %	5.65 %	0.80 %
b4	Not used	40.07 %	51.93 %	0.00 %	8.00 %
b5	Identity not visible	31.44 %	45.00 %	10.15 %	13.42 %
b6	No discrimination	60.48 %	23.66 %	7.78 %	8.08 %
Discrimination in government office/agency					

[70] assigned male third gender
[71] assigned male gay/bisexual
[72] assigned female/third gender
[73] assigned female lesbian/gay

gov1	Denial	77.46 %	11.27 %	11.26 %	0.00 %
gov2	Verbal harassment	82.92 %	9.76 %	4.88 %	2.44 %
gov3	Physical harassment	75.00 %	12.52 %	0.00 %	12.48 %
gov4	Not used	70.88 %	16.03 %	6.99 %	6.10 %
gov5	Identity not visible	34.48 %	47.27 %	8.38 %	9.87 %
gov6	No discrimination	65.83 %	20.37 %	6.52 %	7.29 %
Discrimination in health services					
h1	Denial	88.23 %	6.25 %	4.79 %	0.74 %
h2	Verbal harassment	88.75 %	6.33 %	3.51 %	1.41 %
h3	Physical harassment	77.00 %	15.35 %	0.00 %	7.66 %
h4	Not used	69.24 %	21.20 %	6.82 %	2.74 %
h5	Identity not visible	31.82 %	44.55 %	9.68 %	13.95 %
h6	No discrimination	62.63 %	21.73 %	7.71 %	7.93 %
Discrimination in judicial offices					
j1	Denial	88.47 %	3.85 %	7.68 %	0.00 %
j2	Verbal harassment	83.37 %	8.30 %	5.56 %	2.77 %
j3	Physical harassment	50.14 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	49.86 %
j4	Not used	64.45 %	20.64 %	8.44 %	6.47 %
j5	Identity not visible	42.57 %	45.13 %	5.73 %	6.57 %
j6	No discrimination	69.34 %	19.07 %	4.99 %	6.60 %
Discrimination in market					
m1	Denial	95.92 %	2.04 %	2.03 %	0.00 %
m2	Verbal harassment	82.79 %	9.53 %	5.66 %	2.02 %
m3	Physical harassment	91.36 %	6.05 %	2.59 %	0.00 %
m4	Not used	47.13 %	46.99 %	0.00 %	5.88 %
m5	Identity not visible	30.19 %	45.12 %	10.02 %	14.67 %
m6	No discrimination	64.11 %	21.65 %	7.12 %	7.13 %
Discrimination from police					
p1	Denial	93.80 %	2.65 %	2.66 %	0.89 %
p2	Verbal harassment	88.72 %	7.53 %	3.07 %	0.69 %
p3	Physical harassment	89.68 %	8.11 %	1.48 %	0.74 %
p4	Not used	50.33 %	26.74 %	12.42 %	10.51 %
p5	Identity not visible	28.01 %	47.18 %	10.42 %	14.39 %
p6	No discrimination	66.80 %	26.88 %	6.32 %	0.00 %
Discrimination in education system					
s1	Denial	81.93 %	8.34 %	6.94 %	2.78 %
s2	Verbal harassment	77.39 %	13.56 %	8.04 %	1.00 %
s3	Physical harassment	76.33 %	15.79 %	5.26 %	2.62 %
s4	Not used	70.72 %	19.33 %	5.56 %	4.39 %
s5	Identity not visible	37.60 %	39.84 %	10.56 %	12.00 %
s6	No discrimination	64.60 %	20.69 %	6.71 %	8.00 %

APPENDIX 7 CATEGORIES DISTINGUISHING VARIOUS GENDER GROUPS

	AMGB	**AMTG**	**AFTG**	**AFLG**
Literacy	Highly educated	Cannot read or write	Lower than AMGB and AFLG in most cases	Less educated than AMGB
Enrolment age	Enrolled to school in time normally	Low educational level	Enrolled in school at a later age (above 35)	Enrolled in school at a later age (above 35)
Relationship status	Freedom to explore sexual relationships, often in uncategorized relationships Engaged in 'sham marriages'	Social stigma attached to relationships	Unconventional relationship status (cohabiting, separated from heterosexual relationships or other non-categorizable relationships)	Unconventional relationship status (cohabiting, separated from heterosexual relationships or other non-categorizable relationships)
Embodiment	No conflicts Effeminate homosexuals derided as *'chakka'* and *'hijada'*	Significant mark of identity Conflicted bodily hexis Body stigma Necessity to meet body ideals (cosmesis) (objectification public gaze) Sacrilegious feminization	Significant mark of identity Conflicted bodily hexis Body stigma Necessity to meet body ideals (cosmesis) Objectification (public gaze)	No conflicts Butch femme derided as *'chakka'* and *'hijada'*
Conflicts in sexual/gender roles	Conflicts in sexual roles Possible to continue with sexual relationships while being in a heterosexual marriage	Conflicts in gender roles More freedom in defining gendered tasks in a household after transition	Conflicts in gender roles More freedom in defining gendered tasks in a household after transition Higher degree of societal control and monitoring of the body	Conflicts in sexual roles Homosociability allows same-sex bonding
Invisibilization in public life	Homosociability allows same-sex bonding	Invisibilization in public life No recognition from law	Invisibilization in public life No recognition from law	Homosociability allows same-sex bonding
Self-denigration	Yes in most cases	Severe, mostly for those who are engaged in sexual labor	Yes in most cases	Yes in most cases
Male privilege accruing from patriarchy	Yes No restriction on mobility	Loss after transition	Higher privilege after transition	Face masculine domination (patriarchy)

	Free to explore sexuality Social prestige 'Izzat' associated with being a male	Higher social stigma after transition Loss of patrilineal properties	More freedom after transition Social prestige *'Izzat'* associated with being a male after transition	Higher degree of societal control and monitoring of sexuality Restricted mobility
Discrimination in public transportation	Not necessary to use public transportation Invisible identity on public transportation	Denial of services Verbally abused Physically abused	Public transport not used frequently, no discrimination on public transport when not used	Invisible identity in public transportation
Discrimination in bureaucracy	Invisible identity	Highly visible identity Medical tests to receive citizenship	Face denial of services Physical harassment	Invisible identity
Discrimination in healthcare services	Invisible identity	Denial of services Verbal harassment Invisibilization Less awareness of medical treatment Hormone therapy absent	Reluctance to reveal HIV status overwhelmingly Face physical harassment Invisibilization Hormone therapy absent	Invisible identity
Discrimination in judicial system	Could be physical harassment if identity known Invisible identity	Denial of services	Proportionately high degree of physical harassment in the judicial system	Proportionately high degree of physical harassment in the judicial system
Discrimination in public places and market	No need to use Invisible identity	Denial of services Physical harassment	Not frequented often	Invisible identity
Discrimination from police	Invisible identity	Denial of services Physical harassment Verbal harassment	No incidences reported	Invisible identity
Discrimination in education system	Invisible identity	Corrective procedures and pedagogical actions Invisibilization	Invisibilization	Invisible identity

APPENDIX 8 THE TIMELINE OF EVENTS IN THE CASE STUDY

1990s	• People's Movement *(Jana Andolan I*) • End of autocratic party-less Hindu monarchical governance system • Transition to a democratic nation with a constitutional multi-party democratic system
1992	• HIV-targeted donor money first entered Nepal in the early 1990s (First case of HIV reported in 1988)
1994	• May 14: Nepal ratified ICCPR
1996	• Start of the Maoist insurgency, which metastasized around social exclusion and the Hindu-dominated political system and was launched by the ultra-left Maoist rebels
1990s-2000s	• Bitter rivalries between political parties and erosion of state efficacy • Heightened sensitivity toward human rights issues and social exclusion (primarily due to full-blown Maoist insurgency) • Proliferation of civil society and NGOs • NGO activities focused on empowering civil society and inflows of donor investments due to loss of functionality and the accountability of existing governments • Registration of more than 30,000 NGOs with the Social Welfare Council of Nepal (the government body that oversees NGO activities) • Opening up of discourse surrounding sexuality, gender identity, and ethnicity suppressed during the previous authoritarian regime
2000	• HIV pandemic primarily among MSM (Men who have Sex with Men) • Start of informal community organization in a park in central Kathmandu called 'Ratna Park'
2001	• Maoist insurgency escalates to a full scale armed conflict • June 1: Massacre of the royal family in the palace grounds, sending the country into uncertainty and chaos • September: Establishment of first LGBTI rights activist organization, Neel Heera Samaaj (NHS), led by Sunil Babu Pant with an initial focus on HIV prevention and care
2002	• Abrupt seizure of the power by King Gyanendra covertly behind nominated governments • Supreme court rules marital rape a crime, excludes sexual and gender minority related issues
2004	• June 8 (4 Ashad 2061): Law student/private lawyer Achyut Prasad Kharel files a petition at the Supreme Court demanding the government disband NHS. • August 9-24: State violence against LGBTI community increases (several examples available) in the wake of the petition • A member of the police slits the throat of a *méti* after forcing her to perform oral sex • 39 members of NHS imprisoned and held without charge and released after 13 days, branding them as a 'public nuisance' • Exposure to national and international media about the plight of the LGBTI community in Nepal

2005	• NHS supports lesbian couple Laxmi Ghalan and Meera Bajracharya in escaping threats of rape and death; the two go on to establish Mitini Nepal (the first women's LBT rights organization) • February 1: King Gyanendra, the reigning monarch, suspends parliament and appoints himself as the head of new government and blocks influential political parties • Martial law instituted in the name of controlling the Maoist insurgency • April 13: Harassment and attacks on the transgender population by the security forces increase • NHS calls attention by appealing to human rights organizations and galvanizing international support
2006	• Large-scale people's movement *(Jana Andolan II*) as retaliation against royal coup and concurrent Maoist insurgency • January-March: Frequency of attacks against LGBTI community by the police and security forces increases which Human Rights Watch refers to as a 'sexual cleansing drive' • May: NHS marks international day against Homophobia, inviting dignitaries such as Ian Martin (representative of UN's OHCHR), who gives speech on LGBTI rights (May) • August: NHS contacts international partners: UN draws attention to the Ministry of Home Affairs condemning police violence • NHS begins door-to-door campaign • NHS begins political campaign, such as handing the South African constitution to political parties to pressurize political parties into incorporating LGBTI rights into Nepal's new forthcoming constitution • November 6-9: Yogyakarta Principles was created by a group of international human rights experts and activists, among which Sunil Babu Pant is also a signatory with 29 others • Nov 21: Signing of Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between Maoist rebels and the government • End of the decade-long Maoist insurgency and civil war

2007	• Restoration of the multi-party democratic system • Restored parliament compiles interim constitution • Transformation from world's last Hindu kingdom to a secular democratic republic • Political vacuum and discourse around inclusive and participatory 'New Nepal' that allows the entry of ethnic politics and debate around inclusivity and participation in the political process (including sexual and gender minorities) • Civil society groups organize a conference called 'Nepal's New Constitution and the Fundamental Rights of the Minorities' • January: Invited dignitaries—such as South African Justice Edwin Cameron, the country's first openly gay and HIV-positive judicial leader, who speaks about South Africa's 1994 constitution and suggests steps for future justice and equality for LGBTI communities • April: Four LGBTI NGOs petition Supreme Court to end discriminatory laws based on sexual orientation and gender identity • 14 July: Five *méti*s subjected to beating and sexual abuse by three policemen • 21 December: Supreme Court ruling allowing the legal recognition of a 'third gender' and the abolishment of discriminatory laws toward this 'third gender' • Two Nepali army soldiers engaged in lesbian relationships dismissed from military service

2008	• May: Hindu Monarch abdicates throne • April: General elections held, and a group of gay men stand in Nepal's first post-war parliamentary election • April 10: Results of general election announced • Sunil Babu Pant, founder and executive director of NHS, wins a seat in parliament as a representative of the UML party under the proportionate representation system. He is first openly gay, federal-level elected official in all of Asia
2009	• Establishment of the Sexual and Gender Minority Student Forum
2010	• National Youth Policy acknowledges the need to protect youths belonging to minority and marginalized groups. Nepal's National Youth Policy defines youths to include 'women, men and third gender of the 16-40 age group'
2011	• June: Nepal adds third gender category to its census • Government officials announce plans to build the first South Asian center to harbor victims of violence motivated by LGBTI hate • NHS faces government suspension of its funds
2012	• May 27: Constitutional Assembly dissolved without producing a constitution • June: The Ministry of Home Affairs instructs its district administration offices to grant citizenship to sexual and gender minorities under the 'others' category • The apex court in 2012 recognizes live-in relationships for a lesbian couple. Nepali Supreme Court in November 2012 allows a lesbian-identify woman to live with her female partner and give right to self-determination in respect of sexual orientation. • Nepal hosts South Asia's first LGBTI sports festival inviting openly gay American Olympic diving champion Greg Louganis as guest of honor
2013	• January 1: A circular is forwarded to regional administration offices by a ministry (Ministry of Home Affairs) after a directive regarding the distribution of citizenship certificates to sexual and gender minorities using 'others' as the gender category • Election of another constitutional assembly to produce a new constitution; 62 LGBTI people declare their candidacy in the upcoming parliamentary election • April 2, 201: The United Nations Human Rights Commissioner, Navi Pillay, sends a letter to Madhav Prasad Ghimire, Nepal's Minister for Foreign Affairs, expressing concern over allegations that in recent weeks, some 50 LGBTI activists and transgender persons had been detained by police under the POA. • The Supreme Court of Nepal rules that the Nepalese Government must issue passports with the third gender option.
2012/2013	• NHS leadership accused of financial mismanagement • Government shows undue delay in renewing the 2012-2013 operating license of NHS • License revoked by District Administration Office (DAO) of Kathmandu, after it was only renewed after 8 months
August 2014	• Nepal's most prominent crusader for equal rights for sexual minorities, Sunil Babu Pant, is among the record 278 nominees for this year's Nobel Peace Prize • Ministry of Law and Justice starts revising the Civil and Criminal Code to replace the old legal code (Muluki Ain)

2015	- January: The Supreme Court orders the government to issue passports in three genders - February: The Sexual Harassment at Workplace Prevention Act 2015 came into effect in February 2015 - February: A report on same-sex marriage, released in February, recommends that Nepal legalize same-sex marriage, ensure family protections, and strike out discriminatory provisions from the civil and criminal codes. It was submitted by a committee of experts formed in 2010 at the behest of the Supreme Court to carry out a feasibility study and submit their report to Chief Secretary Leela Mani Poudyal - August: The new body of laws—organized into two codes, namely the Criminal Code *(Muluki Faujdari Samhita Ain, 2074 B.S. 2017 AD)* and Civil Code *(Muluki Devani Samhita Ain, 2074 B.S. 2017 AD)*—to modernize Nepal's justice system and update the prevailing *Muluki Ain* (General Code) is introduced to parliament for deliberation - August 30, 2014: Activists take part in parade in KTM to press their demands for gay rights - September 20: New constitution comes into effect, which guarantee LGBTI rights - The issuance of passports with 'other' as a choice for those who do not wish to identify as male or female - Bhumika Shrestha becomes the first transgender woman to travel abroad by identifying herself as 'other' in the gender category
2017	October 16: The Criminal Code *(Muluki Faujdari Samhita Ain, 2074 B.S. 2017 AD)* and Civil Code *(Muluki Devani Samhita Ain, 2074 B.S. 2017 AD)* to update the prevailing *Muluki Ain* (General Code) are introduced officially; many sexual and gender minority activists consider it as regressive and failing to address the 2007 Supreme Court verdict

APPENDIX 9 COORDINATES AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF CATEGORIES TO DIFFERENT AXES (CORRESPONDENCE ANALYSIS-1)

	Axis 1 (contrib)	Axis 1 (coord)	Axis 2 (contrib)	Axis 2(coord)	Axis 3 (contrib)	Axis 3(coord)	Axis 4 (contrib)	Axis 4 (coord)	Axis 5 (contrib)	Axis 5 (coord)
Gay/Lesbian	**24.03**	**0.64**	10.21	0.29	**12.77**	**0.19**	**22.86**	**0.17**	2.08	-0.03
Third Gender	**22.00**	**0.65**	4.23	-0.20	**29.57**	**-0.30**	**19.39**	**-0.17**	0.04	0.00
Ta	6.88	-0.81	1.33	0.25	2.82	-0.21	3.98	0.17	0.21	-0.02
Heterosexual	8.40	-0.79	**12.90**	**0.68**	6.14	0.27	**33.08**	**-0.43**	**17.25**	**-0.16**
Panthi	9.36	-1.04	3.42	0.43	**12.13**	**-0.47**	3.53	0.18	0.08	-0.01
Bisexual	3.56	-0.48	**11.80**	**0.60**	5.34	0.23	7.13	-0.19	**37.94**	**0.22**
Kothi	5.03	-0.56	**21.76**	**-0.80**	1.74	0.13	0.01	0.01	3.81	-0.07
Méti	2.36	-0.34	**22.01**	**-0.73**	7.29	0.24	0.26	0.03	**23.11**	**0.15**
Fulumulu	7.45	-0.73	8.82	-0.55	1.58	0.13	0.96	0.07	**14.24**	**-0.14**
Hijara	10.93	-1.17	3.51	0.46	**20.61**	**-0.64**	8.80	0.29	1.24	0.06
primary id	9.59	0.67	2.33	-0.23	**13.26**	**-0.31**	**27.53**	**-0.31**	**36.52**	**0.18**
male_multi	0.69	-0.18	**38.16**	**-0.92**	4.89	0.19	0.72	0.05	1.72	-0.04
fem_multi	**19.70**	**0.95**	0.63	0.12	4.28	-0.18	0.61	0.05	**16.61**	**-0.12**
male_single	8.80	0.65	4.71	0.33	**16.66**	**0.35**	**34.29**	**0.35**	**25.35**	**0.16**
male_strong	**17.08**	**-0.89**	11.03	0.50	**16.90**	**-0.35**	4.83	0.13	0.05	0.01
male_somewhat	9.08	-0.65	0.44	0.10	0.28	0.05	3.06	-0.10	0.00	0.00
male_no	1.79	-0.29	**23.21**	**-0.72**	2.47	0.14	0.08	0.02	0.46	-0.02
fem_strong	**14.94**	**0.83**	0.91	0.14	4.11	-0.17	0.47	0.04	**16.44**	**-0.12**
fem_somewhat	0.58	-0.16	**18.44**	**0.64**	**32.49**	**0.49**	**26.23**	**-0.30**	2.60	-0.05
fem_no	**17.75**	**-0.89**	0.13	0.05	4.65	-0.18	2.19	0.09	0.26	0.02

* All variables making a higher-than-mean contribution (11.11%) to the axes are interpreted (denoted in bold)

APPENDIX 10 COORDINATES AND CONTRIBUTION OF CATEGORIES TO DIFFERENT AXES (CORRESPONDENCE ANALYSIS-2)

	Axis 1 (contrib)	Axis 1 (coordinate)	Axis 2 (contrib)	Axis 2 (coord)	Axis 3 (contrib)	Axis 3 (coordinate)
AMTG	32.99	-0.29	0.02	0.01	1.21	-0.03
AMGB	**42.57**	0.58	**35.09**	-0.38	1.68	-0.06
AFTG	4.19	0.31	5.23	0.25	**83.57**	0.69
AFLG	20.26	0.71	**59.66**	0.88	13.54	-0.29
l1	0.26	0.17	0.01	-0.02	0.00	0.01
l2	1.12	-0.34	0.00	0.00	0.22	0.07
l3	**2.42**	-0.50	0.05	-0.05	0.62	-0.12
e1	0.09	-0.10	0.04	0.05	0.21	-0.07
e2	0.06	0.08	0.08	0.06	0.29	0.09
e3	**3.28**	0.58	**1.72**	-0.30	0.03	0.03
eage1	**4.12**	0.65	0.41	-0.15	0.01	0.01
eage2	1.27	0.36	**7.71**	-0.64	**1.74**	-0.21
r1	0.65	0.26	0.41	-0.15	0.15	0.06
r2	0.50	-0.23	1.00	-0.23	1.26	-0.18
r3	0.75	-0.28	1.14	-0.25	1.07	-0.17
r4	0.18	0.14	**5.88**	0.56	**7.88**	0.45
r5	0.90	0.31	**3.96**	0.46	**2.06**	0.23
r6	**2.67**	0.53	**19.26**	1.02	**9.63**	0.50
i1	0.04	-0.07	0.44	-0.15	0.03	-0.03
i2	0.01	0.03	0.09	-0.07	0.11	0.05
i3	0.01	0.03	0.00	-0.01	0.08	-0.04
i4	0.06	0.08	0.08	0.06	0.29	0.09
hiv1	0.00	0.02	0.02	-0.03	0.00	0.01
hiv2	1.18	-0.35	0.58	0.18	0.50	0.11
hiv3	1.07	0.33	0.27	-0.12	**28.79**	0.85
b1	**3.81**	-0.63	0.17	0.09	0.32	-0.09
b2	**1.93**	-0.45	0.01	-0.02	0.01	-0.02
b3	**2.09**	-0.47	0.01	0.02	0.13	0.06
b4	**3.51**	0.60	**3.43**	-0.43	**3.96**	-0.32
b5	**5.21**	0.74	0.20	-0.10	0.01	-0.01
b6	0.14	0.12	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01
gov1	0.89	-0.31	0.02	-0.04	**2.37**	0.25
gov2	1.32	-0.37	0.00	-0.01	0.00	0.00
gov3	0.17	-0.13	0.79	0.21	**3.81**	-0.31
gov4	0.12	-0.11	0.04	0.05	0.01	0.01
gov5	**4.38**	0.68	1.04	-0.24	0.09	-0.05
gov6	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.00	-0.01

h1	**2.22**	-0.48	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.02
h2	**2.36**	-0.50	0.00	0.00	0.01	-0.01
h3	0.34	-0.19	0.07	0.06	**2.70**	-0.26
h4	0.06	-0.08	0.23	-0.11	0.08	0.05
h5	**5.26**	0.74	0.09	-0.07	0.03	-0.03
h6	0.05	0.07	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.01
j1	**2.44**	-0.50	0.02	0.03	0.83	0.15
j2	1.34	-0.37	0.05	0.05	0.03	0.03
j3	**2.66**	0.53	**43.05**	1.52	**24.36**	-0.79
j4	0.00	0.02	0.00	-0.01	0.07	0.04
j5	**2.49**	0.51	**1.84**	-0.31	0.25	-0.08
j6	0.03	-0.05	0.01	0.02	0.23	-0.08
m1	**3.89**	-0.64	0.00	0.01	0.17	-0.07
m2	1.25	-0.36	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.04
m3	**2.75**	-0.54	0.03	-0.04	0.05	-0.04
m4	**1.93**	0.45	**3.34**	-0.42	**3.17**	-0.28
m5	**5.77**	0.77	0.03	-0.04	0.06	-0.04
m6	0.02	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.01
p1	**3.22**	-0.58	0.02	0.03	0.08	-0.05
p2	**2.14**	-0.47	0.02	-0.03	0.11	-0.05
p3	**2.38**	-0.50	0.05	-0.05	0.61	-0.12
p4	0.98	0.32	0.16	0.09	0.49	0.11
p5	**6.22**	0.81	0.18	-0.10	0.03	-0.03
p6	0.02	-0.04	1.55	-0.29	0.06	0.04
s1	1.24	-0.36	0.07	0.06	0.16	0.06
s2	0.67	-0.26	0.09	-0.07	0.54	0.12
s3	0.45	-0.22	0.07	-0.06	0.01	-0.02
s4	0.12	-0.11	0.07	-0.06	0.00	0.00
s5	**3.44**	0.60	0.06	-0.06	0.07	0.04
s6	0.01	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.02	-0.02

*Numbers in bold represent row categories with above-mean (1.61%) contributions

*Numbers in bold represent column categories with above-mean (33.33%) contributions

APPENDIX 11 IDENTIFICATION OF FIELD REPRESENTATIVES

Respondents	Name	Data sources	Position	Fields
1	Ramhari Neupane	Pahichan archived interview	District-level program coordinator	Bureaucratic
2	Bharatmani Paudel	Pahichan archived interview	Local Development Officer	Bureaucratic
3	Nur Prasad Khatiwada	Pahichan archived interview	Damak metropolitan city	Bureaucratic
4	Dambar Baral	Pahichan archived interview	City town collaboration program coordinator	Bureaucratic
5	Rakesh Upadhyaya	Pahichan archived interview	Far Eastern society health assistant	Bureaucratic
6	Birendra Chaudhari	Pahichan archived interview	Dhangadi Municipiality	Bureaucratic
7	Binod Mohra	Pahichan archived interview	INSEC chief	Bureaucratic
8	Binod Sharma	Pahichan archived interview	Deputy Superintendent of Police	Bureaucratic
9	Pashupati Khadka	Pahichan archived interview	City councilor	Bureaucratic
10	Surendra KC	Pahichan archived interview	Public healthcare officer	Bureaucratic
11	Karuna Bajracharya	Pahichan archived interview	Public healthcare officer	Bureaucratic
12	Bishnu Karki	Pahichan archived interview	District Land Rights Forum	Bureaucratic
13	Somendra Rathor	Sajha Sawal Episode 459	District Super Intendent	Bureaucratic
14	Prem Bahadur Thapa	Pahichan archived interview	Human rights lawyer	Juridical
15	Avinash Karna	Pahichan archived interview	Human rights network, third alliance	Juridical
16	Deepak Karki	Pahichan archived interview	National Human Rights association	Juridical
17	Aditya Bandhu Upadhya	Pahichan archived interview	Indian Lawyer	Juridical
18	Dr. Laxmi Raj Pathak	Pahichan archived interview	Committee for same-sex marriage	Juridical
19	Sujan Pant	Pahichan archived interview	LGBTI lawyer	Juridical
20	Balaram K.C.	Samakon panel discussion episode 59	Justice of the Supreme Court of Nepal	Juridical
21	Pranita Chetri	Pahichan archived interview	NHS district in charge	Political
22	Gyanu Gaire	Pahichan archived interview	Member of the parliament, CPN-UML	Political
23	Durga Poudel	Pahichan archived interview	Member of the parliament, RJP party	Political

24	Anonymous	Pahichan archived interview	NHS worker	Political
25	Muna Magar	Pahichan archived interview	NHS program coordinator	Political
26	Ishwari Prasad Sigdel	Pahichan archived interview	NHS worker	Political
27	Bhakti Shah	Pahichan archived interview	Chairman, LGBTI forum	Political
28	Pinky Gurung	Pahichan archived interview	Transgender activist, Party member	Political
29	Dr. Baburam Bhattarai	Pahichan archived interview	Renowned politician, former PM	Political
30	Bhumika Shrestha	Pahichan archived interview	Transgender activist, Party member	Political
31	Yagyaraj Sunuwar	Pahichan archived interview	Member of Parliament, Nepal Communist Party	Political
32	Mitrasen Dahal	Pahichan archived interview	Leader, Nepal Congress Party	Political
33	Parasuram Tamang	Pahichan archived interview	Leader, Nepal Communist Party, Maoist faction	Political
34	Dr. Subodh Kumar Nepal	Samakon panel discussion episode 59	Constituent Assembly Member	Political
35	Tuka Bhadra Hamal	Sajha Sawal Episode 460	Member of the Parliament, NCP-Maoist	Political
36	Richa Ghimire	Pahichan TV panel debate hosted by Sunil Babu Pant	Popular actress	Socio-cultural
37	2 anonymous students	Pahichan TV panel debate hosted by Sunil Babu Pant	Anonymous students	Socio-cultural
38	Sapana	Pahichan archived interview	Bar dancer	Socio-cultural
39	Jaya Bahadur Chaudhary	Pahichan archived interview	Media worker	Socio-cultural
40	Taranath Baral	Pahichan archived interview	Local teacher	Socio-cultural
41	Ganga Sitaula	Pahichan archived interview	Hotel proprietor	Socio-cultural
42	Gangadhar Parajuli	Pahichan archived interview	Media worker	Socio-cultural
43	2 anonymous	Pahichan archived interview	Students	Socio-cultural
44	Laxmi Shrestha	Pahichan archived interview	Hotel proprietor	Socio-cultural
45	Gauri Nepali	Pahichan archived interview	Peer leader, UNICEF	Socio-cultural
46	Sudip Gautam	Pahichan archived interview	Peer leader, UNICEF	Socio-cultural
47	Jyoti Thapa	Pahichan archived interview	Student	Socio-cultural

48	Anjali Lama	Pahichan archived interview	Transgender model	Socio-cultural
49	Group	Pahichan archived interview	LGBTI members	Socio-cultural
50	Sunil Adhikari	Pahichan archived interview	Physiotherapist	Socio-cultural
51	Angel Lama	Pahichan archived interview	Miss Pink Nepal	Socio-cultural
52	Anonymous	Pahichan archived interview	LGBTI community members	Socio-cultural
53	Malvika Subba	Nepal Minds	Miss Nepal 2002	Socio-cultural
54	Nirakar Yakthumba	Nepal Minds	Musician	Socio-cultural
55	Ayushman Deshraj Shrestha Joshi	Nepal Minds	Actor	Socio-cultural
56	Yash Kumar	Pahichan Episode 2	Singer	Socio-cultural
57	Sunita Dulal	Pahichan Episode 3	Singer	Socio-cultural
58	Malina Joshi	Pahichan Episode 4	Actress	Socio-cultural
59	Reecha Sharma	Pahichan Episode 5	Actress	Socio-cultural
60	Richa Ghimire	Pahichan Episode 8	Actress	Socio-cultural
61	Hari Manandar	Pahichan Episode 9	Football player (sportsperson)	Socio-cultural
62	Laxmi Nath Sharma	Pahichan Episode 10	Movie Director	Socio-cultural
63	Kadambini	Pahichan Episode 11	Writer	Socio-cultural
64	Rekha Thapa	Pahichan Episode 12	Actress	Socio-cultural

Jagat Bahadur Kunwar

Breaking free of the binary: Gender habitus, heteronormative domination, and classificatory struggles

Some individuals face social discrimination due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Despite legal successes, social inequalities for sexual and gender minorities (SGM) persists. The aim of the study was to understand: (1) Which social inequalities do SGM face and how are these inequalities reproduced? and (2) How, and to what effect, has collective action subverted these individuals' experience of oppression? The ongoing SGM movement in Nepal, which started around the year 2001, is used as a case study.

The study empirically adopts a multi-level field analysis. Correspondence analysis performed on an existing census of SGM population in Nepal revealed various SGM clusters with their corresponding sociodemographic characteristics and social discrimination experienced. Narratives of SGM revealed how they construct their own identities and interpret the social inequalities faced. In-depth interviews with influential actors explained how gender taxonomies are established and contested in various social fields. Text-mining operations on a media corpus revealed significant 'discourse clusters' and helped to understand discursive evolution of the SGM movement in Nepal. A systematic bibliometric survey of sexuality and gender studies helped to contextualize some unique SGM issues in the 'Global South'.

Social construction, self-construction, embodiment, and intersectionality of social categories are important to understand sexuality and gender. Narratives of the lived experiences produce a coherent sense of gender identity. Sexuality and gender can additionally be understood as 'habitus'/dispositions–inculcated through socialization–and transformed through everyday practices.

The bases of social inequalities faced by SGM are social stigma, 'identity ambiguities', and an 'internalized' form of oppression. Intersecting social identities can further lead to a unique experience of oppression. This study identifies discriminatory gender taxonomies as the root cause producing and perpetuating social inequalities. However, inequalities faced by SGM are not uniform but hierarchical and nested. The severity of the heteronormative domination is mediated by the masculine domination already existing in a society.

SGM activism can be viewed as delegitimizing the discriminatory gender taxonomies across various social fields. 'Gender reflexivity' arising due to the dialectic of subjective identification towards socially constructed categories is the main force for social activism. Gender reflexivity articulated as personally empowering narratives–when combined with commensurable experiences of oppression faced by various intersectional categories–can develop a collective identity which can be further mobilized through collective organization and symbolic representation. Effective leadership focused on building a common agenda and group consciousness can leverage individual reflexivity into collective action for social justice.

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