Throughout high school I was a good church atten-
dant, enjoyed Sabbath School, and was involved in
vespers programs. I played the piano and sang in
the church choirs (George).

Gay men, more so than lesbian women in this sample,
remembered participating in the music program in the church.
"I was musically talented, four times winning national
Sabbath School organist at 13, church choir director at 15" (Richard). "When the church doors opened and someone needed
a musician, it was kind of expected for me to be there to
play" (Donald).

We did a lot of visiting to other churches for
youth programs and I accompanied those who sang.
I enjoyed all the music and for the most part I
think the religion I experienced was mostly from
the music (Juan).

Church related organizations

Most Adventist churches develop organizations supple-
menting the socialization offered in their weekly services.
Lesbian and gay Adventists were generally quite active in
these organizations. One of the best known organizations of
the Adventist church is the Pathfinder club. Pathfinders is
an organization similar to the Girl and Boy Scouts with an
emphasis on skill and character building. One participant
whose parents were not Adventists recalls becoming involved
with the church through Pathfinders. "I joined Pathfinders
and the social network began to wrap itself around me"
(Irene).
Adventist lifestyle and traditions

About 80 percent of the families of participants in this sample followed quite conservative teachings of the Adventist church. The families adhered to the lifestyle guidelines and traditions as presented by the church.

While our family was not as strict as others I have heard of, we were the strictest that I knew in terms of following the Adventist line. We were vegetarians, had no caffeine, no white bread or black pepper, no secular toys or music on Sabbath, read only church approved storybooks, to name a few (Donald).

"We kids always had to have our clothes ready for Sabbath; clothes ironed, shoes cleaned, our rooms cleaned, and all the chores done before sundown" (Juan).

I could not attend or participate in school choir concerts, I could not engage in sports activities, I could not attend other school social functions because I attended public school and those activities usually lingered beyond sunset during the winter (George).

Family cohesiveness

The family socialization efforts facilitated religious identity development through frequent face-to-face interaction in the family setting. This day-to-day interaction with family members appears to have a great influence in the identity development of Seventh-day Adventist homosexuals. Adventist homosexuals in general feel that they grew up in solid, loving, and cohesive families. "I was blessed with two wonderful parents, who taught me about a God of love"
parents brought me up Seventh-day Adventist. My dad's a minister" (Nathan).

The expectation that the gay and lesbian Adventists would observe the religion was understood from the beginning. "I am a third generation Seventh-day Adventist. I don't think it was ever a question of if I would become one, but when" (Anna).

To answer the question of how I became an Adventist, I'd have to say that I don't know what else I could have been. I was born in an Adventist hospital (on the Sabbath, no less), to SDA parents who had graduated from SDA schools, sent there by their SDA parents. I went only to SDA churches and my parents socialized almost exclusively with SDA's. My aunts and uncles were SDA's. One set were missionary doctors, another uncle was an academy Bible teacher. My mother's father had been a missionary to Japan (Marvin).

In addition to the ascribed status of being a Seventh-day Adventist, being an Adventist is also an achieved status. Official membership in the Seventh-day Adventist religion is initiated by the ceremony of baptism. Since baptism is such a significant event associated with church membership, many participants offered information about their baptism as part of the memories connected to religious identity development. For example, Donald recalls:

I often tell people that I was baptized twice. Back when my mother was baptized, she was pregnant with me at the time. So I was baptized at the pre-infant stage and then later on at the age of 10.
2. Exploring heterosexual relationships
3. Publications
   a. Non-gay publications
   b. Gay publications
4. Travel
5. Gay Bars
6. Sex
   a. Known partners
   b. Anonymous sex
C. Resisting homosexual identity
   1. Prayer
   2. Denial
   3. Heterosexual marriage
   4. Turning off feelings
   5. Claiming Bible promises
   6. Use of religious rituals
   7. Immersion in religion
   8. Seeking professional help (for the purpose of change)
   9. Suicide
D. Acceptance of homosexual identity
   1. Resignation
   2. Reinterpretation of Bible texts
   3. Changing views of God
   4. Seeking approval from religious authority
   5. Receiving a "sign" of God's approval
   6. Developing new role models
      a. SDA Kinship
      b. Kinnet
      c. Church friends
      d. Network of peers
      e. Gay and lesbian community
E. Coming out
   1. Coming out to self
   2. Coming out to others--gay
   3. Coming out to others--straight
F. Commitment to homosexual identity

All of the names used throughout this study are pseudonyms. While other researchers report findings using no names or case numbers to protect identity, that practice may be dehumanizing and may mask ethnicity and gender. Using pseudonyms aids the reader in identifying the participants as persons rather than objects used for scientific study.
analytical process, member checking was especially helpful in pursuing categories for further elaboration.

The cycle of data collection, analysis, writing, verification, and revision continued to the point of the categories becoming saturated (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Lofland and Lofland 1995). No new information was gained in understanding the category by the collection of additional data.

Referential Adequacy

The final step in data analysis was writing the report. During this phase, member checking continued, and I made provisions for developing referential adequacy. Referential adequacy refers to the practice of the researcher putting aside some of the raw data to be used as a benchmark to test against the current analysis (Lincoln and Guba 1985). I did not include one interview in the analysis specifically for the purpose of developing referential adequacy. When I checked the interview data against the analyzed data, there was a good fit, giving further credence to the analysis.
Peer Debriefers

Throughout the analysis processes, I used peer debriefers (Lincoln and Guba 1985) to discuss, clarify, and advance the developing categories. Peer debriefers offer an external watch on the study process. The peer debriefers I used were primarily graduate students and other professionals interested in homosexual identity development.

While writing, I discussed my work with these peers who gave feedback about the ideas I presented. This was particularly helpful as I moved from comparing incidents on an intuitive level to a more rule-based categorization. In this way, I examined both the incident and the category itself for appropriateness and accuracy. As the categories became more clearly defined, I began to integrate the categories which began to help explain identity construction among Adventist homosexuals. Since data collection and analysis occur simultaneously in qualitative research, I was able to collect data specifically to add to the understanding and integration of a category. This assisted in clearing up irregularities and uncertainties.

Negative Case Analysis

Once initial codes with rules specifying conditions under which those rules applied were established, I used negative case analysis to further analyze the data (Lincoln and Guba 1985). This technique helps refine working
1995, p. 197). I used typologizing, concept charting, and flow charting as initial ways to diagram the data. Typologizing is cross classification that shows how variables are related in two or more ways. Concept charting assists the researcher in arranging all the working elements on a single sheet of paper. Flow charting is a visual representation of a process that occurs over time (Lofland and Lofland 1995). As the analysis progressed, I used a specialized form of typologizing, taxonomic analysis (Spradley 1980). Taxonomic analysis visually identifies relationships among the categories in the data. Examples of these taxonomies are reported in the findings.

Working Hypotheses

Throughout the course of data analysis, I developed working hypotheses to further guide the inquiry. Working hypotheses are ideas that offer initial answers about research questions and conceptual relationships. These hypotheses take the form of generalizations that the researcher makes when working the data (Lincoln and Guba 1985). The first several participants indicated that they had been able to successfully integrate their Adventist identities with their gay identities while remaining a member of the Adventist church. In this case, the working hypothesis was that Adventist homosexuals integrate their
As the coding process proceeded, I compared the incidents among categories. In this way, I was able to think about how similar or different each incident was in the category. Differences between code entries gave me the opportunity to think about how or why the differences existed. Using the constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss 1967), I generated both descriptive and explanatory categories. This process led to interpretive insights as I began to try to understand the various attributes of a category and how the categories might be related.

**Memoing**

Coding and comparing incidents led to the use of the analytical tool of memoing to connect codes theoretically and conceptually. Memos are "the written-out counterparts of explanations and elaborations of the coding categories" (Lofland and Lofland 1995, p. 193). I used three types of memos: elemental, sorting, and integrating memos. Each type of memo provides a greater degree of abstraction (Lofland and Lofland 1995). Elemental memos focused on a specific concept, while sorting memos combined the elemental memos and helped analyze them. Integrating memos explained the association among the sorting memos, which eventually supplied the basis for writing the analysis. I recorded these memos as I reviewed and coded data also using the Ethnograph program.
The first step in making sense of the data was organizing the raw data. The raw data consisted of 28 interviews and 9 autobiographies. Of the 28 interviews, 6 participants agreed to allow the interview to be audio taped. I transcribed these interviews as soon as possible following the interview session. In transcribing the interviews, I followed the guidelines established by Valerie Yow (1994). For Yow, the goal of transcription is "to reproduce as closely as possible the speech of the narrator" (1994, p. 228).

For the interviews that were not tape recorded, I used a lap top computer to write as much data verbatim as possible. Again, following the interviews, I went over the data for completeness and accuracy. I also used the Yow guidelines for these computer-recorded interviews. As mentioned above, member checks were used at this stage of analysis for participant feedback regarding the accuracy of the interview information.

Coding

The next step in data analysis was to code each unit of data, that is, each interview or autobiography. In qualitative research, data collection and analysis occur simultaneously (Lofland and Lofland 1995). Therefore, as I collected the data, I reviewed them for general themes and assigned codes to similar concepts. Codes are "labels that classify items of information pertinent to a topic, ques-
was given to each informant to ask questions before he or she signed the forms.

**Appropriate data storage**

All data have been stored in a locked filing cabinet in my office. All identifying details of the participants were removed/changed in these files. I kept an identification card with original information for each case on a 3 x 5 card. These cards were kept in a locked safe at my home. All computer files required a password and were stored on floppy disks. These disks were also filed in the locked filing cabinet. For those interviews that were audio taped, I transcribed the tapes and the tapes were destroyed or if the participants wished, the tapes were returned to them.

**Interviewer expertise/qualifications**

As an interviewer, I offered participants an added degree of emotional safety because of my professional qualifications. I am a licensed, master’s level social worker (LMSW-ACP). Breach of confidentiality is grounds for removal of the therapist’s license to practice clinical social work. Thus, I take confidentiality issues very seriously.

**Familiarity with the population**

Research confirms that when the researcher has prior exposure to gay and lesbian persons, negative attitudes toward the research subjects are reduced (Ellis and Vasseur 1993). During the summer of 1994, I conducted a workshop at
range of activities individuals engage in to create, present, and sustain personal identities" (Snow and Anderson 1987, p. 1348). Thus, the questions are constructed to discover the activities and interactions with significant others that help shape Adventist homosexuals' identities. The interview guide inquires about the events and relationships that helped individuals construct their identities. Participants were asked about the development of their Seventh-day Adventist identity, their homosexual identity, and their constructed Adventist and homosexual identity.

**The Interview Process**

The interviews lasted an average of two to three hours with a maximum of six hours. Interviews were conducted in a setting suggested by the participant. The typical setting was at the participant’s home, although several interviews occurred in my home office. On a few occasions interviews took place in a public setting, chosen by the participant, that afforded sufficient privacy for the interview.

Participants reviewed and signed an informed consent agreement prior to the interview. Part of the agreement asked participants to allow me to audiotape the interview; however, their participation was not contingent on audio taping. Only six participants agreed to audio taping the interview.
According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), this method of sample selection is known as "selection to the point of redundancy." This way, the research is driven by informational considerations rather than predetermined numbers that might lend itself to statistical significance.

Delimitations of Sample Choices

Recruiting participants through the Internet has some known limitations that I considered prior to initiating this research project. For example, individuals who typically have higher educational levels and familiarity with technology are more frequently members of Internet groups. In addition, women and racial minorities are typically less likely to access Internet groups. In this sample, fewer women initially responded to the announcement to participate in research. Then, when I made an appeal for more women participants, several more volunteered to be interviewed. A similar situation occurred with racial minorities; however, fewer racial minorities responded to a second appeal.

Another choice that limited the sample was the research decision to study a highly stigmatized group of people. Members of stigmatized groups may be reluctant to volunteer in such research, leading to under-representing Adventist homosexuals who are more closeted or socially isolated. However, the procedures outlined here were perhaps the most viable ways to access such a stigmatized group.
a 300 mile radius of the Fort Worth/Dallas, Texas, area were eligible for an interview. Internet members living beyond that region contributed to the research effort by submitting an autobiography.

Criteria for inclusion

To be included in the study, the participants needed to meet two basic criteria (1) identify themselves as homosexual and (2) be a member, current or former, of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In addition, participants were limited in the type of participation in the study because of geographic location.

Snowball Sampling

In addition to purposive sampling, I used snowball sampling (Royse 1995) to supplement the sample. As participants in the Internet support group became familiar with the study, they informed other homosexual Adventists of the project. The participants asked other potential participants to contact me for an interview.

Serial Selection of Sampling Units

When I received responses from the general announcement made to the Internet group, I sent each potential participant a letter inviting his or her participation along with an informed consent form (see Appendix A). After reviewing the written materials, individuals then contacted me for an interview or sent me an autobiography.
variation in the sample and allows the researcher to gather as much detail as possible about the array of diversity in the sample. This type of sampling is understandably very different from conventional sampling which is based on statistical concerns and generalizing the findings to a larger population. Conversely, sampling procedures in this study were driven by informational considerations to magnify information and add understanding.

Sample selection of former participants

To generate possible participants for the study, I began with a group of homosexual Adventists known to me. In 1994, I was invited to speak at the annual meeting of SDA (Seventh-day Adventist) Kinship International, an association of homosexual persons who are or were affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Each summer Kinship organizes a week-long series of meetings called "Kampmeeting." The purpose of the meeting is for spiritual and social renewal. I was asked to speak on self-esteem. Following my presentation, I shared with the Kampmeeting participants that I would like to interview people who would be willing to share their life story with me. Over the following two days, I spoke to many of the Kampmeeting participants. A total of eight participants granted in-depth interviews. I used my laptop computer to take notes as we talked. I assured all respondents that their identity
CHAPTER III

METHODS

The naturalistic paradigm (Lincoln and Guba 1985) of scientific inquiry provides the structure for this qualitative study. The naturalistic paradigm holds that realities are "multiple, constructed, and holistic" (Lincoln and Guba 1985, p. 37). This contrasts with traditional positivistic views that there is one reality that is "real" and can be studied in distinct parts.

The naturalistic paradigm fits well with a study framed in symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionists posit that reality evolves over time through social interaction (Blumer 1969). Therefore, reality is socially and symbolically constructed and emerges in relation to social life. To understand reality from the perspective of the participants, this study uses the naturalistic paradigm coupled with symbolic interaction to inform interpretations.

This chapter gives information on the research participants, how they were selected, the research instrument, procedures of data collection, and data analysis.
result of her son's revelation that he is gay (McLaughlin 1997). The first article endorses the position that religious identity must prevail and homosexuality must be overcome. The second article, while stopping short of subscribing to the position embracing homosexuality as fully equal to heterosexuality, steers the debate clearly in that direction. It appears that the Seventh-day Adventist religion is indeed ready for such a study. Members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are asking the questions. How should they be answered?

Qualitative Research Approach

Researchers evaluating studies in religion have called for more qualitative research designs in order to understand questions about spiritual influences in human lives (Thomas and Cornwall 1990). In addition, researchers note that these studies should focus "on the social psychological reality of simultaneous membership in multiple social institutions" (Thomas and Cornwall 1990, p. 990). Therefore, qualitative research may be ideally suited to understanding the process of homosexual identity development among religiously affiliated homosexuals.

The specific type of qualitative research needed to answer the question, "How do people merge two potentially conflicting identities?" is ethnographic research of which
1991) and in depth of information gathered (Wagner et al. 1994). These research approaches make it difficult to tease out and account for varying answers to important research questions. One way to deal with this complexity is to develop research using one religious context that reflects typical belief systems concerning homosexuality—one that has a multiplicity of avenues for socialization in order to understand the complex interface of society and the individual (Thomas and Cornwall 1990). The Seventh-day Adventist religion provides this context.

**Seventh-day Adventists and Homosexuality**

Seventh-day Adventists view homosexual behavior as sinful (Ministerial Association 1988), a typical stance in mainstream Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism (Orbach 1975; Thumma 1991). Using a religion that holds similar beliefs to other religions may serve as a basis for comparison with other religious groups.

As stated above, it is important to use a religious context that offers ongoing opportunities for interaction and socialization over the life span. "Underlying virtually all of the contemporary sociological views on socialization is the assumption that it is a continuing, lifelong process" (Bush and Simmons 1981, p. 143). The Seventh-day Adventist church organization provides many avenues of socialization

Yet, the everyday reality of many homosexual Christians lies somewhere in between these two positions. What does research say about how gay and lesbian Christians are integrating religion and sexual orientation? One researcher interviewed 26 homosexuals (17 men and 9 women) "to understand and describe the way gay men and lesbian women see and interpret their spiritual journeys" (Shallenberger 1996, p.195). From these interviews, Shallenberger (1996) developed a model noting the spiritual journeys for homosexuals, recording various stages in the process.

While this study documents the importance of spirituality in the lives of a sample of homosexuals, many questions are unanswered. Since a variety of religions were included in the sample, there were few similarities among the partic-
more as a dismal failure rate than documentation supporting change of sexual orientation.

Misinterpretation or misrepresentation of data to support change in sexual orientation is common even in scientific literature. In fact, one reviewer of change therapy concludes that these studies "are consistently flawed by poor or nonexistent follow-up data, improper classification of subjects, and confusion of heterosexual competence with sexual orientation shift" (Haldeman 1991, p. 155).

Theorists that support the possibility of changing sexual orientation list several factors that must be in place before change can occur. When examining this list of factors necessary for the possibility of change, other researchers note "it is clear that these are precisely the attitudes that . . . are related to poor psychological adjustment in homosexuals" (Gonsiorek et al. 1991, p. 118). This confirms again the inadvisability and dangers associated with attempts to change sexual orientation.

**Integration of Religion and Homosexuality**

As studies continued to document the lack of merit in changing sexual orientation, acceptance of one's homosexuality became the focus of practice and policy. One researcher reports that clinicians began "to assist individuals with predominant same-sex sexual orientations to better individu-
homosexuality (Albrecht et al. 1977). However, a recent study found that "religion has no direct effect on gay rates" (Bainbridge 1989, p. 293). That is, while religion deters some behaviors that are considered deviant, it is not the case with homosexuality. It appears that homosexuality persists despite religious socialization that often opposes it.

Efforts to change sexual orientation

What influence, then, does religion have on its gay adherents? One effect of religion in the lives of gay and lesbian church members may be demonstrated through the efforts some homosexuals make to change their sexual orientation. Often individuals who seek to change their sexual orientation will do so for religious reasons (Friedman and Downey 1994). However, such a change is highly unlikely (Friedman and Downey 1994).

A careful review of the literature reveals that "many of the psychoanalytic and behavioral approaches which were designed to purge homosexuality from the individual and create heterosexuality were found to be generally ineffective and ethically questionable" (Coleman 1988). In fact, at times, individuals that enrolled in programs to alter sexual orientation found the treatment worse than the condition of homosexuality itself. Research documenting one "change ministry" confirmed widespread sexual abuse of the counselees by the "reformed homosexual" center director
gious involvement creates a context, not only for indoctri-
nation into a particular theology, but also for socializa-
tion regarding normative expectations" (Heaton 1986, p.
249). If you are homosexual, you are expected to not be a
Christian, if you are a Christian, you must not be homosexu-
al.

Gay and Lesbian Religious Affiliation

In spite of the above assumption, many homosexual
persons have some kind of religious identity that they are
reluctant to give up (Salais and Fisher 1995). In fact,
studies suggest that "gays and lesbians belong to the vari-
ous major faiths and denominations in about the same propor-
tions as other Americans" (LeVay and Nonas 1995, p. 106).
One reason why this may be true originates from the impor-
tance of religious identity. Researchers note that "the
churchgoer identity may be beneficial . . . and provide
social integration, support, and a sense of meaning and
coherence in the self and in life" (Dietz and Ritchey 1996,
p. 5).

Studies indicate that among gays who were religiously
affiliated, the religious attitudes of gay and non-gay
members were not much different (O’Brien 1991). However,
research notes significant differences between a community
sample of gay persons not associated with a religious insti-
tution and those affiliated with a particular religion in
terms of religious beliefs and religious behavior (Wagner et
In a study of growing up lesbian in the South, Sears (1989) describes the impact of gender and race on identity development when individuals attempt to integrate multiple identities. Since ethnic identity acquisition occurs first, the later developing lesbian identity can sometimes create a sense of betrayal to one’s ethnic group.

In addition to ethnicity, other events or conditions may complicate the process of homosexual identity development. These include such things as problems of adolescence, erroneous stereotypes about homosexuals, and religion (Hunter and Schaecher 1987; Icard 1986; Schneider and Tremble 1986). "The importance of any one factor to the development of a homosexual identity will depend upon the meaning it holds for a particular individual" (Hart and Richardson 1981, p. 92). Therefore, those individuals who attach importance to any one aspect of the self will need to reconcile that identity with their homosexual identity. Frequently, religion is one aspect of an individual’s identity that holds a great deal of importance and must be reconciled with a developing homosexual identity.

Religion and Homosexuality

Many world religions point to the Bible story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah as proof of God’s disapproval of homosexuality (Ponse 1978). Particularly among conservative Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish adherents,
son and Hart (1981) note three stages of coming out: (1) coming out to oneself (2) coming out in the gay world, and (3) coming out in the straight world.

Identifying oneself as homosexual can include a general awareness, a behavioral acceptance, or a public identification as a homosexual (Hencken and O'Dowd 1977). In addition to private and/or public acknowledgment of homosexuality, some researchers conceptualize coming out as "a feedback loop regulating the relationship between the gay person and society" (de Monteflores and Schultz 1978, p. 62).

Most homosexuals vary in the amount of disclosure they offer to others about their sexual orientation. Coming out to others depends on a number of factors including how accepting family members are, their work environment, and so forth. The feedback model suggests that "a gay person's actions elicit certain societal responses which affect that person's subsequent actions" (de Monteflores and Schultz 1978, p. 62). Therefore, the degree of openness about homosexuality, the amount of how "out" a person is, relates directly to the individual's social environment. In fact, "the entire developmental process and outcomes within the sense of self can vary greatly as the social forces that shape them vary" (Gonsiorek and Rudolph 1991, p. 167). Therefore, factors such as gender, race, religion, and many others influence the identity process.
These sampling methods have an inherent selective bias potential. Particularly with clinical samples, there may be other issues that impact the findings other than homosexuality.

Similarities in Identity Developmental Models

**Norm of heterosexuality**

In spite of the various ways of conceptualizing and drawing samples to study identity development, similarities do exist among the models. Many studies stress the importance of acknowledging the norm of heterosexuality and society's heterosexual bias. Because homosexuality is so highly stigmatizing, researchers agree that "homosexuality is a sexual orientation that emerges despite contrary social expectations and cultural condemnation and which, if not merely a transitory stage, the person must reckon with as a stable part of his social and psychological being" (Hammersmith and Weinberg 1973, p. 58). One researcher reported that "the people we have studied have found themselves in fundamental, unrelenting, anguishing conflict with a social world that tried to deal with them in absolutist fashion, tried to force them into a mold they felt did not allow them to become what they really were or what they wanted to be" (Warren and Ponse 1977, p. 288). Thus, the development of a homosexual identity is often stigmatizing and conflictual (Warren 1974).
Definitions of Homosexual Identity Development

According to Wagner, homosexual identity development is "a process whereby gays and lesbians come to accept their sexual identity over a period of time, as they learn to disregard negative societal messages and recognize the validity of their feelings" (1994, p. 93). This definition notes the importance of disregarding societal messages and the validity of the individual's feelings. Minton and McDonald regard homosexual identity as "a life-spanning developmental process that eventually leads to personal acceptance of a positive gay self-image and a coherent personal identity" (1984, p. 91). These researchers emphasize that homosexual identity development leads the individual to a positive gay self-image and a corresponding personal identity that is congruous.

The above definitions incorporate elements of homosexual identity development that include a positive acceptance of homosexuality as an expected outcome. Since this study focuses on present processes rather than outcomes, it will use Troiden's definition of homosexual identity. Troiden defines homosexual identity as "a perception of self as a homosexual in relation to social settings, imagined or real, defined as romantic or sexual" (1988, p. 31). How this perception of self develops among Seventh-day Adventist homosexuals is the primary focus of this study.
Homosexual Identity Development

Homosexual Behavior

It is important to be clear about the differences between homosexual behavior and homosexual identity. Hart and Richardson point out that this distinction is crucial because "many people engage in same-sex acts without necessarily identifying as homosexual. Alternatively, a person may not have actually engaged in same-sex sexual acts, although they would define themselves as homosexual" (Hart and Richardson 1981, p. 73). Researchers have attempted to make clear distinctions between heterosexuals and homosexuals. In Kinsey’s (1948) early studies on sexual behavior, he revealed that roughly 37% of the men sampled had experienced at least one sexual encounter with another man after age 16. Rather than concluding that these men were homosexual, Kinsey emphasized the fluidity of sexual experiences that men encounter in a lifetime.

Further evidence that homosexual behavior alone does not identify someone as homosexual was offered by Laud Humphreys (1970). Humphreys found that many men who identify themselves as heterosexual engage in same-sex relationships. This finding has been well-replicated and documented (Desroches 1990). Thus, it is not homosexual acts alone that distinguish individuals as homosexual.
begins with an overview of the process of religious identity development among this population. The Findings Chapter then explicates the processes, stages, and strategies involved in homosexual identity development.

In the Analysis Chapter, I discuss the conditions and consequences that move participants through the process of identity construction. Concepts from processual symbolic interactionism are used to illuminate the discussion of the interpretive insights from the data.

To conclude, I review the research questions and how they were answered. I identify research questions that remain in light of the existing literature and briefly summarize key contributions this study makes to sociology and symbolic interactionism.
lesbians engaged in, which enabled them to create, present, and sustain their personal identities.

This research articulates the process of identity construction, the conditions underlying these processes, as well as the strategies used in identity construction. These findings enhance the conceptual understanding of identity construction within a stigmatized population. In addition, this study provides insight into how symbolic interaction helps clarify the identity construction process.

**Study Questions and Sensitizing Concepts**

Hypothesizing that various conditions influence the process of identity construction, this study asked the following research questions:

**Study Question 1:** How do homosexual Seventh-day Adventists construct identities within a religious context that prohibits homosexual behavior?

**Study Question 2:** What are some typical life events that homosexual Seventh-day Adventists experience that may indicate common stages and strategies in the process of identity construction?

**Study Question 3:** What conditions facilitate or impede identity construction among homosexual Seventh-day Adventists?
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The ancient Greeks admonished, "Know thyself." From the earliest times human beings have been interested in self-identity. Sociology has influenced this interest through the theory of symbolic interaction which has a distinct body of knowledge dealing with the self. Symbolic interaction holds that humans know themselves through their relationships with others, by taking on the role of others, and by being able to see themselves as others see them (Mead 1934).

In this study, I examined how this sense of self develops through identity construction. Identity construction refers to a process which may be conceptualized as a series of stages, steps, phases, cycles, or sequences that succeed each other in a rather fixed way (Lofland and Lofland 1995). Snow and Anderson discuss identity construction as "identity work" and define it as "the range of activities individuals engage in to create, present and sustain personal identities" (1987, p. 1348).

Identity construction may be particularly problematic for individuals who encounter two competing or conflicting
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ABSTRACT

BECOMING GAY AND LESBIAN: IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AMONG SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST HOMOSEXUALS

MAY 1998

Rene’ D. Drumm

This study examines the problem of identity construction among Seventh-day Adventist gays and lesbians. How people negotiate the conflicts between religious beliefs that prohibit homosexual behavior and their gay or lesbian sexual orientation is the primary focus of this study. This research used in-depth interviews with 37 gay and lesbian Seventh-day Adventists to analyze the strategies, conditions, and consequences involved in the identity process. These data were interpreted using strategies from the naturalistic paradigm such as coding, memoing, and diagraming.

The first study question was “How do homosexual Seventh-day Adventists construct identities within a religious context that prohibits homosexual behavior?” Religious socialization provided the context for identity development. The reciprocal socialization efforts of the family, church, and Adventist education maintain the conditions under which lesbian and gay Adventists construct their identities. Through a series of processes and stages, gay and lesbian Adventists develop and use a variety of strategies that help them accomplish identity construction.
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are several people whose help and assistance I could not have done without in writing this dissertation. First, Dr. Brenda Phillips had the vision early on as to the possibilities of this study. Thanks for helping me to see them as well. The process of writing a dissertation is at best tedious, with unexpected obstacles and opposition. Thank you Dr. Phillips, for negotiating those aspects of the dissertation with me.

Support from my colleagues at Southwestern Adventist University was also crucial in this process. Dr. Marcus Sheffield edited this dissertation—just because it’s what good faculty do. My secretary, Beverly Bottsford, painstakingly created tables and other supporting documents. Michelle Long took up the “slack” in the social work department allowing me more time to write. You’re all the best. Thank you.

Finally, to all the participants in this study, thank you for the time you gave to this cause and for the special parts of your journey you shared. I am honored by your trust in me.