iscte

INSTITUTO
UNIVERSITÁRIO
DE LISBOA

Religion, spirituality, and conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities: Associations with well-being and LGB identity dimensions

Marta Sofia de Sousa Fernandes

Master in Psychology of Intercultural Relations

Supervisor:
Dr. Carla Moleiro, Associate Professor,
Iscte - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

October, 2020

Religion, spirituality, and conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities: Associations with well-being and LGB identity dimensions

Marta Sofia de Sousa Fernandes

Master in Psychology of Intercultural Relations

Supervisor:
Dr. Carla Moleiro, Associate Professor,
Iscte - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

October, 2020

Acknowledgements

The intense journey of writing this dissertation began a long time ago, with two kids trying to make sense of who they were. I would like to start by thanking the one that stood by my side through many years of shame, struggles, and doubt, but also through many days of victory, acceptance and faith. I could not wish for a better adventure buddy.

I would also like to thank the wonderful woman that I am proud to call my girlfriend. I am not the same person I was when I first started this dissertation and I owe it all to her. Thank you for the endless hours listening to me, for supporting me through my many ups and downs, and, above all, for inspiring me every single day to live out and proud.

This dissertation would also not be possible without its participants and their experiences. I am deeply grateful for each person who took the time to answer the survey and share a little bit of their lives with me.

Finally, I want to thank those without whom this dissertation would not be a reality. My supervisor, Dr. Carla Moleiro, for supporting me since the first meeting and helping me turn my ideas into reality. I am thankful for her support and reassurance each step of the way and for all that I have learned from her. I am also deeply grateful to Eduardo Reis for all the time he put into this dissertation, for all the knowledge he shared with me and for the amazing support he gave me.

Abstract

Even though LGB individuals are usually less religious than the general population, religion and/or spirituality are still a part of many LGB people's lives. As such, this dissertation focused on investigating the relation between religious/spiritual variables and subjective well-being, and dimensions of LGB identity; identifying correlates of the experience of conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities and comparing people who felt conflict with people who did not experience it, in terms of LGB identity dimensions, subjective well-being and outness. The participants were 126 LGB people, with 80 of them being female. No significant correlations were found between religious/spiritual variables and subjective well-being. Participation in religious ceremonies and private prayer were significantly and positively correlated with the LGB identity dimensions Acceptance Concerns, Concealment Motivation and Difficult Process and spiritual identification was significantly and negatively correlated with Internalized Homonegativity. Conflict between religious and LGB identities was found to be significantly and negatively correlated with outness to the world, overall outness and positive affect, and positively correlated with negative affect and the LGB identity dimensions Internalized Homonegativity, Difficult Process, Acceptance Concerns and Concealment Motivation. People who felt conflict between their religious and LGB identities were found to have higher scores on Difficult Process, Acceptance Concerns, Concealment Motivation and Identity Centrality, than those who did not experience it. The present dissertation was then able to contribute to the understanding of the religion and spirituality of Portuguese LGB people, and their experiences with this type of conflict.

Keywords: religion, spirituality, sexual orientation, identity conflict, subjective well-being

PsycINFO Classification Codes:
2920 Religion
2980 Sexual Behavior & Sexual Orientation

Resumo

Apesar das pessoas LGB serem menos religiosas do que a população em geral, a religião e/ou espiritualidade continuam a ser parte da vida de muitas delas. Esta dissertação pretendeu investigar a relação entre variáveis religiosas/espirituais e bem-estar subjetivo e dimensões da identidade LGB; identificar correlatos da experiência de conflito entre as identidades religiosa/espiritual e LGB e comparar pessoas que sentiram conflito com pessoas que não o sentiram, nas dimensões de identidade LGB, bem-estar subjetivo e abertura. Os participantes foram 126 pessoas LGB, 80 das quais do sexo feminino. Nenhuma das variáveis religiosas/espirituais foi significativamente correlacionada com o bem-estar subjetivo. A participação em cerimónias religiosas e a oração foram significativamente e positivamente correlacionadas com as dimensões de identidade Preocupação com a Aceitação, Dissimulação Identitária e Dificuldades no Processo Identitário, e a identificação espiritual foi negativamente correlacionada com a Homonegatividade Internalizada. O conflito entre as identidades religiosa/espiritual e LGB foi significativamente e negativamente correlacionado com a abertura a pares, com a abertura em geral e com os afetos positivos, e positivamente correlacionada com os afetos negativos e com as dimensões Homonegatividade Internalizada, Dificuldades no Processo Identitário, Preocupação com a Aceitação e Dissimulação Identitária. As pessoas que sentiram conflito entre as duas identidades apresentaram um nível mais alto de Dificuldades no Processo Identitário, Preocupação com a Aceitação, Dissimulação Identitária e Centralidade Identitária, comparadas com quem não sentiu conflito. Esta dissertação contribuiu para o conhecimento sobre a religião e espiritualidade das pessoas LGB Portuguesas e as suas experiências com este tipo de conflito.

Palavras-chave: religião, espiritualidade, orientação sexual, conflito identitário, bem-estar subjetivo

PsycINFO Classification Codes:

2920 Religion

2980 Sexual Behavior & Sexual Orientation

Table of Contents

Introduction 1
Chapter I. Literature Review 3
1.1 Religion/spirituality and well-being 3
1.1.1 Definitions of religion, spirituality and well-being 3
1.1.2 Relation between religion/spirituality and well-being, in the general population 6
1.1.3 Relation between religion/spirituality and well-being, in the LGB population 7
1.2 Religion/spirituality and the LGB identity 10
1.3 Conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities 13
1.3.1 Theoretical approaches 13
1.3.2 Dealing with conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities 15
1.3.3 Potential consequences of conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities. 18
1.4 Research goals 19
Chapter II. Method 21
2.1 Participants 21
2.2 Measures 23
2.2.1 Religious/spiritual variables 23
2.2.2 Subjective well-being 24
2.2.3 Dimensions of LGB identity 25
2.2.4 Conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities 25
2.2.5 Outness 26
2.3 Procedure 26
Chapter III. Results 28
3.1 Descriptive Statistics 28
3.2 Relation between religious/spiritual variables and dimensions of LGB identity and subjective well-being 31
3.3 Relation between conflict between religious and LGB identities and dimensions of LGB identity, subjective well-being and outness levels 33
3.4 Comparing identity conflict and no identity conflict groups on subjective well-being, dimensions of LGB identity and outness levels 33
Chapter IV. Discussion 35
References 45

Introduction

The positive relationship between several aspects of religion and/or spirituality and well-being has been heavily studied in the general population. Religiosity (Bergan & McConatha, 2000), spirituality (Hadzic, 2011), religious affiliation (Schwab & Peterson, 1990) and religious participation (Ellison, Gay, & Glass, 1989) have all been shown to be positively correlated with well-being and better mental health. However, in the case of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) people, often stigmatized and discriminated by most formal religions, this relationship becomes less clear. According to Barnes and Meyer (2012), when compared with the general population, LGB individuals report less religious affiliation, less attendance of religious services and prayer and a lower level of self-reported religiosity. LGB individuals are also more likely to report that religion is not important (Lytle, Blosnich, De Luca, & Brownson, 2018) and a lower sense of belonging to their religious communities (Kralovec, Fartacek, Fartacek, & Plöderl, 2014), when compared with heterosexual samples. In Portugal, this apparent disaffiliation of LGB people from religion has also been reported by Moleiro, Pinto, and Freire (2013), who found that 80% of their participants did not identify with any religious denomination.

Nonetheless, even considering the lower rates of religious affiliation and behavior, LGB religious and spiritual people exist and have been the focus of many investigations. To what concerns religiosity, Boppana and Gross (2019) reported significant and positive correlations with well-being that are similar to those found in the general population. As for spirituality, Barnes and Meyer (2012) reported higher levels of spirituality for an LGB sample, when compared to the general population, and authors have found significant and positive correlations with life satisfaction and positive affect (Harari, Glenwick, & Cecero, 2014) and self-esteem (Stern & Wright, 2018).

Other authors, though, have found different results for this population, from non-significant correlations between religiosity and well-being (Harari et al., 2014) to even finding negative correlations between religiosity and self-esteem (Stern & Wright, 2018) and positive correlations with loneliness (Escher et al., 2018). Such results seem to indicate a more complex relationship between these variables for the LGB population than for the general population, thus showing the importance of further studying these correlations.

Besides focusing on well-being and mental health, research about religion and spirituality in the LGB population has also focused on issues and subjects that are specific to the LGB experience, such as internalized homophobia, and outness. As an example, religiosity was found by Shilo and Savaya (2012) to be associated with higher levels of internalized homophobia and lower levels of outness. Fewer authors have focused on the conflict

experienced by some LGB religious people that belong to religions that are non-affirming of their LGB identity (Schuck & Liddle, 2001). The existing literature, mainly qualitative, reports that people who experience conflict between their religious/spiritual and LGB identities experience a great deal of negative feelings, emotions and cognitions (Anderton, Pender, & Asner-Self, 2011), including depression, anxiety and self-hatred (Schuck & Liddle, 2001; Subhi & Geelan, 2012; Beagan & Hattie, 2015). The few quantitative research on this topic also found that people who experience this type of conflict have more difficulty accepting their LGB identity (Schuck & Liddle, 2001) and poorer mental health (Zeidner & Zevulun, 2018). Due to the lack of quantitative research investigating conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities, especially in the Portuguese context, it is also important to continue investigating this experience of conflict, namely by identifying new correlates.

The present dissertation will thus focus on the religion and spirituality of LGB Portuguese people, as well as the possible conflict felt between their religious/spiritual and LGB identities. The dissertation is organized by chapters, starting with the present introduction. Chapter 1 will be a literature review, defining and exploring religion and spirituality, well-being, the relation between the two in the general population and in the LGB population, as well as the relationship between religion/spirituality and LGB specific variables, and the experience of conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities. Chapter 1 will end with the definition of this dissertation's research goals and will be followed by Chapter 2, which will focus on the methodology, including the participants, the measures, and the procedure. Chapter 3 will describe the results found for each research goal and Chapter 4 will encompass the discussion of the main findings, the limitations of the dissertation and a final conclusion.

Chapter I. Literature Review

1.1 Religion/spirituality and well-being

1.1.1 Definitions of religion, spirituality and well-being. For a long time, spirituality was not distinguished from religion (Turner, Lukoff, Barhouse, & Lu, 1995) and either the two terms were used as meaning the same thing or all associated phenomena was considered religion (Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott, 1999). Only with the rise of secularism, during the 20th century, did authors start distinguishing spirituality from religion (Turner et al., 1995). More recently, a new and opposite tendency emerged, which considers the two terms as mutually exclusive, with spirituality being viewed on a more positive note and religion being mostly viewed as a negative and restricting experience (Pargament, 1999; Turner et al., 1995).

In this contrasting view, many authors see spirituality as a personal and affective experience (Turner et al., 1995), a dynamic process and a search for meaning, purpose, connectedness, and transcendence (Pargament, 1999). Religion, on the contrary, is often seen as a static, organizational, ritualistic, formalized, ideological, and mainly social experience (Pargament, 1999). As an example, Miller and Thoresen (2003) present their definitions of religion and spirituality in a contrasting way. For these authors, religion is an institutional phenomenon, defined by boundaries, and specified beliefs and practices. Although they do say that the spiritual can also be a focus of religion, they contrast religion as a social phenomenon with spirituality as an individual issue. The definition of spirituality and religion by Koenig (2009) is also an example of this contrasting good/bad view of the two terms, with the author saying that spirituality is something personal, and free from the rules, regulations and responsibilities that are set by religion.

Although there is evidence to suggest that religion and spirituality are indeed different concepts (Hadzic, 2011; Zinnbauer et al., 1997), a total distinction between the two is hard to do, because people tend to think of the terms as similar (Hadzic, 2011). In their study, Zinnbauer et al. (1997) showed that religiousness and spirituality are significantly correlated, with most of the respondents considering themselves both spiritual and religious. The two concepts were also correlated with the same religious variables, such as frequency of prayer, church attendance and intrinsic religiosity. It is also important to note that when people self-rate their religiousness/religiosity and spirituality, they do it regarding their own religious experiences and affiliations, and may attribute different meanings to the terms and view them as more or less similar (Zinnbauer et al., 1997).

Considering this overlap, some authors have drawn attention to the similarities between spirituality and religion, considering that it is important to distinguish but not completely oppose the two terms. Concerning the individual aspect, Pargament (1999) says that every formal religion is concerned with spiritual matters, even considering it their most fundamental mission, thus arguing that if spirituality concerns the individual, so does religion. This author also considers that most spiritual experiences occur not only in a private setting, but also in a social context, with many individuals searching for shared views of the world, life or the transcendent. Thus, both spirituality and religion have an individual and a social aspect (Pargament,1999). Regarding the tendency to view religion as bad and spirituality as good, Pargament (1999) draws attention to the fact that, on one hand, people can pursue high goals and meanings of spirituality through destructive behaviors and dysfunctional paths and,on the other hand, that involvement in formal religions can be a source of support and connection for individuals. As such, neither concept should be seen as all bad or all good. Other similarities between the two terms mentioned in the literature are: 1) they involve a sense of meaning and life purpose (Turner et al., 1995); 2) they provide a source of connectedness and relatedness (Turner et al., 1995); 3) they develop across the lifespan, thus not being static (Hill et al., 2000).; 4) they are socio-psychological phenomena and, 5) they are both related to cognitive and affective phenomena (Hill et al., 2000).

Having these similarities in mind, it is still important to define and differentiate religion and spirituality. Religion is a multidimensional construct that has both psychological and sociological implications (Paloutzian & Kirkpatrick, 1995). It concerns to the adherence to a set of common beliefs or practices of an organized institution or faith group, concerning the sacred (Koenig, 2009; Turner et al., 1995). It involves the collective spiritual experience of a group or community in their search for the sacred (Mueller, Plevak, & Rummans, 2001; Pargament, 1999), but also an individual and private experience (Koenig, 2009). Associated with the term religion, some other concepts emerge in the literature and might be important to define. Religiosity refers to the degree of commitment or adherence to the beliefs and practices of a particular faith or organized religion (Hamblin & Gross, 2014; Mueller et al., 2001). Religious participation refers to the involvement or attendance in church activities or services (García, Gray-Sanley, & Ramirez-Valles, 2008). Religious behaviors usually include attendance to religious activities, but also private or collective prayer, and reading of religious texts (Hamblin & Gross, 2014).

Spirituality concerns the transcendent and a search for the sacred and involves beliefs, feelings and ways of behaving (Fetzer Institute and National Institute on Aging, 2003;

Pargament, 1999). It is also often seen as a relationship or connection between human beings and metaphysical systems, such as a higher power, a creator, supernatural beings or forces, the world or others around us (Prest & Keller, 1993; Zinnbauer et al. 1997).

In order to study the relationship between religion/spirituality and well-being, it is also important to define the concept of well-being. According to Lent (2004), well-being literature usually follows two different perspectives. The eudaimonic perspective views well-being as the pursuit to realize our true human potential, striving to achieve perfection and realization (Lent, 2004). This perspective is followed by Ryff (1989), whose definition of psychological well-being reflects this idea of realization, focused on six dimensions: autonomy, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, self-acceptance and positive relations with others. The second perspective is called the hedonic view, according to which well-being is equivalent to pleasure, happiness, pleasant feelings and relaxation (Lent, 2004). The concept of subjective well-being is considered to be connected to the hedonic view, because it considers well-being as subjective happiness, life satisfaction and a balance between positive and negative affect (Diener, 1984). Being subjective, this type of well-being is not based on objective terms such as health or wealth, but rather on the subjective experience of an individual, that assesses their life according to their own criteria (Diener, 1984).

According to Diener (2000), subjective well-being has different components, such as life satisfaction, positive affect and negative affect. Life satisfaction is a global self-assessment of a person's satisfaction with their life, positive affect consists in experiencing pleasant emotions, feelings or moods, and negative affect is the experience of unpleasant emotions, feelings or moods (Diener, 2000). The two types of affect are not independent and they work according to a suppression mechanism, which means that the more someone feels one type of affect, the less they will tend to feel the other (Diener, 1984). Thus, it is generally considered that people who have more positive emotions than negative emotions and that evaluate their life in a positive way have more subjective well-being (Galinha & Ribeiro, 2005).

Life satisfaction is usually considered the cognitive part of subjective well-being because it involves a cognitive judgment and evaluation and positive and negative affect are usually considered the emotional part of subjective well-being (Galinha & Ribeiro, 2005). However, Lent (2004) draws attention to the fact that both life satisfaction and positive/negative affect are measured with self-reports and thus both require individuals to reflect on their experiences and make judgements about either their life or their feelings, so both constructs have a cognitive component. Similarly, people have to reflect either on broad affective aspects like happiness or on specific emotional experiences, so both judgments about life satisfaction and

positive/negative affect include an affective part (Lent, 2004). Thus, this author considers that life satisfaction, positive affect and negative affect are important to evaluate subjective well-being because they are indeed distinct constructs, though they should not be considered as independent (Lent, 2004).

1.1.2 Relation between religion/spirituality and well-being, in the general population. In the general population, both religiosity (Bergan & McConatha, 2000) and spirituality (Hadzic, 2011) have been found to be correlated with well-being variables, such as life satisfaction. A meta-analysis by Witter, Stock, Okun, and Haring (1985) also found religion to be positively correlated with subjective well-being and, according to Koenig (2004), until the year 2000 almost 500 studies had shown a positive and significant association between religion and well-being and/or mental health. Schwab and Peterson (1990) also showed that religious affiliation was a significant predictor of general life satisfaction.

Other types of variables used to understand the relationship between religion and well-being are, as an example, private prayer or devotion and religious participation. Ellison et al. (1989) found a positive association between religious participation and subjective well-being and Poloma and Pendleton (1991) showed religious devotion to be positively correlated with subjective well-being. However, private prayer and devotion showed mixed results, with authors such as Schwab and Peterson (1990) not finding a significant predicative power for this variable.

Some authors have also found positive and significant correlations between religious variables and mental health benefits. In his meta-analysis, Koenig (2004) refers a significant association between religious beliefs and practices with less depression and suicide rates, less anxiety and less substance abuse and also an association with more hope, purpose and meaning in life.

Considering the evidence that religious and spiritual variables are connected to well-being and mental health, literature has also tried to explain this relationship. Some reasons presented as for why religion and spirituality might enhance well-being are: 1) it may provide people with social support, as well as with social norms that might help navigate the world (Ellison, 1991; Koenig, 2009); 2) it may give people a sense of connection, due to having a personal relationship with a divine other or others (Ellison, 1991); 3) it may provide meaning, helping people make sense of life, suffering and negative emotions (Ellison, 1991; Koenig, 2009; Hadzic, 2011) and 4) it may promote healthy behaviors and lifestyles (Ellison, 1991; Hadzic, 2011).

1.1.3 Relation between religion/spirituality and well-being, in the LGB population. In the LGB population, as in the general population, the relationship between religion/spirituality variables and well-being has been studied in many ways, with authors focusing on different aspects of religion/spirituality and different aspects of well-being and mental health.

Some authors have focused on the relationship of well-being and/or mental health with religiosity and/or spirituality, measured in a multitude of ways. In their study with gay male Orthodox Jews, Harari et al. (2014) used more than one religiosity measure, one specific for Orthodox Jews and the Intrinsic/Extrinsic-Revised Scale (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989), that assesses intrinsic, extrinsic social and extrinsic personal religiosity. None of the used scales were significantly correlated with subjective well-being measures such as life satisfaction and positive and negative affect. Other authors have found significant and positive correlations between religiosity and eudaimonic well-being (Boppana & Gross, 2019) and negative correlations with depression scores (Boppana & Gross, 2019; Escher et al., 2018; Gattis, Woodford, & Han, 2014), but also negative correlations with self-esteem (Stern & Wright, 2018) and positive correlations with loneliness (Escher et al., 2018). We can then see that the relation between religiosity and well-being/mental health can be complex and encompass both positive and negative outcomes.

Spirituality has also been the focus of many researchers, with authors reporting more consistent findings. The spirituality measure used by Harari et al. (2014) in their study mentioned above, did have a significant and positive correlation with life satisfaction and positive affect. Stern and Wright (2018) reported that, when studied independently from religiosity, spirituality was found to be significantly and positively correlated with self-esteem. Lassiter et al. (2017) also reported a negative association between spirituality and depressive symptoms and a positive association with resilience, in a sample of gay and bisexual men. The authors also found that men with high levels of both religiosity and spirituality had lower depressive symptoms than men who had high religiosity and low spirituality, which made them conclude that religiosity can actually have a positive impact on mental health when it is paired with high levels of spirituality.

Besides focusing on religiosity and spirituality, authors also focus their attention either in private and/or intrinsic experiences, or external behaviors, such as participation. To what concerns personal experiences, Whicker, de St. Aubin, and Skerven (2017) found that, for lesbians, personal spiritual practices, like prayer and meditation were associated positively with overall happiness (but not with psychological well-being or satisfaction with life) and Puckett, Wolff, Gunn, Woodward, and Pantalone (2018) found that sexual minority people who

maintain a personal relationship with a higher power tend to have lower levels of depression. Both Ream and Savin-Williams (2005) and Whicker et al. (2017) tried to understand if LGB people's views of this higher power as either loving or punitive/controlling changed the effect of this relationship on well-being/mental health. Ream and Savin-Williams (2005) found that participants who believe in a punitive God or that found it difficult to believe that this God loved them, scored lower on mental health outcomes. In their sample, Whicker et al. (2017) found that when lesbians viewed God as loving they had greater psychological well-being and satisfaction with life, but when they viewed God as controlling, they had lower levels of overall happiness.

Another interesting finding in LGB religious literature is the fact that negative religious experiences seem to have a stronger relationship with mental health outcomes when compared to positive ones (Dahl & Galliher, 2010). An example of this is a study by Brewster, Velez, Foster, Esposito, and Robinson (2016) where authors found that negative religious coping was positively and strongly correlated with distress and negatively correlated with well-being, but no significant correlations were found between positive religious coping and these mental health variables. Another example of the influence of negative experiences is a study by Zarzycka, Rybarski, and Sliwak (2017), who found that those who have more negative social interactions surrounding religion report less satisfaction with life and more anxiety.

Other authors have focused their attention on religious participation and attendance of religious services and activities, with some authors finding significant results. Meanley, Pingel, and Bauermeister (2016) found that greater religious participation was negatively correlated with psychological well-being. Whicker et al. (2017) found that religious activity attendance was associated with less life satisfaction, but not significantly correlated with psychological well-being or overall happiness. Barringer and Gay (2017) also found that attendance at religious services was not a significant predictor of LGBT individuals' happiness.

Another main focus of North American LGB religion/spirituality studies has been comparing different religions and denominations, due to their great religious diversity. Yakushko (2001; 2005) was one of the first authors to try to understand how attending a conservative church (i.e. a church that does not accept homosexuality) can influence LGB people's self-esteem, and was able to find in both studies that those whose religious background include a conservative church, tend to have lower self-esteem compared to those who do not attend such churches. Yakushko (2005) also reported that people who have attended at some point in their lives a faith community that fully accepts homosexuality tend to have higher self-

esteem than those who have not, which led the author to conclude that religion can have both a damaging and a protecting effect on LGB people's lives.

This apparent both positive and negative influence of religion for LGB people, depending on their affirmation or rejection of homosexuality, has been reported by other authors. Gattis et al. (2014) compared the depressive symptoms scores of those who belonged to a denomination opposed to same-sex marriage, those who belonged to a denomination who endorsed same-sex marriage and those who considered themselves secular and did not belong to any denomination. Both those who belonged to a denomination opposed to same-sex marriage and those who identified as secular had significantly greater scores in depressive symptoms than those who belonged to a denomination that endorsed same-sex marriage (Gattis et al., 2014).

Boppana and Gross (2019) also focused their study on attendance of accepting/rejecting churches. Their results showed that attending an accepting church was positively correlated with eudaimonic well-being and negatively correlated with depression, and the opposite correlation was found for attending a rejecting church – those who attended a rejecting church tended to have less eudaimonic well-being and more depression symptoms.

It is also relevant to mention that some authors have found sex and sexual orientation differences in the relationship between religious/spiritual variables and well-being. For example, Dilmaghani (2018) found that religiosity was not a significant predictor of subjective well-being for lesbian women, but it had a significant and positive contribution to subjective well-being for gay males. Dahl and Galliher (2010) also found that higher levels on a religious benefit scale (i.e. degree to which the participants feel supported by their congregation) was only associated with higher levels of self-esteem for males and not for females. Also related to these two findings, Scroggs and Faflick (2018) found that identifying as a female was associated with a decrease in religiosity, and Sherkat (2002) reported that gay men had higher rates of church participation than other LGB people.

Besides gender differences, Scroggs and Faflick (2018) also found age differences in their results, with participants over the age of 60 reporting higher levels of religiosity. Drabble, Veldhuis, Riley, Rostosky, and Hughes (2018) also report this pattern, with participants in their oldest age group (over 51 years old) significantly being more likely to identify as being somewhat or very religious, when compared to younger participants.

Finally, of considerate value for the present dissertation is the only study performed in Portugal that focuses on religion in the LGB population, by Moleiro et al. (2013). In this study the authors found that more than 80% of participants did not identify with any religious denomination and that those who identified with a religion were mostly Catholic (65%). The

authors also investigated LGB people's religious attendance and private religious practices, with a little above 9% of participants attending religious practices more than not at all or rarely, and 22.5% of participants engaging in prayer or meditation. Regarding their religious and spiritual identification, 53% of participants said they were not religious at all and only 15.5% said they were not spiritual at all. Moleiro et al. (2013) also inquired the participants about their spiritual and religious well-being and found that the participants reported higher levels of spiritual well-being and lower levels of religious well-being.

1.2 Religion/spirituality and the LGB identity

According to McCarn and Fassinger (1996), sexual identity development is the process through which individuals understand and interpret their sexual orientation. For LGB people, this can be a challenge mainly for two reasons: 1) the development of their sexual identity occurs in a context of negative messages received from society and 2) their families and even society in general do not provide visible role models and socializing experiences to help in this developmental process (Love, Bock, Jannarone, & Richardson, 2005). LGB people grow up surrounded by heteronormativity, a system of legal, institutional and cultural practices and norms that supports the idea that gender is binary and defined by biological sex and that the only natural and expected attraction between people is the one that occurs between opposite genders (Oliveira, Pereira, Costa, & Nogueira, 2010).

Many authors have tried to explain how LGB people develop their sexual identity by creating stage models, characterized by the notion that sexual identity is developed in a series of sequential phases, from first gaining awareness to accepting their sexual orientation (Mohr & Fassinger, 2000). An example of such models is the one developed by Fassinger and colleagues (Fassinger & Miller, 1997; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996), according to which there are four phases of identity development, awareness, exploration, deepening-commitment, and internalization-synthesis. As individuals increase their ability to integrate same-sex attractions and internalize their identities, they move progressively to a new phase of identity development. Identity development, according to these authors, is conceptualized as a multidimensional process, involving not only the individual's feelings and beliefs about their sexual orientation, but also other LGB people and heterosexual people. In stage models, identity integration is achieved when someone accepts their own sexuality and, as a consequence, achieves a greater notion and clarity of who they are, increasing their self-awareness in a deeper sense (Love et al., 2005).

Some authors have criticized stage models, by arguing that they are essentialist views, assuming that sexual orientation is innate and something that people find out about when they discover their true self through self-reflection (Oliveira et al., 2010). Stage models thus look at sexuality as something static, that cannot possibly change, not considering its fluidity (Oliveira et al., 2010). Another criticism is the way they assume that sexual identity development is unidirectional and that every LGB person follows the same sequential stages, in the same order, with no space for variation (Oliveira et al., 2010). Love et al. (2005) also mention that there is little empirical evidence for the existence of these stages, with the ones that exist being mainly focused on the experience of White people, especially White gay men. Related to this, Oliveira, Lopes, Costa, and Nogueira (2012) also mention that this kind of models may not acknowledge the role of social, cultural or political factors in the development of the LGB identity.

Another way of looking at identity development is to consider different dimensions that are important in the LGB experience, but that occur in a multiplicity of ways (Mohr & Fassinger, 2000). These important dimensions can include individual variables, interpersonal variables and variables that reflect specific experiences and events that occur in the lives of LGB people (Mohr & Fassinger, 2000). One example of a model that follows this perspective was presented by D'Augelli (1994), according to whom LGB identity development is a life span process, shaped by three sets of variables that are interrelated: personal subjectivities and actions, interactive intimacies and sociohistorical connections. The first one, personal subjectivities, are the individual's emotions, perceptions and actions that involve their sexual orientation and the meanings the person attaches to each one. The second one, interactive intimacies relates to the effect that family, friends or partners have on the individual's process and the meaning the individual attributes to the interactions with other people. The third one, sociohistorical connections, draws attention to the impact of norms, laws and cultural specificities of the different environments that surround the individual. Having these three sets of important variables in mind, D'Augelli (1994) identified six processes that are interactive and not sequential: exiting heterosexual identity, developing a personal lesbian/gay/bisexual identity status, developing a lesbian/gay/bisexual social identity, becoming a lesbian/gay/bisexual offspring, developing a lesbian/gay/bisexual intimacy status, and entering a lesbian/gay/bisexual community.

Mohr and Fassinger (2000) have also presented a multidimensional model of gay and lesbian identity that has later been adapted to also include bisexual individuals (Mohr & Fassinger, 2006; Mohr & Kendra, 2011). To build their model and identity scale, the authors tried to consider different dimensions that were consistently studied in literature as being

important in the lives of gay and lesbian individuals and in their identity's development. As such, the authors ended up considering the following variables as important dimensions: internalized homonegativity, confusion about their sexual orientation, belief in the superiority of lesbian and gay people compared to heterosexual people, fear of judgment from others, desire to hide one's sexual orientation, and the perception of the identity development process as having been difficult (Mohr & Fassinger, 2000). The authors also mention the importance that outness has in the lives of non-heterosexual people. Outness is defined as the degree to which non-heterosexual individuals have disclosed their sexual orientation to others or not (Mohr & Fassinger, 2000). This degree can vary across different contexts where the individual moves and lives. Later, Mohr and Kendra (2011) revised the original scale to be inclusive for bisexual people and also extended the scale, to include new identity dimensions that were considered important. The authors ended up with eight dimensions that characterize an LGB identity: Acceptance Concerns, Concealment Motivation, Identity Uncertainty, Internalized Homonegativity, Difficult Process, Identity Superiority, Identity Affirmation, and Identity Centrality.

Some gender and age differences have been found in the way LGB people develop and experience their identity. Concerning gender, Mohr and Fassinger (2000) reported that men tend to have higher levels of internalized homonegativity and a more difficult coming out process and that women tend to have higher levels of sexual identity confusion. Page, Lindahl, and Malik (2013) also report that males tend to have a more difficult LGB identity development process. Scroggs and Faflick (2018) reported that in their sample being female was associated with an increased LGB identity salience. Regarding age differences, Moleiro et al. (2013) found that younger participants tended to have higher levels of acceptance concerns, identity uncertainty and internalized homonegativity. The same authors also reported that older participants in their sample tended to have higher levels of LGB identity centrality than younger participants, a result that was also found by Stern and Wright (2018). Some sexual orientation and gender differences regarding outness levels are also found in the literature. Shilo and Savaya (2012) found that being bisexual was associated with lower levels of outness, when compared to lesbian or gay individuals and Costa, Pereira, and Leal (2013) found that lesbian and bisexual women were more likely to be out to their family and friends then were gay or bisexual men.

When studying LGB religion and spirituality, some authors have focused their attention on its relationship with dimensions of LGB identity, especially internalized homonegativity (or internalized homophobia), and other LGB related issues such as outness. Kralovec et al. (2014)

found that participants who were religiously affiliated had higher levels of internalized homonegativity and Shilo and Savaya (2012) found that religiosity was associated with higher levels of internalized homophobia.

This pattern does not seem to hold when authors study the relationship between spirituality and internalized homonegativity. Meanley et al. (2016) studied religious and spiritual identification as one single variable and came to the conclusion that religious/spiritual participants had higher scores of internalized homophobia than non-religious/spiritual participants. However, authors who studied religious and spiritual identification as separate variables concluded that internalized homonegativity is only significantly related with religious identification and not with spiritual identification. For example, Moleiro et al. (2013) found that religious participants reported higher levels of internalized homonegativity and were more motivated to conceal their LGB identity, than those who were not religious. But neither of the two identity variables were associated with identification as a spiritual person. Stern and Wright (2018) also reported that religiosity, when studied independently from spirituality, was positively related with internalized homonegativity, but such a correlation was not found for spirituality. What these authors did find was that higher levels of spirituality were significantly correlated with higher levels of identity superiority and higher levels of LGB identity affirmation (Stern and Wright, 2018).

Regarding the relationship between religiosity and outness, Shilo and Savaya (2012) reported that religiosity was associated with lower levels of outness, but in a study from Foster, Brewster, Velez, Eklund, and Keum (2017), the opposite pattern was found, with greater religiosity being associated with higher levels of outness as an LGB person.

1.3 Conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities

1.3.1 Theoretical approaches. According to Coyle and Rafalin (2000) identity conflict occurs when two or more identity aspects that are important to an individual are perceived as being in part or completely incompatible. Because many formal religions have traditionally condemned or criticized homosexuality, many religious LGB people experience a conflict or dissonance between their religious/spiritual identity and their LGB identity (Schuck & Liddle, 2001). Literature about this type of conflict, especially qualitative research, is consistent in presenting the negative feelings, emotions and cognitions expressed by LGB people who feel conflict between their religious and sexual orientation identities (Anderton et al., 2011). It is important to notice however, that although many religious LGB people feel this conflict, others

see no incompatibility between their identities and still others fluctuate between feeling accepted and feeling uncertain about their identities and beliefs, through their lifetime (Pitt, 2009). Reviewing conflict literature can thus help us understand not only the multiple ways people experience this type of conflict, but also the multiple ways LGB people find to deal with it or try to solve it.

Authors like Rodriguez (2009) and Anderton et al. (2011) have presented Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory to explain the feelings of conflict experienced by religious LGB people. According to this theory, cognitive dissonance occurs when an individual experiences tension between two thoughts or beliefs that are inconsistent. Maintaining the two contradictory cognitions is mentally and emotionally painful and so individuals try to adjust them to reduce the experience of conflict. Cognitions can include the knowledge that individuals have about their behavior, their environments and themselves (Anderton et al., 2011). When dissonance is perceived as persistent and high in magnitude, that is, when dissonance exists between elements that are of great importance to the individuals, they will feel motivated engage in ways of alleviating the pressure (Anderton et al., 2011).

Applied to this context, if someone's religious beliefs are important to them and if those religious beliefs are not affirmative of LGB people, they will start to feel a dissonance between their religious beliefs and their self-knowledge and start questioning one of the cognitions or both. The more the religious beliefs are important for the individual, the more they will tend to experience dissonance, tension and pain, and the more they will feel motivated to solve this dissonance (Anderton et al., 2011). This theory can also be applied to explain some of the things people might do to deal with dissonance. According to Anderton et al. (2011), people who experience dissonance will tend to avoid people and situations that increase their experience of conflict. Someone who feels conflict between their religious and LGB identities might thus try to avoid people, situations and other things that remind them of this conflict and it can either be avoiding LGB contexts and people or avoiding religious contexts and people, or even avoiding both. Another way of alleviating their dissonance, supported by this theory, might be searching for others that are supportive of their beliefs and values. Thus, as LGB people in conflict start forming new cognitions about themselves or their religion, they might start to seek out people who would support their beliefs either about their sexual identity or about religion.

Although cognitive dissonance theory provides a theoretical framework to think about conflict between religious and LGB identities, Rodriguez (2009) considers that such a theory cannot be used to understand all the levels of complexity of this issue. Rodriguez (2009) considers the theory not dynamic enough to include all the issues that arise when an individual

feels an intense experience of conflict and anxiety, especially concerning personality issues and social implications.

Another theoretical model often referred by authors (e.g., Rodriguez, 2009; Zeidner & Zevulun, 2018) to explain this experience of conflict is the multiple identity conflict model, by Baumeister, Shapiro, and Tice (1985). According to this model, the multiple social roles, and multiple identities that people are strongly committed to, can start to be perceived as incompatible, making people feel like they are in an impossible situation. Being strongly and personally committed to both distinct identities is a key aspect, because the authors consider that only such dual commitment can produce conflict. Feeling this conflict between multiple and strong identities, as an LGB and a religious identity, would then prompt people to look for ways of alleviating such conflict. According to Rodriguez and Ouellette (2000), LGB people with a strong religious identity can then take four different paths to alleviate their identity conflict: a) rejecting the LGB identity; 2) rejecting the religious identity; 3) compartmentalization; and 4) identity integration. These four possible paths will be further explored and supported in the next section.

1.3.2 Dealing with conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities. The first strategy mentioned by Rodriguez and Ouellette (2000), that is used by some LGB religious people to relief their conflict is to prioritize their religious identity, in such a way that they end up either denying or completely rejecting their LGB identity. Subhi and Geelan (2012) interviewed 10 male and 10 female Christians, who identified as gay/lesbian and 80% reported feeling or having felt conflict between the two identities. In cases where the conflict was considered extreme, respondents felt like they had to choose between abandoning their religious beliefs and communities or abandoning their sexuality and some participants reported trying to suppress their sexual identity in order to remain Christian.

Another example is Itzhaky and Kissil's (2015) qualitative study, which focused on 22 Orthodox Jewish gay men and their experiences of living in secrecy. All the participants described the negative emotions they felt when they realized they were gay, such as shame, guilt, disgust, and self-hatred. The participants also described strategies used to deal with the initial conflict, such as denying being gay, entering an heterosexual marriage or using religious rituals to try to get rid of their "homosexual side". Denying their homosexuality did not end up when they figured out they could not eliminate it; instead, participants reported focusing their attention in concealing their homosexuality. Although some of the participants had come out to themselves many years before the interview, all the 22 participants still reported experiencing

negative emotions, none of them mentioned having reconciled their conflict and none of them was considering coming out to their families, because, in their opinion, it was not worth to lose their Orthodox Jewish communities. As Anderton et al. (2011) mention, when LGB feel like they need to choose between one aspect of their identity over the other, they experience considerable losses, no matter what decision they make. In the case of Itzhaky and Kissil's (2015) participants the decision was to choose their religion and religious communities over choosing their sexual identity and that meant possibly losing experiences of intimacy and sexual expression, as well as possibly feeling emotionally fulfilled (Anderton et al., 2011). For these men, choosing their sexual identity would mean losing their family, friends, religious community, and the community which provided all their needs, such as work, education or housing (Itzhaky & Kissil, 2015). Since their religious identity shapes every aspect of their lives, these men end up choosing to keep this part of their identity, over choosing any other aspect, which for them was not as important.

Some LGB religious people, though, report choosing their sexual identity over their religious identity, which many times includes to stop attending oppressive contexts or even rejecting their religion entirely. Schuck and Liddle (2001), for example, report that in their sample of 66 LGB people nearly two thirds felt conflict and among those the most common response was to stop attending their religious institution. Five participants also decided to give up religion completely when they came out. García et al. (2008) focused their study on the experience of gay, bisexual, and transgender Latino men, who grew up as Catholic and also found that some of these men opted to abandon organized religion completely.

But not all LGB people who decide to leave their religion give up religion completely. Some people end up returning to their original religion, other people find a new alternative religion or different church that is affirming, and some other people find personal spiritual pathways that are not connected to a particular religion. Such paths were also reported in García et al.'s (2008) study, where some of the men decided to remain Catholic, some joined other formal religions and some followed other types of spiritual groups. These three possible strategies are considered by authors as an integration of both identities, with people being able to reconcile a religious or spiritual identity with an LGB identity. Besides reporting the experience of LGB people who left religion, Schuck and Liddle (2001) also report the experience of LGB people who found a way of maintaining a religious and/or spiritual life. Some participants stopped attending their church but kept their faith and religious beliefs in a private way. Other participants first rejected religion completely, saying they felt the need to leave religion to be able to come out, but ended up returning to their religion of origin feeling

reconciled with their beliefs. And others left their previous religion but ended up choosing a more affirmative denomination. Being a member of an affirmative organization allows people to receive support, giving them a place to connect with others that also have religious and LGB identities, and thus giving them an opportunity to experience both aspects (Anderton et al., 2011).

According to Ganzevoort, Van der Laan, and Olsman (2011), people who are able to integrate their identities do not see the two elements as mutually exclusive or incompatible, as they previously saw it. Instead, those who are able to integrate their identities develop a new identity that is both religious and LGB. The authors also draw attention to the fact that most people do not integrate their identities immediately in a permanent way, without ever rethinking it. Instead, individuals tend to shift from one path to another until they find one that gives them comfort. Like Ganzevoort et al. (2011), Love et al. (2005) also argue that this process is not static nor linear, with people having had moments where they felt more or less reconciled, influenced by new external challenges and obstacles that can create new crisis throughout a lifetime.

Another way of dealing with conflict that does not involve giving up any identity is compartmentalization, a process described by Baumeister et al. (1985). According to these authors, compartmentalization is a compromise between the two conflicting identities, that keeps them completely separate from each other, allowing people to solve the conflict they previously felt. LGB people who use this strategy tend to keep their LGB lives away from religion and their religion away from the LGB part of their lives (Rodriguez & Ouellette, 2000). Rodriguez and Ouellette (2000) differentiate compartmentalization from integration because people who integrate their identities have a positive gay identity and a positive religious identity and the two identities are combined. In the case of compartmentalization, the two identities are not combined but kept separate, with people building walls between the two and perceiving the barriers imposed by their religion or society as impossible to solve. Love et al. (2005) report an example of compartmentalization, with one participant in their study saying he kept his gay identity apart from his Catholic identity, having no need to have both identities interact and considering not feeling any conflict.

Lastly, it is important to mention that not all religious LGB people feel conflict between the two identities. Sherry, Adelman, Whilde, and Quick (2010) report that a few people in their study never felt conflict between the two identities either because they felt their religion was affirming of their sexual identity or because the issues were very small, because religion was not an important part of who they were. Coyle and Rafalin (2000) also reported the experience

of a gay Jewish man who never felt any conflict between the two identities. This man attributed this to the acceptance he felt from his parents and also the support and validation he felt from his rabbi when he disclosed his identity.

1.3.3 Potential consequences of conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities. Several qualitative and only a few quantitative studies have tried to understand the potential consequences of this type of identity conflict, either in terms of well-being and mental health or in terms of some LGB identity dimensions, like internalized homophobia. In qualitative studies, individuals often mention that their experience of conflict impacted greatly their psychological well-being (Coyle & Rafalin, 2000) and their mental health, with some participants mentioning depression, anxiety, self-hatred and even suicidal ideation (Beagan & Hattie, 2015; Schuck & Liddle, 2001; Subhi & Geelan, 2012). Participants in qualitative studies also frequently report feeling guilt and shame about their sexual orientation, during a period of conflict (Beagan & Hattie, 2015; Schuck & Liddle, 2001; Subhi & Geelan, 2012). Related to these feelings of guilt and shame, Began and Hattie (2015) also report that several participants mentioned an impact in their self-esteem, due the persistent exposure to condemnatory messages.

In terms of quantitative research, authors have tried to compare LGB people who feel conflict between the two identities and LGB people who do not report feeling such conflict. Schuck and Liddle (2001) found that those who reported feeling conflict had higher levels of difficulty accepting their LGB identity than those who did not feel any conflict. Ream and Savin-Williams (2005) reported that people who felt like their religion made it impossible to accept their sexual orientation had higher internalized homophobia than people who felt no conflict, but did not find significantly different levels of general mental health. Consistent with the findings of Ream and Savin-Williams (2005), Gibbs and Goldbach (2015) also found that people with unresolved conflict between their sexuality and religious beliefs reported higher levels of internalized homophobia when compared to those who did not grow up in a religious environment. These authors also focused on mental health and reported that those with unresolved conflict had higher odds of having suicidal thoughts in the previous month, when compared with those who did not grow up in a religious environment. Zeidner and Zevulun (2018) also focused their study on conflict and mental health and found out that Jewish gay men who report greater identity conflict also reported poorer mental health, having higher levels of state anxiety, depression and loneliness than those who did not feel any conflict.

Other authors have focused their attention on the possible consequences of conflict resolution strategies on mental health, well-being and internalized homophobia. Ream and Savin-Williams (2005) compared LGB people who left Christianity due to the conflict they felt with LGB people who felt no conflict and found out that those who left Christianity had significantly worse general mental health than those who had no conflict. On the other hand, those who left Christianity had lower internalized homophobia than people who had no conflict. Another interesting finding by these authors was that those who reported they had reconciled the conflict or changed their beliefs to another Christian denomination, had similar outcomes in terms of general mental health and internalized homophobia to the group who felt no conflict. Gibbs and Goldbach (2015) reported a similar pattern, with those who left their religion of origin due to conflict feeling lower levels of internalized homophobia but higher odds of suicidal thoughts and attempts.

Another quantitative study, by Scroggs, Miller and Stanfield (2018) tried to understand the relationship between identity integration and well-being but found no significant direct association between the two variables. What they did find was that identity integration was associated with an increase in religious group activity and that this religious group activity significantly mediated the relationship between identity integration and well-being.

1.4 Research goals

As seen in the literature review, religious/spiritual variables have been found to be correlated with well-being and mental health, both in the general population and in LGB populations, with some authors focusing on subjective well-being. In terms of dimensions of LGB identity, studies have almost exclusively focused on the relationship between religious/spiritual variables and internalized homonegativity and outness. Additionally, literature on conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities has been in the most part of qualitative nature, with quantitative research focusing on the relationship between conflict and mental health variables or internalized homonegativity. In the Portuguese context, there is only one study on LGB population and religion, focusing mainly on the experience of religious and spiritual well-being. The current dissertation will thus try to contribute for the research on religion and spirituality among the LGB population, with the following research goals:

- To investigate the relation between religious/spiritual variables, such as religious and spiritual identification, religious practices and spiritual experiences, and subjective well-being, including life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect, in the Portuguese context.

- To investigate the relation between religious/spiritual variables and different dimensions of LGB identity, including internalized homonegativity.
- To identify correlates of the experience of conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities, focusing on LGB identity dimensions, subjective well-being and outness.
- To compare people who felt conflict between their religious/spiritual and LGB identities and people who did not experience this conflict, in terms of LGB identity dimensions, subjective well-being and outness.

Additionality, we will contribute to characterize the Portuguese LGB population in terms of religious and spiritual identification, behaviors and practices, as well as explore sex and sexual orientation differences on the experiences of religion and spirituality, subjective well-being, LGB identity dimensions, outness and conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities.

Chapter II. Method

2.1 Participants

The survey recruited participants who were at least 18 years old, identified as LGB and understood Portuguese fluently, and was completed by a total of 185 people. Although the participants were not asked about their country of residence, considering the fact that the survey focused on context and culture-dependent issues, a decision was made to not consider the responses of 57 participants who indicated having Brazilian nationality and answered the survey from Brazil. Brazilian participants who answered the survey in Portugal were considered in this sample (n = 5; 4%). Two participants did not indicate their nationality, but their answers were registered in Portugal and were thus considered in the analysis. Another 2 participants indicated that they were heterosexual and were eliminated from the sample.

The frequency, percent, and valid percent of all demographic variables can be seen on Table 1. The final sample consisted of 126 participants. The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 66 years old (M = 29.41; SD = 9.69), with 85.7% of participants being between 18 and 35 years old. Regarding sex, 45 participants indicated being male (36%) and 80 participants reported being female (64%). One participant did not answer this question but indicated in the open-answer question about gender that they were intersex, as well as genderfluid. Another 3 participants indicated a gender that was different from their sex (n = 4; 3.4%), with one participant identifying as non-binary, another identifying with both genders and one identifying as male. The gender of these 4 participants was classified as "other", to distinguish from participants whose gender agrees with their assigned sex, as well as participants who wrote they were cisgender. These 112 participants were classified as "cisgender" (96.6%).

Concerning sexual orientation, 37.6% identified as Lesbian (n = 47) and 30.4% identified as Gay (n = 38). For analysis purposes, Bisexual and Pansexual individuals were considered as being in the same group (n = 40; 32%). From this Bisexual or Pansexual group 32 participants were female, 7 participants were male and one participant did not indicate their sex. One participant indicated that they didn't know what their sexual orientation was. Considering the fact that identity uncertainty can be a part of the process for LGB people and that this participant answered all the questions in the survey, it was decided that they could remain in the sample.

Participants also indicated their marital status and education level. Regarding marital status, 76.2% of participants were single (n = 96), 16.7% were cohabiting (n = 21), 5.6% were married (n = 7) and 1.6% were divorced (n = 2). About education level, 23% of participants indicated

having secondary education (n = 29), 51.6% had an undergraduate degree (n = 65), 23.8% had a master's degree (n = 30) and 1.6% of participants had a doctoral degree (n = 2).

Table 1

Frequency, percent and valid percent of age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, marital status, and education level

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Age			
18 to 25	50	39.7	39.7
26 to 35	58	46.0	46.0
36 to 45	6	4.8	4.8
46 to 66	12	9.5	9.5
Total	126	100	100
Sex			
Male	45	35.7	36.0
Female	80	63.5	64.0
Missing	1	0.8	-----
Total	126	100	100
Gender			
Cisgender	112	88.9	96.6
Other	4	3.2	3.4
Missing	10	7.9	-----
Total	126	100	100
Sexual Orientation			
Lesbian	47	37.3	37.6
Gay	38	30.2	30.4
Bisexual or Pansexual	40	31.7	32.0
Missing	1	0.8	-----
Total	125	100	100
Nationality			
Portuguese	119	94.4	96.0
Brazilian	5	4.0	4.0
Missing	2	1.6	-----
Total	124	100	100
Marital Status			
Single	96	76.2	76.2
Cohabiting	21	16.7	16.7
Married	7	5.6	5.6
Divorced	2	1.6	1.6
Total	126	100	100
Education Level			
Secondary Education	29	23.0	23.0
Undergraduate degree	65	51.6	51.6
Master's degree	30	23.8	23.8
Doctoral degree	2	1.6	1.6
Total	126	100	100

2.2 Measures

2.2.1 Religious/spiritual variables. Different aspects of religion and spirituality were measured using questions proposed by the Fetzer Institute and National Institute on Aging (2003) in the Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness/Spirituality, as well as in its brief form. From the brief form, 6 questions were chosen, from 4 different domains (religious preference, organization religiousness, private religious practices and overall self-ranking) and from the full measurement 7 questions were chosen, all from one domain (daily spiritual experiences). All questions were translated to Portuguese.

Religious preference was measured using one open-answer question from the domain "Religious Preference", that asked participants directly what their current religious preference was. From the "Organizational Religiousness" domain two questions were chosen to measure participation in religious ceremonies or activities. Although these were two separate questions proposed by the Fetzer Institute and National Institute on Aging (2003), in the present dissertation they were joined in one single question "How often do you attend or take part in religious services or other religious activities at a place of worship?", measured on a scale from 1 - Never to 9 - Several times a week.

From the domain "Private Religious Practices" one question was chosen, "How often do you pray privately in places other than at church or synagogue?", to measure the frequency of private prayer but, for consistency reasons, the words "church or synagogue" were changed to "place of worship". This question was measured on a scale from 1 - Never to 8 – Several times a day.

From the domain Overall Self-Ranking, a domain that only appears on the brief form of the measurement, two questions were asked: "To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person?" and "To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person?". These were chosen to measure religious and spiritual identification, respectively, and were both measured on a scale from 1 - Not at all to 4 - Very.

Finally, to measure the frequency of Daily Spiritual Experiences, 7 questions were chosen from this domain, from the full version of the Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness/Spirituality (e.g., I feel God's presence; I find strength in my religion or spirituality; I feel guided by God in the midst of daily activities; I feel God's love for me through others). This set of questions was not presented to participants who indicated being "not at all religious" and "not at all spiritual", only being presented when participants indicated being "at least slightly religious and/or slightly spiritual". As suggested by the Fetzer Institute and

National Institute on Aging (2003), before presenting the 7 questions the participants were told that, although the word God was used, if they were not comfortable with the word they should consider another word that represented the divine or sacred for them. The 7 questions were averaged to end up with a single "Daily Spiritual Experiences" variable, that expresses how frequently the participants have these experiences ($\alpha = .95$).

2.2.2 Subjective well-being. Subjective well-being was measured using both the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Pavot & Diener, 1985) and the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988).

The SWLS is a 5-item scale measuring overall life satisfaction (Pavot & Diener, 1993). In the original version, the items are rated from 1 - Strongly disagree to 7 - Strongly agree, with total scores ranging from 7 to 35 and the highest scores indicating higher levels of life satisfaction (Pavot & Diener, 1993). In the present dissertation a Portuguese adaptation by Simões (1992), mentioned and presented by Nunes (2009) in her dissertation, was used. This version measures the items with a five-point scale instead of seven, with total scores ranging from 5 to 25, and showed a Cronbach's alpha of .77 in the original study by Simões (1992) and of .86 in Nunes's (2009) dissertation. In the current sample a Cronbach's alpha of .79 was found.

The PANAS assesses positive and negative affect (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). The original scale consists of 10 items measuring positive affect and another 10 items measuring negative affect. The items are presented as single words (e.g., Distressed; Enthusiastic; Irritable; Proud) and participants are asked to rate the extent to which they have felt that way on a scale from 1 - Very slightly or not at all to 5 - Very much. According to the original authors different time instructions can be used, such as "in the present moment", "today" or "this year", among others. In this dissertation the participants were asked to rate how much they felt each emotion in general, a time instruction that is also suggested by the authors. The Portuguese version by Simões (1993), cited and presented by Nunes (2009), was used in this dissertation's survey. This version measures each component using 11 items instead of 10, with the scores from each measure ranging from a minimum of 11 to a maximum of 55. The original study reports a Cronbach's alpha of .82 for the positive affect measure and .85 for the negative affect measure (Simões, 1993, as cited in Nunes, 2009). In this sample an alpha of .85 was found for the positive affect measure and of .87 for the negative affect measure.

2.2.3 Dimensions of LGB identity. The different dimensions of the LGB identity were measured using the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Identity Scale (LGBIS; Mohr & Kendra, 2011), a 27-item measure that evaluates eight dimensions of LGB identity: Acceptance Concerns; Concealment Motivation; Identity Uncertainty; Internalized Homonegativity; Difficult Process; Identity Superiority; Identity Affirmation and Identity Centrality. Participants were asked to evaluate each sentence about their experience as an LGB person using a 6-point rating scale, from 1 - Strongly agree to 6 - Strongly disagree.

The LGBIS is a revision and extension of a previous measure that only measured lesbian and gay identity development and did not account for identity centrality and identity affirmation (Mohr & Fassinger, 2000). The first version of the LGBIS was presented by Kendra and Mohr in 2008, with 7 dimensions instead of eight and a different structure, still not including the dimensions Internalized Homonegativity, Acceptance Concerns and Identity Affirmation.The Portuguese translation by Oliveira et al. (2010), as well as the validation by Oliveira et al. (2012), were based on this previous version, and thus encompass different dimensions, measured on a scale from 1 to 7. As such, in this dissertation the translation by these authors was used, with the exception of two additional items from the current LGBIS (Mohr & Kendra, 2011), that had to be translated, in order to use the current version of the LGBIS and not the one presented by the Portuguese authors. In the original paper, Mohr and Kendra (2011) report Cronbach's alpha scores from .75 to .91 across samples, for the eight the dimensions; and in the present sample Cronbach's alpha values ranging from .75 to .88 were found.

2.2.4 Conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities. Conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities was measured using 5 questions created by Page et al. (2013), that asks participants to rate from 1 - Strongly disagree to 5 - Strongly agree what they felt when they came out to themselves, regarding this type of conflict (e.g., "I felt accepted or supported by my religion"; "I felt conflicted between my spiritual beliefs and my sexuality"; "I had doubts about my spiritual beliefs"). The questions were translated to Portuguese. The original authors reported a Cronbach's alpha of .88 and in this dissertation an alpha of .82 was obtained.

To measure the conciliation between religious/spiritual beliefs and sexual orientation at the time of answering the survey, an additional single item question was created. The participants were asked to rate the sentence "Comparing with the moment when you came out to yourself as an LGB person, do you feel that, at the present moment, the conciliation between your

religious/spiritual beliefs and your sexual orientation is…”, from 1 - Much worse to 5 - Much better.

2.2.5 Outness. The Outness Inventory (Mohr & Fassinger, 2000) is an 11-item measure and was used in this dissertation to measure the degree to which the participants were open about their sexual orientation to their family (mother, father, siblings and extended family/relatives), the world (new straight friends, work peers, work supervisors and strangers) and their religion (members of their religious community and leaders of their religious community). Each item is measured with a 7-point Likert-type scale from 1 - Person definitely does not know about your sexual orientation status to 7 – Person definitely knows about your sexual orientation status, and it is openly talked about. In addition, a non-applicable option is presented. The Portuguese translation presented by Gonçalves (2017) in her dissertation was used. In her sample, the following Cronbach’s alpha were found: .80 for outness to family, .88 for outness to the world and .99 for outness to religion (Gonçalves, 2017). In the present sample a Cronbach’s alpha of .84 was found for outness to family and of .89 for outness to the world. The two items of outness to religion were strongly and significantly correlated (r = .73). Cronbach’s alpha for overall outness level was .81.

2.3 Procedure

After choosing the appropriate measures and translating the ones that did not have a Portuguese translation, an online survey was created using Qualtrics. The survey included all measures mentioned above as well as demographic questions, such as age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, marital status, and education level. To make sure all the translations were easily understood by the participants, the survey was pre-tested by four master’s degree students, whose suggestions were taken into account. The survey was launched on the first day of March and answers were collected for three and a half months.

The sample was recruited through social media (e.g., Facebook), using snowball sampling and by contacting Portuguese LGBTQI+ groups and associations and asking them to share the online survey. Prior to answering the survey, the participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and anonymous and that they could give up at any moment by exiting the survey. They were also informed of the main requirements to participating, that were being at least 18 years old, identifying as an LGB person and being fluent in Portuguese. To proceed to the survey the participants had to explicitly consent to their participation in the study. At the end of the survey the participants were presented with a message thanking them for their

participation and asking them to share the link for the online survey with other LGB people. An e-mail address was also given, in case they had any doubts or concerns about the study.

After the data was collected it was analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25. People who did not give their consent were deleted from the data base. That is, since it was stated in the informed consent that they could give up at any time, people whose responses ended before reaching the demographics part were also eliminated from the data base.

A reliability analysis was performed to find out the Cronbach's alphas for all variables measured with a scale and new variables were created from these scales, such as daily spiritual experiences, satisfaction with life, positive affect, negative affect, each of the eight LGBIS dimensions, conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities and each outness level.

To facilitate the analysis, answers to open-ended questions such as age, gender, nationality and religious preference were classified into appropriate categories and new variables were created. A variable called religious and spiritual identification was created from the answers to two questions, religious identification, and spiritual identification. Finally, from the two conflict variables a third one was created, a dichotomous variable in which participants were classified as either having felt or currently feeling conflict between their religious/spiritual and LGB identities or having felt no such conflict.

Descriptive statistics and correlations for all variables were analyzed, specifically the ones that could answer the first three research goals presented in this dissertation. ANOVAs and t-tests, as well as some post-hoc Bonferroni tests, were performed to see if the measured variables changed significantly according to relevant demographics. To answer the fourth research goal, 14 independent sample t-tests were performed.

Chapter III. Results

3.1 Descriptive Statistics

Regarding their religious preferences, 54% of people indicated having no religious or spiritual preference (n = 68), either by saying they had "none" or "no religion" (n = 24) or considering themselves atheists (n = 30) or agnostics (n = 14). Christian religions were the next biggest group (n = 32; 25.4%), with people considering themselves either as "Catholic" (n = 21) or as "Non-Catholic Christians" (e.g., Christian, Evangelic, Protestant, etc.; n = 11). Seven people indicated some type of Non-Christian religion/spirituality as their preference (e.g., Buddhism, Spiritism, Islamism, Paganism, etc.; 5.6%) and 17 people (13.5%) indicated other spiritual beliefs, such as being "only spiritual" or believing in concepts such as "energy" or "love". Two 2 participants (1.6%) chose to not answer this question.

Regarding participation in religious ceremonies or activities 48.4% said they never participate (n = 61), 21.4% said they participated less than once a year (n = 27), 15.9% said that they participated once or twice a year (n = 20) and 14.3% said they participated several times a year or more frequently (n = 18). In regards to private prayer, 57.9% indicated that they never pray (n = 73), 11.9% indicated that they pray less than once a month (n = 15), 11.2% pray once a month or a few times a month (n = 14) and 19.1% said that they pray at least once a week (n = 24).

Participants also indicated how religious and how spiritual they were, with the majority of participants saying they were not religious at all (n = 80; 63.5%), but only 20.6% of participants saying they were not spiritual at all (n = 26). Based on their responses to these two questions the participants were grouped into categories of both religious and spiritual identification. Thus, only 19.8% of participants (n = 25) considered themselves not religious and not spiritual, compared with 43.7% of participants who considered themselves spiritual but not religious (n = 55) and 35.7% of participants who considered themselves both religious and spiritual (n = 45). Only one participant considered themselves religious but not spiritual.

Finally, regarding daily spiritual experiences, on average the participants reported feeling these spiritual experiences less than some days (M = 2.44; SD = 1.30), with mean responses ranging from 1-Never to 6-Several times a day. People who identified as religious and spiritual (M = 3.05, SD = 1.33) significantly reported feeling spiritual experiences more frequently, $t(82.82) = -4.58$, $p = < .001$, than those who identified as spiritual but not religious (M = 1.93, SD = 1.05). Neither this variable nor any other religious/spiritual variable varied significantly according to sex or sexual orientation.

Concerning subjective well-being, positive affect ranged from 16 to 52 (*M* = 38.21; *SD* = 6.48), negative affect ranged from 11 to 49 (*M* = 26.21; *SD* = 7.85) and life satisfaction ranged from 8 to 25 (*M* = 17.95; *SD* = 3.87). None of the subjective well-being measures varied significantly according to sex. For negative affect, a significant difference was found, $F(2, 122) = 3.07$, $p = .05$, between lesbians (*M* = 23.94; *SD* = 6.61), gays (*M* = 27.95; *SD* = 7.54) and bisexuals/pansexuals (*M* = 26.73; *SD* = 8.99) but no significant differences showed up in post-hoc testing.

The present LGB sample reported low levels of Internalized Homonegativity (*M* = 1.53; *SD* = 1), Identity Uncertainty (*M* = 1.60; *SD* = 0.96) and Identity Superiority (*M* = 1.71; *SD* = 0.93); medium levels of Acceptance Concerns (*M* = 2.88; *SD* = 1.24), Concealment Motivation (*M* = 2.89; *SD* = 1.33), Difficult Process (*M* = 3.20; *SD* = 1.51) and Identity Centrality (*M* = 3.72; *SD* = 1.16); and higher levels of Identity Affirmation (*M* = 4.82; *SD* = 1.29).

Significant differences were found between males and females regarding Identity Uncertainty, $t(116.50) = -2.10$, $p = .038$, and Difficult Process, $t(123) = 2.10$, $p = .038$, with females reporting higher levels of Identity Uncertainty (*M* = 1.72, *SD* = 1.05) than males (*M* = 1.38, *SD* = 0.74) and males reporting a more Difficult Process (*M* = 3.59, *SD* = 1.45) than females (*M* = 3.00, *SD* = 1.51). Similarly, a significant difference between sexual orientation groups was found for Identity Uncertainty, $F(2, 76.61) = 9.13$, $p < .001$, and Difficult Process, $F(2, 122) = 3.67$, $p = .028$. Post hoc testing showed that both Lesbians (*M* = 1.43, *SD* = 0.72) and Gays (*M* = 1.22, *SD* = 0.58) report less Identity Uncertainty than Bisexuals or Pansexuals (*M* = 2.09, *SD* = 1.14). There was no significant difference between Lesbians and Gays on Identity Uncertainty. Post hoc testing for Difficult Process showed that Gay men (*M* = 3.70, *SD* = 1.40) reported a more difficult process than Lesbians (*M* = 2.87, *SD* = 1.49). There were no significant differences between Gays and Bisexuals/Pansexual or between Lesbians and Bisexuals/Pansexuals.

Concerning the conflict felt between religious/spiritual and LGB identities after coming out to themselves, the participants tended, on average to neither agree nor disagree with the sentences (*M* = 3.00; *SD* = 1.08). Regarding the conciliation between religious/spiritual beliefs and sexual orientation, at the moment of answering the survey, the participants considered it, on average, to be the same than at the time when they first came out (*M* = 3.48; *SD* = 0.97). Based on their answers to the two questions about conflict participants were categorized in two groups, *identity conflict* and *no identity conflict*. Fifty-two participants reported that they felt conflict between their religious/spiritual and LGB identities, either at the time when they came

out to themselves or at the time of answering the survey (41.3%) and 74 participants reported no conflict felt at either time (58.7%).

Significant differences were found between males and females regarding conflict between religious and LGB identities at the time of coming out to themselves, $t(123) = 2.42$, $p = .017$, with males ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 1.15$) reporting higher levels of conflict than females ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 1.01$). Significant differences between sexual orientation groups were also found, $F(2, 122) = 4.18$, $p = .018$, for the same variable. Post hoc testing showed that Gay men ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.35$) reported more conflict at the time of coming out to themselves than Bisexual/Pansexual individuals ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.15$). No significant differences were found between Lesbians ($M = 2.91$, $SD = 0.93$) and Gays, or between Lesbians and Bisexuals/Pansexuals. No significant differences were found on conflict between religious and LGB identities regarding age , $F(3, 122) = 0.07$; $p = .976$, marital status, $F(3, 122) = 0.82$; $p = .484$ or education level, $F(3, 122) = 0.31$; $p = .815$.

Regarding the outness level, participants seemed to be the most out to their siblings ($M = 5.61$; $SD = 2.01$), their mother ($M = 5.25$; $SD = 1.93$) and their heterosexual friends, both old ($M = 5.26$; $SD = 1.94$) and new ($M = 5.6$; $SD = 1.80$). Participants seemed to be less out to members of their extended family ($M = 3.56$; $SD = 1.99$), members of their religious communities ($M = 3.13$; $SD = 2.48$) and leaders of their religious communities ($M = 2.36$; $SD = 2.06$). Participants thus had higher levels of outness to the world ($M = 4.81$; $SD = 1.83$) and their family ($M = 4.62$; $SD = 1.66$), lower levels of outness to their religion ($M = 2.86$; $SD = 2.23$) and a medium level of overall outness ($M = 4.47$; $SD = 1.57$).

There were no significant sex differences regarding outness level, but there was a significant difference of outness to family, $F(2, 122) = 8.96$; $p < .001$, and overall outness level, $F(2, 122) = 3.80$; $p = .025$, between sexual orientation groups. Post hoc testing showed that both Lesbians ($M = 5.24$; $SD = 1.6$) and Gays ($M = 4.76$; $SD = 1.35$) had higher levels of outness to the family than Bisexuals/Pansexuals ($M = 3.85$; $SD = 1.68$), with no significant differences between Lesbians and Gays. Post hoc testing also showed that Lesbians ($M = 4.88$; $SD = 1.61$) had significantly higher levels of overall outness than Bisexuals/Pansexuals ($M = 3.99$; $SD = 1.44$), with no differences found between Gays and Bisexuals/Pansexuals and between Gays and Lesbians.

3.2 Relation between religious/spiritual variables and dimensions of LGB identity and subjective well-being

Table 3.1 presents the correlations between religious/spiritual variables, conflict between religious and LGB identities, and dimensions of LGB identity.

Participation in religious ceremonies or activities was significantly and positively correlated with Acceptance Concerns, Concealment Motivation and Difficult Process. Frequency of private prayer was significantly and positively correlated with Acceptance Concerns and Concealment Motivation. Spiritual identification was significantly and negatively correlated with Internalized Homonegativity. Religious identification and daily spiritual experiences were not significantly correlated with any of the LGBIS dimensions. No significant correlations were found between religious/spiritual variables and subjective well-being (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2

Correlations for religious/spiritual variables and subjective well-being measures

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Participation	--							
2. Private prayer	.371***	--						
3. Religious identification	.465***	.666***	--					
4. Spiritual identification	.280**	.494***	.443***	--				
5. Daily spiritual experiences	.335**	.738***	.473***	.494***	--			
6. Positive affect	-.126	.059	-.047	.111	.014	--		
7. Negative Affect	.126	-.004	-.019	-.108	-.020	-.277**	--	
8.Life Satisfaction	-.050	.062	-.012	.084	.167	.508***	-.370***	--

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, two-tailed

Table 3.1

Correlations for religious/spiritual variables, conflict between religious and LGB identities and, LGBIS dimensions

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Participation	--													
2. Private prayer	.371***	--												
3. Religious identification	.465***	.666***	--											
4. Spiritual identification	.280**	.494***	.443***	--										
5. Daily spiritual experiences	.335**	.738***	.473***	.494***	--									
6. Conflict	.089	.126	-.003	-.041	.151	--								
7. LGBIS - AC	.256**	.199*	.091	-.019	.156	.400***	--							
8. LGBIS - CM	.215*	.212*	.009	-.004	.108	.232**	.450***	--						
9. LGBIS - IU	.154	-.003	.012	-.160	-.098	.092	.346***	.239**	--					
10. LGBIS - IH	.144	.074	.084	-.222*	-.028	.223*	.474***	.460***	.380***	--				
11. LGBIS - DP	.226*	.124	.088	-.034	.103	.391***	.534***	.268**	.296**	.360***	--			
12. LGBIS - IS	.076	.068	-.042	.102	-.029	-.049	-.021	-.039	.068	-.141	-.002	--		
13. LGBIS - IA	-.100	-.035	-.014	.136	-.039	-.023	-.201*	-.208*	-.241**	-.497***	-.237**	.244**	--	
14. LGBIS - IC	.012	.102	-.015	.078	.016	.145	.147	-.085	-.104	-.148	.147	.258**	.478***	--

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, two-tailed

3.3 Relation between conflict between religious and LGB identities and dimensions of LGB identity, subjective well-being and outness levels

Conflict between religious and LGB identities was significantly and positively correlated with Acceptance Concerns, Concealment Motivation, Internalized Homonegativity and Difficult Process (see table 3.1).

Table 3.3 presents the correlations between conflict between religious and LGB identities, subjective well-being variables and outness levels. Conflict between religious and LGB identities was significantly and negatively correlated with positive affect, outness to the world and overall outness, and positively correlated with negative affect.

Table 3.3

Correlations for conflict between religious and LGB identities, subjective well-being variables and outness levels

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Conflict	--							
2. Positive Affect	-.187*	--						
3. Negative Affect	.191*	-.277**	--					
4. Life Satisfaction	-.122	.508***	-.370***	--				
5. Out to family	-.046	.184*	-.181*	.206*	--			
6. Out to world	-.219*	.194*	.020	.162	.384***	--		
7. Out to religion	-.231	.271*	-.352**	.074	.554***	.601***	--	
8. Overall outness	-.225*	.240**	-.100	.207*	.772***	.822***	.902***	--

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, two-tailed

3.4 Comparing *identity conflict* and *no identity conflict* groups on subjective well-being, dimensions of LGB identity and outness levels

Table 3.4 presents t-test results on subjective well-being, LGBIS dimensions and outness levels, for the *identity conflict* and *no identity conflict* groups. No significant differences were found between the two groups on subjective well-being or outness levels, but significant differences were found on four LGBIS dimensions. The two groups differed significantly on Acceptance Concerns, $t(124) = 3.14$, $p = .002$, Concealment Motivation, $t(124) = 2.22$, $p = .028$, Difficult Process, $t(124) = 4.40$, $p < .001$, and Identity Centrality, $t(124) = 2.10$, $p = .038$, with people

who felt conflict between their religious and LGB identities reporting higher levels on each dimension.

Table 3.4

Independent samples t-test results on subjective well-being, LGBIS dimensions and outness levels, for the conflict and no conflict groups

	Identity Conflict		No Identity Conflict				
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*df*	*t*	*p*
LGBIS – Acceptance Concerns	3.28	1.24	2.60	1.17	124	3.14	**.002**
LGBIS - Concealment Motivation	3.20	1.35	2.67	1.29	124	2.22	**.028**
LGBIS - Identity Uncertainty	1.59	1.05	1.61	0.90	124	-0.10	.923
LGBIS - Internalized Homonegativity	1.70	1.19	1.41	0.82	84.03	1.50	.138
LGBIS - Difficult Process	3.86	1.45	2.74	1.38	124	4.40	**.000**
LGBIS - Identity Superiority	1.69	0.87	1.73	0.98	124	-0.29	.776
LGBIS - Identity Affirmation	4.75	1.36	4.87	1.25	124	-0.52	.602
LGBIS - Identity Centrality	3.98	1.13	3.54	1.15	124	2.20	**.038**
Positive Affect	37.38	6.89	38.80	6.15	124	-1.21	.229
Negative Affect	27.52	8.66	25.14	7.13	124	1.69	.094
Life Satisfaction	17.69	3.50	18.14	4.13	124	-0.63	.530
Out to family	4.64	1.63	4.61	1.70	124	0.11	.915
Out to world	4.56	1.81	4.98	1.83	124	-1.26	.208
Out to religion	2.64	2.16	3.15	2.34	54	-0.84	.407
Overall outness	4.25	1.63	4.62	1.51	124	-1.29	.199

Chapter IV. Discussion

This dissertation aimed to better understand Portuguese LGB people's religion and spirituality, as well as the experiences of conflict some LGB people feel between their religious/spiritual and LGB identities. In order to achieve this, we identified the following primary research goals: to investigate the relation between religious/spiritual variables and subjective well-being and LGB identity dimensions; to identify correlates of the experience of conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities, focusing on LGB identity dimensions, subjective well-being and outness and to compare people who felt conflict between their religious/spiritual and LGB identities with people who did not experience this conflict, in terms of LGB identity dimensions, subjective well-being and outness.

The majority of participants indicated having no religious or spiritual preference or religious/spiritual beliefs, something that was expected considering the available data on Portuguese LGB people's religious preferences. In Moleiro et al.'s (2013) study, with more than 450 participants, 82.8% of LGB people did not identify with any religion, a percentage that indicates a large majority of non-religious LGB people in Portugal. It is worth to notice though, that in the present dissertation only 54% of people indicated no religious or spiritual preference, a number that is much lower than the one found by Moleiro et al. (2013), and closer to some data found in the USA (e.g. Barringer & Gay, 2017; Dahl & Galliher, 2010; Longo, Walls, & Wisneski, 2013) This might possibly have to do with the way the question was measured or the answers were categorized, namely in the Other category, where in Moleiro et al.'s (2013) study only 2.1% were categorized while in the present dissertation 13.5% of people were considered to have other spiritual beliefs and thus classified as Other. Another possible explanation is the differences in recruitment/sampling, with part of the sample from Moleiro et al.'s (2013) study being recruited in person, at LGBT social events, using a paper-and-pencil method, while the present sample was recruited online and partially through snowball sampling, thus possibly being more representative.

Regarding participation in religious ceremonies or activities and private prayer, only close to 30% of participants said they participated in religious ceremonies more regularly than once a year and that they prayed once a month or more regularly. Both results are higher than the ones reported by Moleiro et al. (2013) for the same variables, which might be connected to the higher percentage of LGB people with a religious preference found in the present sample. Nevertheless, almost half of the participants said they never participated in religious ceremonies

or activities and more than half the participants said they never pray, numbers that are close to those found by American researchers (e.g., Meanley et al., 2016; Puckett et al., 2018).

As expected from previous research, participants in this sample reported being more spiritual than religious, with 63.5% of participants saying they were not religious at all but only 20.6% of participants saying they were not spiritual at all. Such results were also found by Moleiro et al. (2013), with the majority of their sample reporting being not religious at all but only 15.5% reporting that they were not spiritual at all. This type of results is consistent with literature on LGB religion and spirituality, with multiple authors reporting higher rates of spirituality and lower rates of religiosity for this population (Halkitis et al., 2009; Lassiter et al., 2017; Rodriguez, Etengoff, & Vaughan, 2019).

The first two research goals focused on the relation between religious/spiritual variables and subjective well-being and LGB identity dimensions. Although religious identification was not significantly correlated with any of the LGBIS dimensions, other religious constructs measured, such as participation in religious ceremonies and private prayer, were significantly and positively correlated with some LGB identity dimensions that are usually considered negative, namely, Acceptance Concerns, Concealment Motivation and Difficult Process. The positive relation between religion and concealment motivation had already been reported by Moleiro et al. (2013), with religious participants in their sample also being more motivated to conceal their LGB identities.

Although many authors previously reported a significant and positive correlation between religious variables and internalized homonegativity (e.g. Boppana & Gross, 2019; Drabble et al., 2018; Foster et al., 2017; Kralovec et al., 2014; Moleiro et al., 2013; Shilo & Savaya, 2012; Stern & Wright, 2018), in the present sample none of the religious variables were correlated significantly with internalized homonegativity. This could possibly mean that, although some religious people might feel more internalized homophobia, for others this could not be true. We did find, though, a negative and significant correlation between spiritual identification and internalized homonegativity, which means that, in the present sample, the more spiritual LGB people reported being, the less they reported feeling internalized homonegativity. While Moleiro et al. (2013) found no correlation between identifying as spiritual and feeling internalized homonegativity, they did report that those who scored higher on existential well-being (part of spiritual well-being) had less internalized homonegativity and also higher levels of identity affirmation, which could possibly explain how spirituality might be related to internalized homonegativity. Also possibly supporting the results found in this dissertation regarding spirituality and internalized homonegativity, Stern and Wright (2018) also found a

negative correlation between the two constructs, although not significant. These authors also reported significant and positive correlations between spirituality and identity affirmation, identity superiority and self-esteem, which led them to conclude that spirituality is related to positive LGB identity outcomes. In the present sample, these positive correlations (although non-significant) were also found between spirituality and Identity Affirmation and Identity Superiority. It might be the case that the positive influence of spirituality on the LGB identity and on existential well-being might play a role in diminishing the internalized homonegativity felt by some LGB people.

In the present study, no significant correlations were found between religious/spiritual variables and any of the subjective well-being measures. Regarding participation or attendance, although Ellison et al. (1989) found a positive association between religious participation and subjective well-being in the general population, in the LGB population some authors found that attendance of religious activities was associated with less psychological well-being (Meanley et al., 2016) and less life satisfaction (Whicker et al., 2017), while others did not find significant correlations (e.g. Barringer & Gay, 2017). Similarly to Barringer and Gay (2017), in this dissertation the correlations between participation and the three subjective well-being variables were not significant. To what concerns prayer and daily spiritual experiences, no significant correlations with subjective well-being were found.

Finally, religious and spiritual identification also did not correlate significantly with any of the subjective well-being measures. As mentioned in the beginning, religiosity in the LGB population has been found to be positively correlated with eudaimonic well-being (Boppana & Gross, 2019), but also negatively correlated with self-esteem (Stern & Wright, 2018) and positively correlated with loneliness (Escher et al., 2018). From the existent literature and its different findings, we may conclude that religiosity seems to have both a positive and a negative relationship with the well-being of LGB people. Other authors also report non-significant correlations with subjective well-being (Harari et al., 2014). Nonetheless, it is also important to consider that, as Zinnbauer et al. (1997) mention, when people self-rate their religiosity, they do so according to their own experiences and so, different people may attribute different meanings to the terms, which might have contributed to the non-significant findings of this dissertation. As for spirituality, Harari et al. (2014) found a significant and positive correlation with life satisfaction and positive affect and Stern and Wright (2018) reported a positive correlation with self-esteem. In the present study there was no significant correlation between spirituality and positive affect, negative affect or life satisfaction.

The third and fourth research goals were focused on the experience of conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities, including looking at the relation between conflict and LGB identity dimensions, subjective well-being and outness, and comparing people who felt conflict with people who did not, in terms of these variables.

The participants tended, on average, to neither agree nor disagree with the sentences regarding the conflict felt at the time of coming out to themselves, which corresponds to the middle point of the scale. In the study in which this measure of conflict was first presented, Page et al. (2013) report a slightly lower average for their sample, which seems to indicate that the participants of the current study felt relatively more conflict at the time of coming out to themselves than the ones in the original study. By classifying the participants as having felt or currently feeling conflict or no conflict between their religious/spiritual and LGB identities, we were also able to understand that more than half of the participants never felt such a conflict. These results are in line with those found by Gibbs and Goldbach (2015), with a bigger sample of more than 2000 participants, showing that more than half of their LGB participants did not experience conflict between their religious and LGB identities.

Conflict between religious and LGB identities was found to be significantly and negatively correlated with outness to the world and overall outness, which means that, the more conflict people felt at the time when they first came out to themselves, the less they were out to the world or out in general (to the world, the family and religion), at the time of answering the survey.

In previous studies, authors have found religiosity to be associated with lower levels of disclosure of one's LGB identity (Shilo & Savaya, 2012) and, as already mentioned above, religious LGB people tend to be more motivated to conceal their identity (Moleiro et al., 2013). The relationship found between conflict and outness could be a reflection of people being religious and thus being less out and more motivated to hide their identities. But it is important to consider that people feeling conflict when they first came out to themselves does not necessarily mean that they are religious at the time of answering the survey. As mentioned in the literature review, people deal with conflict between LGB and religious identities in various ways, for instance by choosing their religious identity over their LGB one, denying it or concealing it (Itzhaky & Kissil, 2015); stop attending religious settings and giving up religion (Schuck & Liddle, 2001), or try to find ways to integrate both identities such as maintaining their religion by changing some beliefs, changing to another religious tradition or look for ways to be spiritual without a formal religion (García et al., 2008). It is also important to remember that these are not permanent and static solutions to this type of conflict and that people might

vary throughout life on the conflict they feel and the strategies they use to deal with it (Love et al., 2005).

Participants who felt conflict between their religious and LGB identities when they first came out to themselves, might then be at different stages of conflict or reconciliation when answering the survey, and might be religious or not religious, depending on the strategies used. When considering, then, the reasons why people who felt this conflict when they first came out to themselves tend to be less out at the time of answering the survey, it might also be useful to understand the way they are dealing with their LGB identity.

Conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities was found to be significantly and positively correlated with the LGBIS dimensions Internalized Homonegativity, Difficult Process, Acceptance Concerns and Concealment Motivation. The two groups created based on identity conflict differed significantly on Difficult Process, Acceptance Concerns, Concealment Motivation and Identity Centrality, with people who felt conflict between their religious and LGB identities having higher scores on these dimensions.

Looking at the existing literature on this type of identity conflict, internalized homonegativity (or internalized homophobia) has been the most studied, with Gibbs and Goldbach (2015) reporting that those who had unresolved conflict between their sexuality and religious beliefs felt significantly higher internalized homophobia and Ream and Savin-Williams (2005) finding that participants who felt like their religion made it impossible to accept their LGB identity also felt higher internalized homophobia. On the other hand, both studies reported lower Internalized Homophobia for LGB people that left their religion of origin as a way of dealing with conflict (Gibbs & Goldbach, 2015; Ream & Savin-Williams, 2005). Ream and Savin-Williams (2005) also reported that people who found other ways of dealing with conflict, such as reconciling the two identities and remaining in their religion, or finding a different religion that allows them to accept both identities, presented similar levels of internalized homophobia than those who never felt conflict. As such, the significant correlation between conflict at the time of coming out to themselves and current internalized homophobia, could be an indicator of some people still feeling some type of conflict at the time of answering the survey, or not having solved their conflict entirely. Nonetheless, the two groups did not significantly differ on internalized homophobia, probably due to the fact that this internalization of negative attitudes about homosexuality occurs through socialization not just in religious institutions but in the general society as well (Barnes & Meyer, 2012), which means participants who never felt conflict might also feel it to some degree.

Regarding Difficult Process, Schuck and Liddle (2001) found that those who reported conflict between their sexual orientation and their religion at the time of coming out, reported more difficulty accepting their LGB identity than those who did not feel conflict. This difficulty accepting their LGB identity is also reported by qualitative studies' participants, whom often recount long processes of self-acceptance, that include negative feelings such as shame and guilt (Beagan & Hattie, 2015; Schuck & Liddle, 2001; Subhi & Geelan, 2012), and sometimes with periods of self-hatred and denial (Itzhaky & Kissil, 2015).

Qualitative studies can also help us understand results about Acceptance Concerns and Concealment Motivation. All participants from Itzhaky and Kissil's (2015) qualitative study with Orthodox Jewish gay men mentioned being dedicated to concealing their identity from their families and communities, as a mean of maintaining their religious communities. Catholic participants from Pietkiewicz and Kołodziejczyk-Skrzypek's (2016) study also reported fear of disappointing their religious families and being discriminated and saw that as a reason to conceal their identities.

Consistently, in the present dissertation, we also found conflict between religious and LGB identities to be significantly and negatively correlated with positive affect and positively correlated with negative affect. This means that the more conflict people felt at the time when they came out to themselves, the less they felt positive emotions and the more they felt negative emotions, at the time of answering the survey.

The relationship between conflict and well-being (or lack of it) is another common experience reported by LGB people in qualitative studies. Some people describe the way it has affected their well-being (Coyle & Rafalin, 2000) and/or their mental health, including experiences of loneliness, depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation (Beagan & Hattie, 2015; Schuck & Liddle, 2001; Subhi & Geelan, 2012; Zeidner & Zevulun, 2018). Some participants also reported the experience of negative feelings and emotional scars, even after the conflict has been solved (Subhi & Geelan, 2012). In a quantitative study, Page et al. (2013) also reported that participants who tried to solve their conflict by leaving Christianity reported higher levels of depression and lower self-esteem than participants who tried to integrate the identities or participants who didn't experience conflict, which shows that the emotional struggles can persist even after people tried to solve the conflict. The significant correlations found regarding positive and negative affect, are then explained not only by the possibility of some participants still being in conflict at the moment of answering the survey, but also as a consequence of the experience of conflict in the past – the emotional scars mentioned by Subhi and Geelan (2012).

Finally, it is important to mention the significant positive correlation between identity conflict and Identity Centrality. According to Mohr and Kendra (2011), Identity Centrality is the degree to which an aspect of a person's identity is central to their overall identity. As mentioned by Wedow, Schnabel, Wedow, and Konieczny (2017), and consistent with Baumeister, Shapiro, and Tice's (1985) multiple identity conflict model, people experience identity conflict when the two competing identities have high salience for the individual. As such, LGB religious people experience conflict when both identities are seen as incompatible and both are central to their identity. Therefore, people who experience identity conflict tend to be people for whom being LGB is central do their identity. But although this explanation can give an answer as to why people who felt conflict also have high Identity Centrality, they cannot explain why people who never felt conflict have lower Identity Centrality than those who felt conflict.

There is also another possible explanation that could be further explored in the future – the possibility that people who feel or felt conflict between their religious/spiritual and LGB identities have a more central LGB identity than those who did not experience conflict, because they have been more exposed to heterosexist discrimination than those who did not feel conflict, due to not being religious or not growing up in a religious environment. The relationship between discrimination and identity centrality has been formerly found for other minority identities, specifically for Black racial identity, with Sellers and Shelton (2003) finding a correlation between racial identity centrality and perceived racial discrimination. Dunn and Szymanski (2018) applied this to the LGB population and found a significant and positive correlation between heterosexist discrimination and identity centrality, and a significant and positive correlation between heterosexist discrimination and search of meaning. People who experienced conflict between their religious/spiritual and LGB identities are likely to have participated or to currently participate in religious ceremonies and activities, mainly from formal religions that condemn homosexuality. LGB people who experience conflict could have possibly dealt with more situations of heterosexist discrimination than people who are not religious and that, consequently, did not experience conflict. From Dunn and Szymanski's (2018) results we could hypothesize that the constant exposure to heterosexist discrimination that LGB people who feel conflict have faced, could have increased their LGB identity centrality, and also their necessity to search for meaning. According to Dunn and Szymanski (2018), people who experience heterosexist discrimination tend to try to make sense of their lives, their identities, and the discrimination they have faced, in order to cope with it and find purpose. From their investigation, the authors were able to conclude that one of the ways people

use to find meaning is getting involved in LGBTQI+ activism, as a way of reframing their experience, blaming those who discriminated them, instead of internalizing the negative messages received. However, this correlation between heterosexist discrimination and search for meaning, could also possibly explain why some people who feel identity conflict because of heterosexist environments, do not leave religion, but instead actually turn to religion and spirituality as a way to deal with their identity conflict. These hypotheses should be investigated in the future, to better understand the relationship between heterosexist discrimination, conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities, identity centrality, search for meaning and where and how LGB people search for this meaning.

The present dissertation also explored possible sex and sexual orientation differences on the experiences of religion and spirituality, LGB identity dimensions, conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities, subjective well-being, and outness. To start, none of the religious/spiritual variables previously mentioned varied significantly according to sex or sexual orientation, something that was also found by previous authors (Halkitis et al., 2009; Meanley et al., 2016).

The results of the LGBIS dimensions were consistent with those found both in Portugal (e.g. Moleiro et al., 2013) and in the USA (e.g. Mohr & Kendra, 2011), with participants reporting low levels of Internalized Homonegativity, Identity Uncertainty and Identity Superiority, medium levels of Acceptance Concerns, Concealment Motivation, Difficult Process and Identity Centrality, and higher levels of Identity Affirmation. The significant differences found between males and females on Identity Uncertainty and Difficult Process were also found in previous literature, referring a higher percentage of Identity Uncertainty for females and a more Difficult Process for males (Oliveira et al., 2010; Page et al., 2013). To what concerns differences between sexual orientation groups, other authors also report higher levels of Identity Uncertainty for Bisexual individuals, as has been found in the present sample (Oliveira et al., 2010; Oliveira et al., 2012).

Significant differences were found between males and females and between sexual orientation groups regarding conflict between religious and LGB identities at the time of coming out to themselves, with males reporting higher levels of conflict than females and Gay men reporting higher levels of conflict than Bisexual/Pansexual individuals, but not Lesbians. To the best of our knowledge, no other authors reported such differences between males and females. One possible explanation for this could be the differences in religiosity found by authors such as Scroggs and Faflick (2018) and Sherkat (2002), according to whom LGB males tend to be more religious and have more church attendance than LGB females. However, it is

worth noting that in the current sample there were no sex differences on religious variables. There is also a possibility that sex differences on conflict might be connected to differences on LGB identity dimensions, namely the fact that Portuguese men have previously reported more difficulties in their process of accepting their LGB identity, more dissatisfaction with their identity and more sensibility to stigma (Oliveira et al., 2010). According to the authors of this study, this might be due to the fact that men are under a lot of societal pressure to be dominant and strong, and are also not as used to a collectively discriminated gender identity as women are, and thus might have more difficulty dealing with stigmatization coming from society or, in this case, from religious institutions.

Concerning well-being, the participants reported a relatively good subjective well-being, with mean values above the midpoint of the scale for positive affect and life satisfaction and below the midpoint of the scale for negative affect. No significant sex differences were found for subjective well-being, something that was also reported by Harari et al. (2014), with other authors not mentioning any sex or sexual orientation differences found.

Regarding outness, the present sample seems to be more open about their sexual orientation, in every context measured, when compared with data previously collected in Portugal, with mean levels being one scale point above, on average, than the ones reported by Oliveira et al. (2010). Despite the higher values, the findings on outness were similar to those previously found, with participants being the most out to their siblings, mother and friends, and being at a lower level of outness with their fathers, which had similar values to work supervisors or strangers. Members and leaders of their religious communities are still the ones to whom LGB people are the least out and the context where it is less talked about. Nonetheless, it is important to mention that even in religious settings people seem to be more out than in previous data (Oliveira et al., 2010). Although this might be due to differences in sample sizing, with Oliveira et al.'s (2010) sample being almost eight times bigger, it is also possible that it reflects the societal changes from the last ten years , with participants now being more open about their sexual orientation or at least making less of an effort to hide. Regarding the differences found between sexual orientation groups, some of these were also reported by Oliveira et al. (2010), namely the higher levels of outness to family for Lesbians and Gays, when compared to Bisexual individuals. Such findings were also reported by other authors (e.g. Herek, Norton, Allen, & Sims, 2010; Shilo & Savaya, 2012).

Some limitations of the present dissertation should be mentioned. The sample size could be bigger, in order to achieve more representative results. Also, because not many LGBT associations and groups shared the survey, most of the answers were collected through snowball

sampling. Due to this fact, most of the sample was consisted by women, with at least an undergraduate degree, and below 35 years old, which means that the experiences of older LGB people, men and people with lower education levels could not be well represented in this dissertation. Nonetheless, by using snowball sampling and asking people to share the survey with their friends, we might have reached participants who are only out to some friends or people who are not yet in contact with LGBT associations and groups, which is common for people who experience conflict between the two identities. No specific measure of conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities exists, with each author choosing their own question to measure conflict. The measure chosen to assess identity conflict at the time of coming out to themselves was only previously used one time by its authors and more research about its psychometric properties would be useful for future studies about this type of conflict. Finally, we need to mention that all data was collected through self-report measures which could be subject to social desirability bias.

In conclusion, the present dissertation was able to give a new understanding of the religion and spirituality of Portuguese LGB people, and their experiences with conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities, something that has not been studied before in the country. Some relevant results were found, including: the significant negative correlation between spiritual identification and internalized homonegativity, which had not been previously reported; the sex and sexual orientation differences found regarding conflict between religious/spiritual and LGB identities, with males and Gay men experiencing more conflict; a better understanding on how identity conflict relates with the LGBIS dimensions, which had not been studied before and, the significant and positive correlation between identity conflict and identity centrality, which had not been previously reported and should be further investigated in the future.

References

Anderton, C. L., Pender, D. A., & Asner-Self, K. K. (2011). A Review of the Religious Identity/Sexual Orientation Identity Conflict Literature: Revisiting Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance Theory. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, *5*(3–4), 259–281. doi: 10.1080/15538605.2011.632745

Barnes, D. M., & Meyer, I. H. Religious Affiliation, Internalized Homophobia, and Mental Health in Lesbians, Gay Men, and Bisexuals. (2012). *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 82*(4), 505-515. doi: 10.1111/j.1939-0025.2012.01185.x.

Barringer, M. N., & Gay, D. A. (2016). Happily Religious: The Surprising Sources of Happiness Among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Adults. *Sociological Inquiry*, *87*(1), 75–96. doi: 10.1111/soin.12154

Baumeister, R. F., Shapiro, J. P., & Tice, D. M. (1985). Two Kinds of Identity Crisis. *Journal of Personality*, *53*(3), 407–424. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-6494.1985.tb00373.x

Beagan, B. L., & Hattie, B. (2015). Religion, Spirituality, and LGBTQ Identity Integration. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, *9*(2), 92–117. doi: 10.1080/15538605.2015.1029204

Bergan, A., & McConatha, J. T. (2000). Religiosity and Life Satisfaction. *Activities, Adaptation & Aging*, *24*(3), 23–34. doi: 10.1300/J016v24n03_02

Boppana, S., & Gross, A. M. (2019). The Impact of Religiosity on the Psychological Well-being of LGBT Christians. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Mental Health*, *23*(4), 412–426. doi: 10.1080/19359705.2019.1645072

Brewster, M. E., Velez, B. L., Foster, A., Esposito, J., & Robinson, M. A. (2016). Minority stress and the moderating role of religious coping among religious and spiritual sexual minority individuals. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *63*(1), 119–126. doi: 10.1037/cou0000121

Costa, P. A., Pereira, H., & Leal, I. (2013). Internalized Homonegativity, Disclosure, and Acceptance of Sexual Orientation in a Sample of Portuguese Gay and Bisexual Men, and Lesbian and Bisexual Women. *Journal of Bisexuality*, *13*(2), 229–244. doi: 10.1080/15299716.2013.782481

Coyle, A., & Rafalin, D. (2000). Jewish gay men's accounts of negotiating cultural, religious, and sexual identity: a qualitative study. *Journal of Psychology & Human Sexuality*, *12*(4), 21–48. doi: 10.1300/J056v12n04_02

D'Augelli, A. R. (1994). Identity Development and Sexual Orientation: Toward a Model of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Development. In E. J. Trickett, R. J. Watts, & D. Birman

(Eds.), *Human Diversity: Perspectives on People in Context* (pp. 312–333). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Dahl, A., & Galliher, R. (2010). Sexual Minority Young Adult Religiosity, Sexual Orientation Conflict, Self-Esteem and Depressive Symptoms. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health*, *14*(4), 271–290. doi: 10.1080/19359705.2010.507413

Diener, E. (1984). Subjective Well-being. *Psychological Bulletin*, *95*(3), 542–575. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.95.3.542

Diener, E. (2000). Subjective well-being: The Science of Happiness and a Proposal for a National Index. *American Psychologist*, *55*(1), 34–43. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.34

Dilmaghani, M. (2018). Sexual Orientation, Religiosity, and Subjective Wellbeing in Canada. *Studies in Religion-Sciences Religieuses*, *47*(4), 540–565. doi: 10.1177/0008429818796801

Drabble, L., Veldhuis, C. B., Riley, B. B., Rostosky, S., & Hughes, T. L. (2018). Relationship of Religiosity and Spirituality to Hazardous Drinking, Drug Use, and Depression Among Sexual Minority Women. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *65*(13), 1734–1757. doi: 10.1080/00918369.2017.1383116

Dunn, T. L., & Szymanski, D. M. (2018). Heterosexist discrimination and LGBQ activism: Examining a moderated mediation model. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, 5*(1), 13-24. doi:10.1037/sgd0000250

Ellison, C. G. (1991). Religious Involvement and Subjective Well-Being. *Journal of Health & Social Behavior*, *32*(1), 80–99. doi: 10.2307/2136801

Ellison, C. G., Gay, D. A., & Glass, T. A. (1989). Does Religious Commitment Contribute to Individual Life Satisfaction? *Social Forces*, *68*(1), 100–123. doi: 10.1093/sf/68.1.100

Escher, C., Gomez, R., Paulraj, S., Ma, F., Spies-Upton, S., Cummings, C., … Goldblum, P. (2018). Relations of Religion with Depression and Loneliness in Older Sexual and Gender Minority Adults. *Clinical Gerontologist*, *42*(2), 150–161. doi: 10.1080/07317115.2018.1514341

Fassinger, R. E., & Miller, B. A. (1997). Validation of an Inclusive Model of Sexual Minority Identity Formation on a Sample of Gay Men. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *32*(2), 53–78. doi: 10.1300/J082v32n02

Fetzer Institute and National Institute on Aging (2003). *Meaning in: Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness/Spirituality for Use in Health Research*. Retrieved from https://fetzer.org/resources/multidimensional-measurement-religiousnessspirituality-use-health-research

Foster, A. B., Brewster, M. E., Velez, B. L., Eklund, A., & Keum, B. T. (2017). Footprints in the Sand: Personal, Psychological, and Relational Profiles of Religious, Spiritual, and Atheist LGB Individuals. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *64*(4), 466–487. doi: 10.1080/00918369.2016.1191237

Galinha, I., & Ribeiro, J. L. P. (2005). História e evolução do conceito de bem-estar subjectivo. *Psicologia, Saúde & Doenças*, *6*(2), 203–214.

Ganzevoort, R. R., Van der Laan, M., & Olsman, E. (2011). Growing up gay and religious. Conflict, dialogue, and religious identity strategies. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, *14*(3), 209–222. doi: 10.1080/13674670903452132

García, D. I., Gray-Stanley, J., & Ramirez-Valles, J. (2008). "The Priest Obviously Doesn't Know That I'm Gay": The Religious and Spiritual Journeys of Latino Gay Men. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *55*(3), 411–436. doi: 10.1080/00918360802345149

Gattis, M. N., Woodford, M. R., & Han, Y. (2014). Discrimination and Depressive Symptoms Among Sexual Minority Youth: Is Gay-Affirming Religious Affiliation a Protective Factor? *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *43*(8), 1589–1599. doi: 10.1007/s10508-014-0342-y

Gibbs, J. J., & Goldbach, J. (2015). Religious Conflict, Sexual Identity, and Suicidal Behaviors among LGBT Young Adults. *Archives of Suicide Research*, *19*(4), 472–488. doi: 10.1080/13811118.2015.1004476

Gonçalves, P. S. (2017). *Solidariedade Familiar Percebida em Casais de Sexo Diferente e do Mesmo Sexo , Com e Sem Filhos* (master's thesis). Retrieved from https://repositorio.iscte-iul.pt

Gorsuch, R. L., & McPherson, S. E. (1989). Intrinsic/Extrinsic Measurement: I/E-Revised and Single-Item Scales. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *28*(3), 348–354. doi: 10.2307/1386745

Hadzic, M. (2011). Spirituality and Mental Health: Current Research and Future Directions. *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health*, *13*(4), 223–235. doi: 10.1080/19349637.2011.616080

Halkitis, P. N., Mattis, J. S., Sahadath, J. K., Massie, D., Ladyzhenskaya , L., Pitrelli, K., … Cowie, S. E. (2009). The Meanings and Manifestations of Religion and Spirituality among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Adults. *Journal of Adult Development, 16*(4), 250-262. doi: 10.1007/s10804-009-9071-1

Hamblin, R. J., & Gross, A. M. (2014). Religious Faith, Homosexuality, and Psychological Well-Being: A Theoretical and Empirical Review. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health*, *18*(1), 67–82. doi: 10.1080/19359705.2013.804898

Harari, E., Glenwick, D. S., & Cecero, J. J. (2014). The Relationship Between Religiosity/Spirituality and Well-being in Gay and Heterosexual Orthodox Jews. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, *17*(9), 886–897. doi: 10.1080/13674676.2014.942840

Herek, G. M., Norton, A. T., Allen, T. J., & Sims, C. L. (2010). Demographic, Psychological, and Social Characteristics of Self-Identified Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Adults in a US Probability Sample. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy, 7*(3), 176-200. doi: 10.1007/s13178-010-0017-y

Hill, P. C., Pargament, K. I., Hood, R. W., McCullough, J. . M. E., Swyers, J. P., Larson, D. B., & Zinnbauer, B. J. (2000). Conceptualizing Religion and Spirituality: Points of Commonality, Points of Departure. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, *30*(1), 51–77. doi: 10.1111/1468-5914.00119

Itzhaky, H., & Kissil, K. (2015). "It's a Horrible Sin. If They Find Out, I Will Not be Able to Stay": Orthodox Jewish Gay Men's Experiences Living in Secrecy. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *62*(5), 621–643. doi: 10.1080/00918369.2014.988532

Koenig, H. G. (2004). Religion, spirituality, and medicine: Research findings and implications for clinical practice. *Southern Medical Journal*, *97*(12), 1194–1200. doi: 10.1097/01.SMJ.0000146489.21837.CE

Koenig, H. G. (2009). Research on Religion, Spirituality, and Mental Health: A Review. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 54*(5), 283–291. doi:10.1177/070674370905400502

Kralovec, K., Fartacek, C., Fartacek, R., & Plöderl, M. (2014). Religion and Suicide Risk in Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Austrians. *Journal of Religion and Health*, *53*(2), 413–423. doi: 10.1007/s10943-012-9645-2

Lassiter, J. M., Grov, C., Ventuneac, A., Saleh, L., Starks, T., & Parsons, J. T. (2017). Spirituality and Multiple Dimensions of Religion Are Associated With Mental Health in Gay and Bisexual Men: Results From the One Thousand Strong Cohort. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, *11*(4), 408–416. doi: 10.1037/rel0000146

Lent, R. W. (2004). Toward a Unifying Theoretical and Practical Perspective on Well-being and Psychosocial Adjustment. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *51*(4), 482–509. doi: 10.1037/0022-0167.51.4.482

Longo, J., Walls, N. E., & Wisneski, H. (2013). Religion and religiosity: protective or harmful factors for sexual minority youth?. *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*, *16*(3), 273-290. doi: 10.1080/13674676.2012.659240

Love, P. G., Bock, M., Jannarone, A., & Richardson, P. (2005). Identity Interaction: Exploring the Spiritual Experiences of Lesbian and Gay College Students. *Journal of*

College Student Development, *46*(2), 193–209. doi: 10.1353/csd.2005.0019

Lytle, M. C., Blosnich, J. R., De Luca, S. M., & Brownson, C. (2018). Association of Religiosity With Sexual Minority Suicide Ideation and Attempt. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 54*(4), 644-651. doi: 10.1016/j.amepre.2018.01.019

McCarn, S. R., & Fassinger, R. E. (1996). Revisioning Sexual Minority Identity Formation: A New Model of Lesbian Identity and its Implications for Counseling and Research. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *24*(3), 508–534. doi: 10.1177/0011000096243011

Meanley, S., Pingel, E. S., & Bauermeister, J. A. (2016). Psychological Well-being Among Religious and Spiritual-identified Young Gay and Bisexual Men. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, *13*(1), 35–45. doi: 10.1007/s13178-015-0199-4

Miller, W. R., & Thoresen, C. E. (2003). Spirituality, Religion, and Health: An Emerging Research Field. *American Psychologist*, *58*(1), 24–35. doi: 10.1037/0003-066X.58.1.24

Mohr, J., & Fassinger, R. (2000). Measuring dimensions of lesbian and gay male experience. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, *33*(2), 66–90. doi: 10.1080/07481756.2000.12068999

Mohr, J., & Fassinger, R. E. (2006). Sexual orientation identity and romantic relationship quality in same-sex couples. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *32*(8), 1085–1099. doi: 10.1177/0146167206288281

Mohr, J., & Kendra, M. S. (2011). Revision and extension of a multidimensional measure of sexual minority identity: The lesbian, gay, and bisexual identity scale. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *58*(2), 234–245. doi: 10.1037/a0022858

Moleiro, C., Pinto, N., & Freire, J. (2013). Effects of Age on Spiritual Well-being and Homonegativity: Religious Identity and Practices Among LGB Persons in Portugal. *Journal of Religion, Spirituality & Aging*, *25*(2), 93–111. doi: 10.1080/15528030.2012.741561

Mueller, P. S., Plevak, D. J., & Rummans, T. A. (2001). Religious involvement, spirituality, and medicine: Implications for clinical practice. *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, *76*(12), 1225–1235. doi: 10.4065/76.12.1225

Nunes, L. N. (2009). *Promoção do Bem-Estar Subjectivo dos Idosos através da Intergeracionalidade* (master's thesis). Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10316/11787

Oliveira, J. M., Lopes, D., Costa, C. G., & Nogueira, C. (2012). Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Identity Scale (LGBIS): Construct Validation, Sensitivity Analyses and other Psychometric Properties. *The Spanish Journal of Psychology*, *15*(1), 334–347. doi: 10.5209/rev_sjop.2012.v15.n1.37340

Oliveira, J. M., Pereira, M., Costa, C., & Nogueira, C. (2010). Pessoas LGBT – Identidades e discriminação. In C. Nogueira, J.M. Oliveira, M. Almeida, C. Costa, L. Rodrigues & M. Pereira (Eds.), *Estudo sobre a discriminação em função da orientação sexual e da identidade de género* (pp. 149-209). Lisboa: Comissão para a Cidadania e a Igualdade de Género.

Page, M. J. L., Lindahl, K. M., & Malik, N. M. (2013). The Role of Religion and Stress in Sexual Identity and Mental Health Among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *23*(4), 665–677. doi: 10.1111/jora.12025

Paloutzian, R. F., & Kirkpatrick, L. A. (1995). Introduction: The Scope of Religious Influences on Personal and Societal Well-Being. *Journal of Social Issues*, *51*(2), 1–11. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4560.1995.tb01320.x

Pargament, K. I. (1999). The Psychology of Religion and Spirituality? Yes and No. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, *9*(1), 3–16. doi: 10.1207/s15327582ijpr0901

Pavot, W., & Diener, E. (1993). Review of the Satisfaction With Life Scale. *Psychological Assessment, 5*(2), 164–172. doi: 10.1037/1040-3590.5.2.164

Pietkiewicz, I. J., & Kołodziejczyk-Skrzypek, M. (2016). Living in Sin? HowGay Catholics Manage Their Conflicting Sexual and Religious Identities. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 45*(6), 1573-1585. doi: 10.1007/s10508-016-0752-0

Pitt, R. N. (2009). "Still Looking for My Jonathan": Gay Black Men's Management of Religious and Sexual Identity Conflicts. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *57*(1), 39–53. doi: 10.1080/00918360903285566

Poloma, M. M., & Pendleton, B. F. (1991). The Effects of Prayer and Prayer Experiences on Measures of General Weil-Being. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, *19*(1), 71–83. doi: 10.1177/009164719101900107

Prest, L. A., & Keller, J. F. (1993). Spirituality and Family Therapy: Spirital Beliefs, Myths, and Metaphors. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, *19*(2), 137–148. doi: 10.1111/j.1752-0606.1993.tb00973.x

Puckett, J. A., Wolff, J. R., Gunn, H. A., Woodward, E. N., & Pantalone, D. W. (2018). An Investigation of Religion and Spirituality of Sexual Minorities in the United States: Exploring Perceptions, Intrinsic Religiosity, and Outness to Religious Communities. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, *28*(3), 145–161. doi: 10.1080/10508619.2018.1464858

Ream, G. L., & Savin-Williams, R. C. (2005). Reconciling Christianity and Positive Non-

Heterosexual Identity in Adolescence, with Implications for Psychological Well-Being. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education*, *2*(3), 19–36. doi: 10.1300/J367v02n03_03

Rodriguez, E. M. (2009). At the Intersection of Church and Gay: A Review of the Psychological Research on Gay and Lesbian Christians. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *57*(1), 5–38. doi: 10.1080/00918360903445806

Rodriguez, E. M, Etengoff, C., & Vaughan, M. D. (2019). A Quantitative Examination of Identity Integration in Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual People of Faith. *Journal of Homosexuality, 66*(1), 77-99. doi: 10.1080/00918369.2017.1395259

Rodriguez, E. M., & Ouellette, S. C. (2000). Gay and Lesbian Christians: Homosexual and Religious Identity Integration in the Member and Participants of a Gay-Positive Church. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *39*(3), 333–347. doi: 10.1111/0021-8294.00028

Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness Is Everything, or Is It? Explorations on the Meaning of Psychological Well-Being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *57*(6), 1069–1108. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.57.6.1069

Schuck, K. D., & Liddle, B. J. (2001). Religious Conflicts Experienced by Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Individuals. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Psychotherapy*, *5*(2), 63–82. doi: 10.1300/J236v05n02_07

Schwab, R., & Peterson, K. U. (1990). Religiousness: Its Relation to Loneliness, Neuroticism and Subjective Well-Being. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *29*(3), 335–345. doi: 10.2307/1386462

Scroggs, B., & Faflick, N. (2018). Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Religiosity Across the Life Span: Associations with Group Identification and Identity Salience. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, *30*(4), 321–335. doi: 10.1080/10538720.2018.1517398

Scroggs, B., Miller, J. M., & Stanfield, M. H. (2018). Identity Development and Integration of Religious Identities in Gender and Sexual Minority Emerging Adults. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *57*(3), 604-615. doi: 10.1111/jssr.12538

Sellers, R. M., & Shelton, J. N. (2003). The role of racial identity in perceived racial discrimination. J*ournal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*(5), 1079–1092. doi:10.1037/ 0022-3514.84.5.1079

Sherkat, D. (2002). Sexuality and Religious Commitment in the United States. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *41*(2), 313–323. doi: 10.1111/1468-5906.00119

Sherry, A., Adelman, A., Whilde, M. R., & Quick, D. (2010). Competing Selves: Negotiating the Intersection of Spiritual and Sexual Identities. *Professional Psychology: Research*

and Practice, *41*(2), 112–119. doi: 10.1037/a0017471

Shilo, G., & Savaya, R. (2012). Mental Health of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth and Young Adults: Differential Effects of Age, Gender, Religiosity, and Sexual Orientation. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *22*(2), 310–325. doi: 10.1111/j.1532-7795.2011.00772.x

Stern, S., & Wright, A. J. (2018). Discrete Effects of Religiosity and Spirituality on Gay Identity and Self-Esteem. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *65*(8), 1071–1092. doi: 10.1080/00918369.2017.1368769

Subhi, N., & Geelan, D. (2012). When Christianity and Homosexuality Collide: Understanding the Potential Intrapersonal Conflict. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *59*(10), 1382–1402. doi: 10.1080/00918369.2012.724638

Turner, R. P., Lukoff, D., Barhouse, R. T., & Lu, F. G. (1995). Religious or Spiritual Problem: A Culturally Sensitive Diagnostic Category in the DSM-IV. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, *183*(7), 435–444. doi: 10.1097/00005053-199507000-00003

Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Tellegen, A. (1988). Development and Validation of Brief Measures of Positive and Negative Affect: The PANAS Scales. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 54*(6), 1063–1070. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.54.6.1063

Wedow, R., Schnabel, L., Wedow, L. K., & Konieczny, M. E. (2017). “I’m Gay and I’m Catholic”: Negotiating Two Complex Identities at a Catholic University. *Sociology of Religion, 78*(3), 289-317. doi: 10.1093/socrel/srx028

Whicker, D. R., de St. Aubin, E., & Skerven, K. (2017). The Role of Internalized Homonegativity in the Faith and Psychological Health of Lesbians. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, *21*(4), 478–494. doi: 10.1080/10894160.2017.1350795

Witter, R. A., Stock, W. A., Okun, M. A., & Haring, M. J. (1985). Well-Being in Adulthood: A Quantitative Synthesis. *Review of Religious Research*, *26*(4), 332–342. doi: 10.2307/3511048

Yakushko, O. (2001). *Emotional, Social, and Spiritual Well-Being of GLB Clergy.* Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED459391.pdf

Yakushko, O. (2005). Influence of Social Support, Existential Well-Being, and Stress Over Sexual Orientation on Self Esteem of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Individuals. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, *27*(1), 131–143. doi: 10.1007/s10447-005-2259-6

Zarzycka, B., Rybarski, R., & Sliwak, J. (2017). The Relationship of Religious Comfort and

Struggle with Anxiety and Satisfaction with Life in Roman Catholic Polish Men: The Moderating Effect of Sexual Orientation. *Journal of Religion and Health*, *56*(6), 2162–2179. doi: 10.1007/s10943-017-0388-y

Zeidner, M., & Zevulun, A. (2018). Mental Health and Coping Patterns in Jewish Gay Men in Israel: The Role of Dual Identity Conflict, Religious Identity, and Partnership Status. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *65*(7), 947–968. doi: 10.1080/00918369.2017.1364941

Zinnbauer, B. J., Pargament, K. I., Cole, B., Rye, M. S., Butter, E. M., Belavich, T. G., … Kadar, J. L. (1997). Religion and Spirituality: Unfuzzying the Fuzzy. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *36*(4), 549. doi: 10.2307/1387689

Zinnbauer, B. J., Pargament, K. I., & Scott, A. B. (1999). The Emerging Meanings of Religiousness and Spirituality: Problems and Prospects. *Journal of Personality*, *67*(6), 889–919. doi: 10.1111/1467-6494.00077