

Abstract

This research aimed to explore the narratives of romantic jealousy in the context of infidelity for heterosexual and homosexual men from Johannesburg South Africa. This study takes on a qualitative approach using a narrative analysis in combination with a structural and thematic content analysis. The narratives of the heterosexual and homosexual men revealed the role which jealousy plays in every relationship, and how it can affect the emotions and behaviours of both partners. This study found that the narratives of these men were in contradiction to what evolutionary theories as well as past research on the topic have suggested. Evolutionary perspectives propose that heterosexual men are more inclined to sexual infidelity, this was however found to be in contradiction to the beliefs and ideas held by the participants of this study. Heterosexual participants of this study reported that for them emotional infidelity would be more jealousy provoking, as it would be a sure indication that the relationship would end. Past research findings on the other hand have suggested that homosexual males are more inclined to emotional infidelity, as they do not face the risk of cuckoldry. However the same can not be said for the narratives of the homosexual participants of this study. The narrative of all except for one homosexual participant indicated that homosexual men felt that they would be greatly affected by sexual infidelity rather than emotional infidelity. There explanations revolved around the open ended nature and ease of access to sex which is prevalent in the gay community. It is also important to note that similarly to the heterosexual group, most of the participants who experienced sexual jealousy also experienced sexual infidelity. Indicating a link between the type of infidelity you experience to the type of jealousy you feel.

This research identified that heterosexual participants felt that in their live stories they found emotional jealousy to be the worst aspect of infidelity while homosexual men felt that sexual jealousy was the worst aspect of infidelity.

Keywords: Romantic Jealousy, emotional jealousy, sexual jealousy, sexual infidelity, emotional infidelity, Evolutionary theory, Heterosexual men, Homosexual men