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LESBIANS, LEISURE, AND THE CONSTRUCTIONS OF SPACE AMONG BLACK LESBIAN WOMEN IN JOHANNESBURG

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Community-based Counselling Psychology).

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Declaration

I declare that I, Phetheni Nconco, know and accept that plagiarism is wrong. I therefore declare that this research project titled Lesbians, Leisure and the Constructions of Space Among Black Lesbian Women in Johannesburg is my own, unaided work, except where specifically acknowledged. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at this or any other university.

Phetheni Nconco

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June 2018

Abstract

Space is a site of contestation where oppression and resistance simultaneously reside. Social classification, prejudice and identity politics regulate and exclude certain groups from accessing different kinds of space. This can be overlooked when groups are seen as homogenous. Intragroup differences produce different kinds of experiences. This makes the analysis of intersections of identity categories in understanding lived experiences critical. Sexuality, gender, race and class are important identity axes that are mutually constitutive of identity and experience. Among lesbian women, experiences are not the same, although the group may share oppressions, differences along the lines of class and race, carve out unique lives. Black working class lesbian women are the most invisible and have the highest risk of violence, exclusion and oppression. Urban and suburban areas offer safer leisure spaces, whereas townships pose a risk of victimisation. The findings in this study suggest that while black lesbian women create their own exclusive leisure spaces with familiar and close peers, they also resist power and gender norms imposed on their bodies and identities. It appeared that class, race gender and sexuality are identity categories that shape daily lived experiences and inform the multiple ways in which participants navigate space. These identity categories determined the spaces participants had access to and the alternative spaces that could be created. Working class lesbian women create alternative leisure spaces indoors where safety is assured, instead of local taverns in the townships, while middle class lesbian women negotiate their identity performance as they move in and out of working and middle class spaces. Insisting on one's sexuality and openly performing identity proved to be an important aspect of being a black lesbian woman, it spoke to visibility, agency and being assertive of one's sexuality.

Keywords: **Identity politics, sexuality, gender, race, class, intersectionality, space, resistance, leisure.**

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to Fikile Khoza, a mother who has been absolutely amazing to say the least.

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I thank God for giving me strength throughout this process, without you, this would have never been possible.

To my family who showed relentless love and encouragement, thank you, I am truly grateful

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Chapter 1. Introduction and Rationale

Black lesbian women in South Africa have been portrayed as vulnerable to violence, especially in the informal settlements and poor townships in Gauteng. While this is true, there are black lesbian women who are feminist and or activists, who fight for their rights and live "normal" lives, with access to security (Matebeni, 2011). Matebeni found that black lesbian women had to negotiate the reality of hate crimes and violence. For black lesbian women in South Africa, realizing identity and withstanding violence has been a constant challenge.

In this study, I focus on how certain leisure spaces might police black lesbian women and how this may influence their experiences of space and identity. The concept of space is understood and conceptualised as a 'physical habitus' to which people occupy, a place in which lives are lived and moments experienced. I also explore the constructions of safe spaces, what they mean to black lesbian women and how they have been used by them. I then discuss the intersectionality of identity constructs which are sexuality, class and race. The study further looks at how this intersectionality plays out in black lesbian women's identities and experiences of different spaces

The relationship between space, intersectionality, and performativity is carefully studied with the purposes of exploring how space as a physical place to which people find themselves influences or is influenced by the identities that occupy it. The multiple kinds of identities and the ways in which they are performed in different spaces are important for understanding how space, class, race, sexuality, gender and how these are performed bi-directionally and affect each other. This speaks to "queer spacing" which is about how non-cis gender identifying people can colonise spaces which were previously exclusively heterosexual (Predo-Castro and Graham, 2017), indicating how people can also shape spaces in particular ways.

Studies in anthropology, particularly feminists, found that there is a relationship between space and gender, and that it is defined by power relations (Kgosimang, 2015). Space is not only a place where gendered power dynamics play out, but also something that can be shaped

by identities. It is neither neutral nor free from identity politics, rather it enables and disables identities, it can be shaped into a particular kind of space by identities and it is constitutive of.

Prado- Castro and Graham (2017,p. 98) argue that "spaces are important because these are the foundations where queerness is played out" The The kinds of spaces that black lesbian women choose for leisure are contigent not only on concerns about safety and affordability to access, but also on issues of asserting identities. Socio-economic class plays one of the crucial roles, one needs to have the finances to access particular spaces. The need for security and not being violated against is also important in relation to the spaces that are occupied for leisure.

Patronizing gendered spaces, filled with toxic masculinities and heteronormativity may also be accessed as means to visibility. While space has the capacity to shape the extent to which identities can be performed, and the ability for black lesbian women enjoy a social space, black lesbian women can also make space allow for non-gender conforming identities. I then present performativity theory, which engages with how black lesbian women are agential bodies that are also implicated in a world where language, discourses and culture pre-exists and how this unfolds in their performances of identities as black lesbian women in South Africa

Societal norms are based on compulsory heteronormativity. This suggests that sexualities that fall out of the norm are pathologised and othered. Thus, neutralizing gender has led to prejudice and discrimination for those who do not conform to cis-gender performances of identity (Butler, 1990). The focus on how black lesbian women might experience the kinds of policing they may face from a heteronormative society and how this might impact their sense of identity and experience of space is of crucial importance in this study.

Literature and the media have focused on the victimization and violence that lesbian women face, limiting alternative narratives that speak of agency and resistance (Matebeni, 2011). This dissertation intends to contribute to knowledge economy in gender studies through a more rounded representation of the lived experiences of black lesbian women, in relation to

how they experience spaces they consider to be safe or unsafe. It is important to have a more representative account of how lesbian women, in their subjective positions, make sense of their experiences in different spaces, as positioning them as victims can have disempowering implications. Delaney and Kaspin (2011) argue that it is important to recognize how space regulates the ways in which people use it, and who gets to use it. In doing so, power dynamics are exposed in a micro political level, therefore, allowing for those power dynamics to be challenged for social change.

During the emergence of feminism and feminist literature, the politicisation of lived experiences transformed the ways in which violence and oppression against women is understood (Crenshaw, 1993). While the emergence of feminism was for the liberation of women, it became evident that it was about particular women, particularly white cis-gendered women. Crenshaw argued that the problem here was that feminist literature transcended the differences within the category "women". Black women and non-cis gender conforming women were invisible. Women's lived experiences were spoken of and documented as though they were the same for every woman, and this in particular was problematic.

This study prioritises marginalised voices and experiences, and a community that is often invisible. The project values the lived experiences of black lesbian women in Johannesburg, a population that has often been publicised as helpless victims (Matebeni, 2008), which I particularly problematise in this study. The theoretical framework which this study adopts also contributes to feminist literature, as it argues for the appreciation of unique experiences that are often overlooked because of a lack of recognition of the differences that identity categories create.

Questions of space and how it is experienced by its different occupants speaks to hegemonic ideas about gender, specifically how they can be disrupted and challenged by resistance and the exercise of agency. Delaney and Kaspin (2011) propose that space can keep people in or out, and determine who has the freedom of movement and expression, or who feels safe, and who is visible or not. This analysis of space, therefore, is important in helping us understand how lesbian women construct their experiences in different spaces (Canham, 2017). The

analysis of identity performances in space is crucial for seeing the ways in which lesbian women can or not challenge the neutralization of sexuality in different spaces.

This study aims at exploring black lesbian women's understandings of identity surveillance directed at them, focusing on how they experience this and what it means for them. The study explored how identities are performatively constructed in response to patriarchal policing and how safe spaces of leisure enable alternative performances of gender and sexuality. Using an intersectional lens, the study provides a discursive reading of the spaces black lesbian women patronize in order to explore the performative dimensions of identity in safe spaces and spaces considered unsafe. The objective was to explore how black lesbian women understand alternative spaces and their constructions of what a "safe space" is.

The focus is to also critically analyse lived experiences and how identity categories along racial, class, gender and sexual lines make experiences unique. The study hopes to challenge and problematise how women have been seen to have the same experiences when different identity positions form different lived experiences. In the following section, I present arguments on how society polices identity, specifically black lesbian identity.

1.2 Research questions

1. How do black lesbian women experience performing their identities in different spaces?

2. How does the intersection of gender, sexuality, race and class inform their experience of space?

3. What alternative spaces do black lesbian women create?

4. What identity performances emanate from black lesbian women's experiences of space?

Chapter 2. Literature review

2.1 Identity surveillance and policing

"Attempts to regulate race, class, sex and sexuality, as well as those spaces where they could be realized, are not unique to South Africa and are seen historically across many geographical contexts" (Visser, 2003, p.125). Certain spaces discursively reproduce and perpetuate heteronormativity. That has implications on gender performance and the ways in which certain bodies experience particular settings and spaces. This may have policing consequence on behaviour (McDermott, 2006).

In a heteronormative and patriarchal society such as ours, cis-gender performance is the norm, and because of that, sexuality that falls outside of this binary may be under identity surveillance by society. Transgressive performances that eschew heteronormative constructions may stir up a hostile environment where by one may be compelled to change or be disciplined for transgressing given social rules. Because gender has been essentialized and naturalized, heterosexuality exerts a policing power over spaces and acts as a gate keeper, controlling who gets access and who is denied.

The implication of failing to capture this complexity that has been made to seem natural is that, people who assume and enact non- gender conforming roles and relational behaviours may suffer punishment (Foucault, 1982). In spaces where lesbian women feel policed, research in America has shown that many lesbian women feel the pressure to manage their lesbian identity and that induces feelings of fear, anxiety, anger and discomfort (Sorensen & Roberts, 1997). This may provide an understanding of the reason behind some lesbian women's fluid performance of identity as tailored for different settings. Navigating through certain spaces where particular sexual identities are overtly "othered" may be threatening (Sorensen & Roberts, 1997). Therefore, engaging with the implications of this potential othering become of crucial importance. The navigation and negotiation of certain spaces by

black lesbian women is highly influenced by the "complicated calculation of the degree" to which a particular setting allows the freedom of openness (Schneider, 1998, p.378).

Dominant discourse normalizes heterosexuality and this creates room for society to pathologies any sexual orientation that does not fit the "norm". Treating sexual orientation as a measure of biology does not allow for the possibility of sexual orientation as a social identity outside of reproductive possibilities (Butler, 1990). Queer discourses challenge normative assumptions and allow for subversive performances of sexual identity, instead of handing fixed gender boxes in which people must fit into.

2.2 Safe space

A study conducted in Manchester City found that there is a sense of safety when individuals "looked" gay to other gay individuals because that creates an atmosphere of trust and "safe space" (Held, 2015).Thus, a safe space is not only produced by deliberate and intentional forums, but it may be by the overt interaction and recognition of another who shares similar identity constructs such as sexuality, class and race (Sorensen & Roberts, 1997).

Dominant discourse on lesbians is around victimization, crime and violence. Matebeni (2008) argues that extensive work that is written about black lesbians often positions them as victims of violence and hate crimes (Matebeni, 2008, p.89). She takes a critical stance in looking at how the media and academia have contributed to the invisibility of black lesbian women and how this has disregarded the lives and experiences of black lesbian women in South Africa. Matebeni critiques the power dynamics between the researcher and the informants. Looking at how the researcher occupies a position of power by representing the informants, and how this representation could be problematic and an inaccurate reflection of the experiences of black lesbian women (Matebeni, 2008).

Such potential partial images could be produced by this complexity. This may have disempowering implications, which may affirm an identity that suggests "weakness" and victimhood. Such narratives may therefore be represented as being the only experience of black lesbians in South Africa. Black lesbian women do live full and complex lives

characterized by complex human experiences that would typically be assigned to people characterized as "normal" (Mc Dermott, 2006).

Certain readings of bodies in particular spaces may reproduce oppression, othering and marginalization of those who may not conform to cis gender roles, thus reproducing a society with gendered and sexualized bodies (Held, 2015). Space is human beings' primary orientation of the world physically, socially and cosmologically, it is neither empty nor neutral, rather it is filled with meaning (Delaney and Kaspin, 2011). The concept of a "Safe space" originated in the 1960's in the feminist and Gay liberation movements. It has been associated with how marginalized groups have forged settings in which they can freely engage politically and socially with others that may share the same positionality with them without fear of being discriminated against (Delaney and Kaspin, 2011).

The fact that there is a need for safe spaces is indicative of problematic power dynamics and gender discourses. Although safe spaces are needed and have positive effects on marginalized communities where by the members of these safe spaces feel comfortable and accepted in them, the concept inadvertently suggests vulnerability, which can be problematised..

Heterosexuals may be seen as a threat in safe spaces as some people who identify as members of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trangender and Intersex (LGBTI) community may feel that since cis gendered people dominate space in society, they should not then impose in safe spaces exclusive for gay or lesbian communities (Held, 2015). This suggests that there may be gate keeping around safe spaces in relation to who gets to access them. There are other positionalities and identity constructs such as class and race that intersect with sexuality. These impact on how one experiences their sexuality and how they experiences safe spaces (Salih, 2007).

Gender, sexuality, class and race have been used as excluding factors, and to oppress, thus determining who gets to access particular spaces. "Safety" in safe spaces is not limited to feelings but it constitutes people's experiences of sexuality, gender, racial and class subjectivities (Fox and Ore, 2010). Emotional states are not only determined by internal regulations but also social location and experience of spaces.

Research that looked at emotions, people and spaces found that places and emotions have a relationship and that certain emotions can be pinned down to particular spaces. Hubbard (2005) found that certain spaces were associated with particular emotions, and suggested that it would be important to look at how identity constructs such as sexuality, gender, class and race shape the emotional experience of these spaces. Geographers have argued about how space is not only gendered, but also that the use of space is gendered (Held, 2015).

Women's fear of certain spaces speaks to the status quo concerning how gender shapes the experience of different kinds of spaces. Fear may be particularly heightened in spaces with pronounced heteronormative and violent masculinities (Canham, 2017). Feminists and emotional geographers argue that emotions are shaped by space and vice versa. They also maintain that social identity constructs such as gender, sexuality, race and class have a mediating role in this relationship (Held, 2015). In addition, sexuality and space can be seen as interconnected. For instance, together with lesbian, gay and queer geographers, Taylor (2004) argues that space is sexed and sex is spaced. Here in exists an intersectionality of sexuality, spaces, sex, and gender.

Surveillance is not only about keeping an eye on the "other", but also about maintaining social structures (Foucault, 1982). In apartheid South Africa and many other parts of the world, public and political scrutiny of sex and sexuality was intensified through legislature, policing and censorship (Matebeni, 2008). Therefore naturalizing gender has been a way of maintaining social order and systems such as family and the law. This has been seen by how queer sexualities have challenged traditional family systems such as parenting, marriage and reproduction, which has been confronted with resistance by heteronormative culture.

Rooke (2007) conducted a study focused on bisexual and lesbian women, which showed how lesbian spaces are constructed by class. She defines the lesbian habitus as a "visible expression of embodied lesbian cultural capital" (Rooke, 2007, p.232), and as "ways that lesbian identity is made visible, performed, and expressed" (p.239). However, lesbian spaces have internal conflicts about who is more visible and authentic in the space. For instance, feminine lesbians have been accused of being "straight looking" and as therefore benefiting

from heteronormative culture. However, within lesbian exclusive spaces, this caused a feeling of being "othered' or of being an outsider in a space that has been specifically created for lesbians (Cefai, 2004).

Butch lesbians therefore feel more visible and assert their dominance as owners of the space (Eves, 2004). "Butch" lesbians are defined as lesbian women who exhibit masculine traits (Eves, 2004). Skeggs (1999) however found that when straight women enter or occupy lesbian spaces for varying reasons, including the need to escape hetero-masculine performances and demands of heterosexuality, the safety and comfort for lesbian women may be compromised (Casey, 2004). It was found that this may be because straight women in lesbian spaces re-inscribe gender norms, which has identity surveillance and policing consequences that may cause lesbian women to feel uncomfortable and totally excluded from their own space (Skeggs, 1999).

Held (2011) conducted an ethnographic research in a Gay village in Manchester City where she observed that participants felt safer and comfortable in self-selected spaces where they constituted a protected majority. Participants said that they tend to feel threatened in hetero spaces, but have a sense of ownership of space at the gay village. However, participants also indicated that they felt uncomfortable when straight men would come to the gay village because they would impose heterosexual norms. This indicates that identity policing is one of the biggest problems in how lesbian women experience space because it is the level of comfort and freedom in queer spaces that induce feelings of safety and comfort (Held, 2011). However, as soon as heteronormativity is introduced in the space, those feelings are threatened. The awareness of discomfort is produced in relation to the experience of homophobic spaces. One can therefore argue that it is because of homophobia and heteronormativity that "safe spaces' emerged, as Butler (1999) argued that identity policing is a way of maintaining heterosexuality.

Safety and comfort is not only threatened by the presence of men in a lesbian space, but by normative gender enactment in that space. For Butler (1999), gender is reproduced through repetitive acts which reproduce very particular gendered bodies over time. Butler argued that performative gender practises are discursively reproduced through creating and solidifying

gendered difference in the service of patriarchy. All gendered presentations, whether queer or straight are performative. Certain spaces however allow for particular kinds of performance (Canham, 2017). For instance, queer spaces encourage queer identity performances while heteronormative spaces police bodies into straight performances.

Safe spaces have created alternative spaces for lesbian women to feel safe, comfortable and free to interact without feeling scrutinized or policed for performing their identities (Held, 2015). Heteronormative surveillance and potential punishment for transgressing given rules of feminine identity performances is unavoidable. Thus, lesbian women may feel they can only have leisure and the freedom to perform their identities in safe spaces because of the policing and surveillance in "non -safe spaces".

According to Visser (2008), space is not neutral as it plays a role in the construction and expression of sexuality. Rushbrook (2002) argues that repetitive acts reproduce and naturalize public spaces as heterosexual. Because of the common expression in the social organization of space, heterosexual desire is invisible and can therefore be performed without question, surveillance or policing (Visser, 2008). Visser argues that it is not only heterosexual individuals who police queer individuals, but queer individuals also police themselves in heterosexual spaces. He states that "…space that appears asexual to heterosexuals unaware of their own performance of heterosexuality is clearly marked as straight for non-heterosexuals, who are said to police their own performativity, convinced that safe access to that space is contingent on the appearance of being straight" (Visser, 2008, p.1345).
However, the argument here is that the self-policing that Visser refers to is a product of heteronormativity. It is because of historical heteronormative culture that queer identities would have to be cognisant of "straight spaces" and therefore feel the need to hide their identities in order to feel safe. Queer spaces do not only provide space for gender performance and expression, but also a space for freedom of behaviour that does not need to conform to cis gender norms (Visser, 2008). On that same note,Visser argues that queer spaces are contingent on "normal" spaces, on what exists outside the queer space, its very emergence and survival is defined by exclusion, policing and surveillance by heteronormativity. In addition, the dominance of heteronormativitity is dialectically

dependent on the existence of queerness, because that way, it has an identity to dominate over.

While it has been discussed earlier that lesbian women may be invisible in space, they can be visible or even hyper-visible as well (Garcia, 2015). Lesbian women have been visible in media, mostly through stories of violence and victimization. Some lesbian women feel that they are simultaneously invisible and hyper-visible. Invisible in a sense that they are mostly presumed to be "straight" until proven otherwise, and hyper-visible in a sense that public display of affection or sexuality makes them stand out as "different" (Tamale, 2007).

There are spaces in which people are invisible, deliberately, because of homophobia, and safe space, which Tamale (2007) calls 'comfort zones" where they are visible. Some spaces force lesbian women to be invisible. For example inUganda, the country's political system does not acknowledge queer sexuality rights (Tamale, 2007). This shows how structural oppression can influence how lesbian women negotiate their identities in relation to space. Lesbian women's hyper-visibility in certain spaces such as lesbian marches is not only about safety, but ways of resisting the objectification of being "othered" (Collins, 2000).

Garcia (2015) argues that discourse determines how things are represented. Lesbian women have been visible in the media. Their representation is often victimizing and makes the lesbian woman look weak and vulnerable. This speaks to how dominant discourse such as heteronormativity and patriarchy shape the ways in which "non-compliant" identities and women are represented. The visibility of lesbian women in the media has been mobilised by either "hyper-femininity" or hyper- masculinity", meaning that the representation of the lesbian image is based on the gender binary that evaluates whether the lesbian woman represents a "man" (masculinity) or a "woman" (feminity) (Garcia , 2015).

Garcia further argues that entertainment media re-iterates the lesbian image through the "lipstick lesbian image" as it is less threatening to heteronormative discourse invisible (Dove-Viebahn, 2007). This is a reflection of patriarchal power that intends to maintain

gender relations. This also shows a certain kind of visibility, and that one that does not threaten gender norms as the lipstick lesbian image is intended to represent the heterosexual woman. Through the emphasis and therefore visibility of the lipstick lesbian, femininity is rendered as though only females can perform it, and through the erasure of the butch lesbian, masculinity is rendered as though only males can perform it (Garcia, 2015).

Garcia (2015) argues that producing a lesbian woman with fashion looks is a non-politically threatening shift from the issue of political subjectivity to a consumer position within lifestyle markets. Clearly this is a problematized form of visibility. Garcia (2015) further argues that the fashionable lesbian image renders herself to be actively seeking for public visibility. However, she argues that such visibility will paradoxically have implications of implying that lipstick lesbians are not real lesbian women because they represent straight women and are therefore invisible.

2.3 Performativity

Performativity occurs in and through the body, this is to say that, the body is the primary site in which identity and information about the self is expressed and projected to the world. The term "performativity" was first coined by Butler (1990). According to Butler, gender is performative, it constitutes of acts of identity, and on-going social and cultural performances rather than an expression of a fixed prior identity. This argument is therefore critical in thinking about black lesbian women in South Africa (Goffman, 1978).

If we use Butler's argument as a framework when thinking about black lesbian bodies in the country, we would understand that identity is not an essentialized way of being in the world. However, this identity involves a series of acts, and performances which evolve. What choice there is exists within strongly regulatory frames (Goffman, 1978). It is the on-going performative acts that produce identity, these acts are largely prescribed as it is not by choice and free will that some forms are taken up and others are not. In the South African context, the inevitable effects of racial oppression, patriarchy, class and culture are frames that inform these acts. These determines what spaces and resources are accessed, where people live, what

level of education they have accessed and how their gender expressions are interpreted by others.

Visser (2003) looked at an interesting gay leisure space that echoes the legacy of apartheid and class inequality. Sexuality and gender are not the only constructs that play a role in determining who uses certain spaces, who is allowed in them, who owns them, who "belongs" in them and who has access to those spaces. Amongst others, race and class are important constructs that play a role in the use and experience of space. For instance Cape Town's "gay village" Dier Waterkant is purportedly a safe space, but it perpetuates the historic exclusion not only of other queer people, but also of poor black people.

Die Waterkant is therefore a safe space for middle class and wealthy white LGBTI communities. Thus, despite South Africa's "inclusive" constitution, because of historically defined material imbalances (Visser, 2003), there are spaces that are more "welcoming" than others. These are spaces where individuals are not only policed because of their gender expressions but because of the colour of their skin and their socio-economic status.

Besides the discomfort one my experiences because of surveillance they may face as a result of their "difference" in these kinds of spaces is a question of"do they even have access to the space"?. There is the possibility of exclusion based on socio-economic factors. For example, can a poor black lesbian from an informal settlement gain access to such a space as Die Waterkant? Vissers (2003) research suggested that the notion of space and place is of great significance in the discussion of queer communities. This is because queer expressions of identity are not deemed to belong in social spaces, public spaces and work spaces which parade themselves as neutral (Visser, 2003). Valentine (1996) argues that gay or lesbians are not allowed to be in spaces, commonly assumed to be naturally heterosexual.

Visser (2003) argued that the state's regulation of sexual practises has been a way of metaphorically reproducing the nation. Apartheid South Africa was a hetero-patriarchal society that imposed racial and economic segregation. This produced spatial differentiation. According to Visser (2003) in the mid-1980s during apartheid, black areas were under state surveillance and thus gay leisure spaces and subcultures were spaces where white middle

class males leisured. Because of the international gay movements, gay culture developed in South Africa, but this was mostly for white people as the apartheid government limited such developments for blacks.

The state restricted permanent appropriation of black public gay leisure spaces. In addition, cultural systems are other constructs that police identity. The belief that homosexuality is an "un African" constrained gay space development and queer gender identity expressions amongst the gay population (Visser 2003). Currently, urban spaces such as Johannesburg city provide an escaper for lesbian women as they feel they have a little more freedom of expression, since in the townships, black lesbians fear hate crimes. Thus, some feel the need to "mask" themselves and hide their identities to protect themselves (Matebeni, 2011).

Since "African" culture has been known to reject queer identities, it raises questions of how black lesbian women perform their sexuality and how the intersectionality of class and race shape their identities, specifically as lesbians (Khonou, 2015). It is therefore important to engage with how the reconciliation of their blackness and class play out in their performance as lesbian women (Forman, 2001). Black lesbian women create and continue to recreate themselves across different spaces they find themselves. Forman (2001, p.53) noted that "performance involves an individual or group of people interpreting an existing tradition, reinventing themselves in front of an audience or public". Performativity is tied to the politics of racial identity (1997), and other identities constructs such as class and gender. These constructs intersect and are constantly revised.

For Butler, bodies exist socially and they are not merely natural, but gendered and have cultural inscriptions on them. Therefore "gender is not something one is, it is something one does, an act, or more precisely, a sequence of acts, a verb rather than a noun, a "doing" rather than a "being" (Salih, 2007, p.55). Butler argues that gender is policed and expressed in rigid frames within which that the repeated acts that constitute gender are located. Performance and performativity are not the same for Butler, for her, gender is not a performance because that would suggest that the subject pre-exists before the deed and before cultural inscriptions and the social space that the subject find themselves. Rather, the subject for Butler does not have much choice in what they choose to enact.

The "script" as Butler would call it, is already determined for the subject. Sex does not exist alone, but it is already gendered. Thus, the body cannot pre-exist its cultural inscription. Language precedes gender and so does discourse precede the subject. Butler argues that it is language that constructs identity, and it is also discourse that constructs the individual. In South Africa, apartheid, patriarchy, and heteronormativity, are significant discourses that have constructed the ways in which black lesbian women enact their identities (Matebeni, 2008). These discourses have placed black lesbian women in certain socio economic statuses, in particular certain living spaces and informed the responses they are constantly confronted with from the environment, and this for Butler is performativity.

Even though people may belong to the same racial group, identity expression differs. Class is a determinant of the resources and spaces people may have access to. How people experience their identities in the world cannot be homogenized (Crenshaw, 1989). While people may be of the same race or socio economic categories, and it cannot be automatically assumed that they to have the same experiences. How sexuality is performed and experienced may then be influenced by the intersectionality of these factors.

2.4 Intersectionality

The understanding of lived experiences as shaped by mutually constitutive relations among social identities has been a central part of feminist thinking (Shields, 2008). "Mutually constitutive" refers to the meaning of one category as being made in relation to another category. None of the categories can be analysed in isolation of each other as though that is how they are translated into lived experiences. Intersectionality has been an important contribution that feminist theory has made, and has shaped how identity has been conceptualized in research over the years. While psychology has made its own great deal of a contribution in homogenizing gender (Shields, 2008), intersectionality challenges this and brings about a holistic perspective in identity politics.

While identity in psychological terms is understood as self-awareness and image, in this study, identity relates to the social categories a person can occupy or claim a membership (Ashmor, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004). Intersectionality thus sets out to combat the lack of recognition of the multidimensionality of lived experiences, particularly those of marginalised subjects (Crenshaw, 1989)

Symington (2004) argues that intersectionality is a crucial tool for analysis that can be used to address multiple discriminations. It also helps us understand how different identity constructs can inform the rights, opportunities and resources we may have access to, and therefore shape our experiences and identity. She defines intersectionality as a feminist theory and a research methodology that suggests that people are constituted by multiple layered identities that are embedded in history, social relations and the uneven structures of power (2004). This concept came about when second wave feminists asked "Which women's experience?", when most feminist scholarship was about middle class educated white women (Shields, 2008). The importance of other categories of identity such as race and class were made visible.

Intersectionality can shape different kinds of experiences of being in the world. While some identity constructs such as race may ascribe one privilege, another such as sexuality may mean oppression for the same person. Therefore, it is important to particularly pay attention to how different identity constructs shape the experiences of people in different ways. For example, while the apartheid history of South Africa may ascribe economic privilege to a white lesbian woman, their sexuality may ascribe oppression in a different setting such as the work place. While blackness may ascribe racial oppression on a black lesbian woman, class may ascribe economic privilege. Thinking about performativity from Butler's perspective is therefore helpful in understanding how pre-existing social structures shape identity (Salih, 2007).

Intersectionality is plays a crucial role in understanding experiences because it has an appreciation of subjective contexts and it places importance in the understanding and value of distinct experiences (Symington, 2004). This is a radical shift from a thinking that generalizes and assumes uniformity about the experiences of people of the same racial group,

socio-economic group or other identity categories. To infuse the experiences of people who actually have differences my lead to misrepresentations.

Feminist literature critically engages with Foucault's accounts of power. Foucauldian feminist's literature has an appreciation of his second wave theory on power, the notion that "where there is power, there is resistance" (Deveaux, 2014, p.231). Feminists have been interested in Foucault's assertion that people contest fixed identities and relations in subtle ways. This idea has been a useful tool for feminist in their project which aims to expose women's resistance in their daily lives (Sawiski, 1991).

Feminist's literature has drawn from his later developments in which he challenges the assumption that power is possessed (Deveaux, 2014). Foucault's assertion that power is productive has helped move away from a state subordination understanding of power, which emphasizes domination and victimization, to a different understanding of the role of power in women's lives. This explains how lesbian women recreate existing spaces and create new spaces such as lesbian nightclubs.

Feminist's literature argues that Foucault's view of power compliments feminists by suggesting that power should be thought of outside the confines of state or law, therefore freeing power from political domain, which is what radical feminists did (Deveaux, 2014). Foucault's view of power as productive and existing in multiple power relations has been viewed as one that reveals resistance to discourses that subordinate women (Deveaux, 2014). However, Foucault's view of power has been critiqued by other feminists for obscuring the systematic nature of gender oppression, thereby, undermining attempts at social change (Hekman, 2010).

The argument here is that Foucault's understanding of power downplays systematic injustices. Deveaux (2014) argues that Foucault's view of power is both useful and problematic for feminists. It is useful in the extent to which it disengages from the simplistic and dualistic accounts of power which imply that it is top down. However, she argues that it is problematic in that, it obscures important experiences of power specific to women, and fails to provide a sustainable notion of agency.

Foucault has been critiqued for his lack of rounded theory concerning subjectivity and agency because it has been seen to conflict with the fundamental aim of the feminist project, which is to rediscover and re-evaluate the experiences of women (Devauex, 2014). Feminists caution the "omnipresent" view of power that Foucault asserts the assumption that power is everywhere, and all social interactions are permeated. This means that feminists reject his assertion that, absolutely no social relation can escape the permeation of power (Hekman, 2010).

It is problematized because it leaves little room for women to exercise agency and resistance. Foucault understands power in relation to freedom, asserting that for power to be exercised, there must be freedom (Foucault, 1982). He argues that the free subject who is exposed to possibilities of several ways of behaving and several reactions, is affected by the opposite pole of power, that is, the power which is separated off force and violence but passive and minimizes resistance. However, feminists stress the importance of seeing women as active agents, who are able to resist power and mediate their experience rather than as passive victims (Devauex, 2014).

What feminist literature does and what Foucault fails to do is to critically examine the issue of freedom where it concerns women's responses to structural inequality and male violence (Sawiski, 1991). Devauex (2014) further argues that in order to understand the workings of power, it is necessary to ask women how they experience freedom and its barriers. In feminist literature, freedom does not simply imply the possibilities for resistance, but it is a question of whether a woman feels empowered in her context (Hekman, 2010).

Feminists argue that Foucault's understanding of power is an inadequate tool to employ in understanding the inner processes that condition women's sense of freedom (Devauex, 2014). This takes us to his first wave theory. Foucault's first focus of power was on the body, what he called "docile bodies" (Hekman, 2010). For Foucault, the body is a political field that is constituted by power relations (Devauex, 2014). Feminist scholars argue against his assumption that bodily experiences of men and women as being the same. The critique here is around Foucault's blindness to disciplinary practices that engender women.

Clearly there are tensions within feminist literature. While Foucauldian feminist argue that women internalize the feminine ideal so much that they lack the distance necessary to contest it and are even afraid of non-compliance (Devauex, 2014). Other feminists on the other hand argue that such use of Foucault's "docile bodies" obscures meaningful conversations about the subjectivities and complexities of women and their differences on multiple axes of identity, such as; race, class, age, and sexuality (Devauex, 2014).

This unhelpful account of subjectivity derives from problems inherent in the docile bodies paradigm, as Devauex (2014, p.228) argued that "Foucault's extreme reluctance to attribute explicit agency to subjects in this early account of power results in a portrayal of individuals as passive bodies, constituted by power and immobilized in a society of discipline". The tension among feminists about Foucault illustrate how women challenge accounts of gender relations and more radically, literature that is perceived to victimize and disempower women, by representing them as overcome by patriarchal domination.

The assertion that women have agency and the capacity to resist power is seen in how women challenge patriarchy and heteronormativity through the use of space. This is observed when lesbian women publicly express their sexuality across different spaces. Such is where the usefulness of Foucault's view of power is for some feminists, the realization that people can resist power in ongoing and subtle ways (Hekman, 2010).

Lesbian women's use of space is a reflection of the "productive" quality of power, in that it demonstrates how people are not passive receptors of power, but active subjects who are able to exercise their resistance and agency. For some feminists, Foucault's first wave has been useful for further investigation of women's subjectivities as this lacks in his account of power. Feminists have been interested in exploring how different axes of identity inform women's everyday lives (Devauex, 2014).

This will help the study examine how women experience different spaces in their different subjective and multiple positions. Here there are two terrains that highlight how the study intends to use Foucault's conceptualization of power, those are: Firstly, the feminist's critique

on his “docile bodies” paradigm, on the bases that it lacks acknowledgement of agency and subjectivity. This helps us understand how it is that lesbian women can re-imagine space and express their sexuality in spaces considered “patriarchal” or “heteronormative”. Secondly, the usefulness of Foucault’s second wave, which is about the productive dimension of power. It helps us understand how women have disrupted and transgressed gender binaries and norms through expressing romantic or sexual relationships with other women publicly or not in different spaces.

While intersectionality has significantly contributed to thinking about how multiple facets of identity influence lived experiences, African feminism has its own critiques. It recognizes that the understandings of social constructions of women do not take into account differences in histories, world views, social organisations across the world and that women are not socialised the same way (Akin-Anina, 2011). The argument here is that delineating gender as taking the same social positionality everywhere in the world is problematic. To what extent western feminism is transferable and exportable have been questions of interest for African feminists.

Intersectionality has been accused of replicating the approaches that it critiques (Nash, 2008). Feminists argue that the limitations of reliance on black women’s experiences in the pursuit of intersectional analysis is that; the difference between black women gets obscured with presenting black women as a category that opposes whites and black men (Nash, 2008). The other critique is that intersectionality is limited in the ways in which it represents black experience of violence. This is because such experiences are complicated by class and sexuality, whereas intersectionality is more concerned with race and gender.

While intersectionality claims to include race in its analytical lenses, there is still a racial divide between white women and women of colour (. White women and their experiences have seemingly been prioritised in intersectional theory, leaving the lives of not only women of color but non-cis gender identifying women on color underrepresented and less visible, especially those from third world countries.

The literature reviews has drawn from four broad themes that may be explored in the study, which are: Identity surveillance, safe spaces, performativity and intersectionality. These themes have been suggested to be influential constructs that might shape the experience of black lesbian women in Johannesburg and how they locate themselves in the world and their

lived experiences. The theoretical framework used suggests that race, class, gender and sexuality may be constructs that may determine the experience of space and identity.

Chapter 3. Methodology

This study takes on a qualitative orientation, which is defined as an exploratory research approach that may be used to gain a deeper understanding of subjective realities, opinions and social relations (Mason, 2002). The approach intends to create space for participants to feel safe and heard. It seeks to encourage participants to be open and provide rich responses. It also intends to give participants room for the possibility to expand and explore their thinking as they interact with the researcher. The study places value in people's subjective realities and experience as means of producing knowledge about particular phenomena. The project is also interested in the social construction of identity, therefore, a qualitative approach was identified to be the most suitable research method (Canham, 2017).

The study employed a qualitative method because it seeks in-depth information about how black lesbian women make sense of the ways in which society treats them. A qualitative approach that used interviews as a method of data collection was therefore selected, in order to promote in-depth discussions between the researcher and the participants. Interviews also enabled the researcher to establish rapport with the participants, in order to potentially increase the participant's levels of comfort in sharing their experiences, ideas and thoughts with the researcher in a more natural setting. The semi-structured design of the interviews enables participants to elaborate on their experiences while promoting creativity (Dearnley, 2005).

The study was also interested in the subjective responses of the participants and sought to avoid limiting responses by not asking closed questions. The qualitative design allows for richer data (Dearnley, 2005) because the interviews were semi-structured, it allowed new information that was not thought about by the researcher, to emerge during the course of the interview. A qualitative approach creates space for the interview framework to be improved for the purposes of more comprehensive responses. The interviews were conducted in English, isiZulu, seTswana and seSesotho as many of the participants were multi-lingual.

3.2 Research design

Social science aims to uncover new and different ways of understanding social realities (Jackson, Camara and Drummond, 2007). While grappling with trying to find systematic ways of apprehending lived experiences, researchers found a number of ways for conducting studies. This study adopted a qualitative methodology, consisting of eight semi-structured interviews.

This methodology values an expansive exploration of findings through careful analysis of broad interview responses. The data collection technique was interviews. The researcher ensured the creation of a safe space where participants felt more confident to participate freely. Each interview was approximately one hour long, providing sufficient time to encourage participants to engage at their own pace and allow for the generation of rich data. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

3.3 Sample and sampling

The sampling method was a non-probability purposive one. The project also employed snowballing techniques to gain access to participants that meet the criteria of the study. People who identified as black lesbian women who are "out" were invited to be a part of the study. The criteria was that participants must identify as a lesbian woman and be racially categorized as black.

The criteria was this specific because study intended to carefully look at the kinds of "policing" that may take place in different spaces.

It was important for participants to be "out" because the study is interested in how identity surveillance plays out in different space when one is perceived to be "different" from the heterosexuality. In order to obtain the sample, lesbian support groups were approached and members were invited to participate. The gender office at a local university was contacted for

referrals to support groups, individuals, and community organizations that run support groups for lesbian women. Once an individual showed interest in participating by contacting the researcher, they were then invited through an emailed participant information sheet. The researcher informed potential participants about the sample criteria.

The sample size was eight black lesbian women between the ages of 18 and 35. The sample size was based on the potential or likelihood of reaching theoretical saturation. The age range was chosen because participants are of consent age, and they are of age to gain legal access to multiple leisure spaces. The specific age range is also because the study sought to focus on younger and middle aged lesbian women. The sample was specifically comprised of eight

black lesbian women, two of them are middle class and they resided in suburban areas, while the six participants were working class and resided in the townships of Johannesburg.

3.4 Analysis

Discourse can be described as practises that shape the object they speak of in systematic and particular ways (Foucault, 1969). Discourse analysis has different meanings for different scholars. For linguists, it means whatever that is behind the sentence, while for others, it is the study of language use (Schiffrin, 2003). While discourse analysis is the analytical methodology that was used in this study, incorporating other forms of discourse analysis can be useful. These include critical discourse analysis, discursive psychology, Foucauldian analysis and conversation analysis. What these various forms of analysis have in common is meaning making and critique concerning domination by powerful social structures, and also the importance of language, which is central in multiple forms of communication (Canham, 2014).

Discursive Psychology as a form of analysis is mostly applied in the field of psychology. It is not only interested in the ways that people use discursive resources such as language and its implications, but also, it explores discourses that inform how people understand their lives.

(Canham, 2014). However, it has been critiqued for its lack of critical consideration of larger ideological discourses. Conversational analysis is concerned with textual analysis, where by, factors outside the text are considered only when the text refers to them (Fairclough, 1992). It looks at the particular ways in which texts are organised. However, with the development of discourse analysis as a field, there has been a shift from detailed reading of texts to more critical methods of analysis (Canham, 2014).

Canham (2014. p. 110) argues that Foucauldian analysis "distinguishes itself from discursive psychology by fore-grounding the role of the socio-historical through the genealogies of knowledge production by powerful experts". For Foucault, knowledge is pre-established in discursive forms and power, and this is central in understating the present. This form of

analysis has been important for post–structuralists. Critical discourse analysis is concerned with how social power abuse, forms of dominance and inequality are reproduced and resisted by text in social and political contexts (Van Dijik, 1998). It looks at how social structures are produced in daily life. If critical discourse analysis is a critical way of reading, discourse analysis is a way of reading (Canham, 2014).

Being more than a noun, Schifrin (2003, p.1) argue that the term "discourse" can be understood as a "broad conglomeration of linguistic and non-linguistic social practices and ideological assumptions that together construct power". Discourse analysis goes beyond words and looks at ideologies and power dynamics entangled in social practises and language. This method of analysis also shows how language functions as a symbolic tool to create and maintain social, cultural and personal meanings and identities (Schiffrin, 2003)

The study employs discourse analysis, because it seeks to engage with the politics of identity and space. A sense of what Parker (1992) refers to as "the real" is considered crucial in anchoring the understanding of the dynamics of discourse in this study. Making meaning out of the lived experiences of black lesbian women in relation to dominant discourse is important in this research project. In this study, discourse analysis is therefore employed as a conceptual and methodological resource to orientate the researcher into a social context in which people construct and challenge what has been presented to them as facts about their nature and possibilities for alternative realities thereof.

Parker (1999) argues that analysis entails some level of objectification. He speaks about the "reality" that discourse refers to. This relates to the ways in which language and nouns give reality to objects. He further says that "discourse is representations of the world which have a reality almost as coercive as gravity, and, like gravity, we know of the objects through their effects" (Parker, 1992, p.4). This means that discourses are presentational practises and sets of meanings that constitute objects.

Parker states that in discourse analysis, statements can be grouped into making particular coherence. He also advices that researchers are ought to apply culturally available

understandings as to what constitutes certain themes. This has been particularly important in this study in order to make meaning out of the realities lived by black lesbian women.

However, Parker (1999) also cautions that there are no particular steps of conducting discourse analysis, rather, researchers find their own way which will be informed by their reading and interpretation of text. An understanding of how dominant discourses are central to the meaning making process of daily lived experiences of black lesbian women will be crucial in this study.

3.5 Procedure

After receiving ethics clearance from the University of the Witwatersrand, the interviewers were sort. Post obtaining the sample, participants were then contacted to schedule for interviews with the researcher. The time and place in which the interviews were conducted were agreed upon by both the participant and the researcher.

An audio recorder was used to record the interviews upon participants consent for the purposes of capturing and analysing data. Interviews will be conducted at a place that was considered safe and conducive for speaking freely and privately. Participants were advised that the process is voluntary and they could opt out at any point in time without facing any consequences. Further psychological support contact details were provided in case participants felt the need for them, however, none of the participants reported a need to pursue those services.

3.6 Reflexivity

Parker (1991) prioritizes reflexivity by arguing that researchers need to question the position from which they carry out research. He further proposes that reflexivity in qualitative research invites researchers to reflect and speak about their journey into research. This is then useful as it then consequentially gives a confessional account, which is part of the regulation of subjectivity.

As a researcher who identifies as a black cis-gender woman, who from a young age subscribed to a religious values that naturalized and neutralized gender, my preconceived ideas about gender and sexuality from a heteronormative and patriarchal way of thinking about gender may have affected how I engaged with discourses that challenge these dominant discourses that I have subscribed to for the longest part of my life. This speaks to how Malterud (2001) argued that research is influenced by one's background and position. These inadvertently shape methods of investigation, analysis and discussion.

It was therefore important for me to engage my values and beliefs in order to critically reflect on how they contribute to meaning making throughout the study (Willing, 2010). As an emerging scholar, discourses such as gender queerness and feminism, which already exist in my academic knowledge base, have challenged my assumptions about how romantic relationships are not limited to existing between a male and a female. Therefore my former assumptions about sexuality may have limited how I engaged with the results, and how I critically engaged with theory that critiques hegemonic discourse.

Throughout the process of this research, I continuously faced a crisis around representation and legitimacy to write about the participants. Although there are shared identity categories as I identify as a black woman, being cis gendered and having the honour to listen to the stories the participants shared often left me feeling guilty. However, in retrospect, I also realised that some of the participants found the interviews as a space to share alternatives stories that speak of courage, pain and agency. It was a privilege to listen to empowering narratives that created opportunities for alternative ways of thinking about the black lesbian woman identity. I therefore needed to continuously be mindful of the emotional relationship that was created between the participants and me.

Matebeni (2008) argues that researcher-participants dynamics perpetuate the notion that the researcher is the knower and the participants the known. Being an outsider in terms of identifying as a heterosexual woman in this research allowed for me to listen from a place of not knowing, which helped me think critically about the narratives that were shared.

Matebeni (2008) cautions about how there may be emotional blockages when listening to the experiences of participants because of shared social oppressions, which could limit one's thoughts.

In most of the interviews, participants often asked if I was a lesbian woman, especially just before they shared an anecdote about an experience they encountered. I constantly found it difficult to say that I am not a lesbian woman because I then immediately felt underserving of being told about their lives. These were feelings I constantly needed to negotiate throughout the process. What this means for how I made meaning and analysed narratives is something I reflected on and always brought to supervision. At the same time, by responding and telling participants that I am a cis-gendered woman, it seemed to encourage most of them to share more explicit and fine details as they then assumed that I came from a position of not knowing. This dynamic also encouraged a space where the participants were not passive but rather as active producers of knowledge. As the researcher my role was therefore one of an active listener involved in mutual meaning making with participants in the construction of their reality (Speer, 2002).

There was a particular experience that stood out for me during the interviews. One of the interviews was conducted in Johannesburg central business district. The interview ended late and by the time the participant and I needed to leave, it was already dark outside. It was less busy and most of the streets were occupied by men. I remember being teased and stared at as the participant and I were walking around looking for a taxi. At some point, there was a group of young men behind us. They were drunk and directed comments at us. I knew immediately that we were perceived as a couple.

Knowing the stories that have been covered by the media about violence against lesbian women, especially in hyper-masculine spaces, I was terrified that we would be victimised.

While the participant was also scared, I noticed that she tried to keep calm and assure me that we would be okay. Eventually, we were able to call a cab. In hindsight, this experience allowed for me to experience for myself, the very experience that I am exploring in this study, which is how lesbian women experience different spaces. At that moment, I embodied

the identity of a black lesbian woman in the eyes of the people who were verbally harassing us.

For a moment, I felt what it was like to feel unsafe and policed in a heterosexual space full of toxic masculinities because of being perceived as a gender transgressor.

Matabeni (2008) is critical of writing and positioning lesbians as victims of violence and hate crime. This inspired me to think carefully about how I was drawing meaning and analysing experiences relayed to me in interviews. It then helped me avoid missing stories and details that challenged gender ideologies and enabled me to hear when participants were sharing about how they claimed visibility in particular spaces. Reflecting in my personal space helped me think critically about my own positionality, how it played a role in my interactions with participants and enhanced self-awareness as I engaged this study.

3.7 Ethical considerations

A research proposal was submitted to the University's ethics committee for clearance. Ethical clearance was approved on the sixth of June 2017, with a protocol number; MACC/17/007 IH (Appendix E). Participants were given information sheets, and informed consent forms to sign should they wish to participate in the study (Appendix D). The researcher's contact details and referral information were provided if the participants needed debriefing or in any case of potential harmful outcome by participating in the study. Participants were assured of confidentiality as no revealing information was to be reported.

Data is stored safely in a password protected computer. Only my supervisor and I have access to the interview recordings and transcripts, however, the research report may be published and will be available at the library. Data will be reported in ways that do not reveal the identities of participants. Between the interviewer and the participant, anonymity was not assured as the interviewees were known to the researcher based on face to face interviews. The sample was of consent age and participants were not from a vulnerable population.

Participants were assigned pseudonyms during the transcription process and in the report in order to promote anonymity and protect the identities of participants. Participants were also advised that the report will be made available to them upon request should they wish so.

Chapter 4 Findings

This chapter aims to illustrate how the theories of intersectionality and performativity illuminate the lives of black lesbian women as they navigate the different spaces in the course of living their lives. Shields (2008, p. 305) argues that "The facts of our lives reveal that there is no single identity category that satisfactorily describes how we respond to our social environment or are responded to by others". This speaks to the multiplicity and complexity of identity.

Without mentioning the terms, what Shields is proposing is that experience cannot be understood on the basis of a single axis of identity. Instead, the multiple ways of being in the world play a role in shaping experiences and constructing meaning. The analysis that follows shows how the women carve out their lives within social parameters that both limit and enable their lives.

4.2 Gold Star Lesbian

Identities can be understood as on-going narratives (Giddens, 1991). Not only do they speak to particular practises and behaviours, but ways of being in the world, experiencing the self and others as well. The term "golden lesbian" refers to a lesbian woman who has never had sexual intercourse with a man. Being a black lesbian woman in South Africa is a clear indication of non-conforming sexuality. Bodies that disrupt gender boundaries play a significant role in terms of how they challenge heterenormatvity. Therefore, those considered to be "golden lesbians" are particularly disruptive of the patriarchal order. This is because they expose the fragility of gender power dynamics across different spaces as patriarchy is bolstered by heterosexuality (Matabeni, 2012).

On the other hand, heterosexuality sits at the epitome of gendered identities and simultaneously polices how identities and gender relations are performed. Not having any sexual experiences with men seems to affirm a sense of agency, resistance and legitimacy for some of the participants of this study. Although popular media continues to portray lesbian

women as weak victims in the hands of a patriarchal society, on the contrary, they also resist pressure to perform heterosexual identities that centre men and dominant masculinities.

> *There is a term, it's called, gold star lesbian… this is a lesbian who has never been with a man, that is a virgin, whoever "disvirgined" her is a lesbian as well* (Zee).

In the above quote, Zee describes a particularly kind of lesbian, one who has never has never been with a man sexually, the "gold star lesbian". The term "gold" appears to render the identity as precious. A body untainted by men is seen as one worth having. Lesbian women who have never been with men seem to be celebrated. This can be seen as another way of proving the legitimacy of attraction only with other women. This valuing of women who only love other women challenges the taboos that are said to be dominant in most African cultures.

In the following extract, Thandi demonstrates the golden lesbian identity and resistance against heteronormativity as she persists in not "trying" to have romantic relationships with men.

> *My mom sat me down and asked, "My child tell me, have you been with a boy?", and I said "No". She asked why, and I said "I don't like them" and she said, "But you haven't tried them, why don't you try them and see if you really don't like them? Then I said "I don't wana try them". She responded and said, "So if you don't like boys, you like girls?" I said "Yes".* (Thandi)

It appears that Zee's mother insists that she "tries" men. This is an illustration of heteronormative culture that only sees romantic relationships only between men and women as worth having. Zee responds with a clear resistance and asserts her sexuality in the conversation. Even though her mother is evidently showing determination by suggesting that she at least "tries" men, perhaps with an understanding that should she do so, it will only be natural for her to continue pursuing heterosexuality since it is perceived to be natural. However, Zee resists an imposition of an identity she does not want for herself, demonstrating that trying men will not serve as a "fix" for her sexuality.

Most of the people tend to believe that lesbian women become lesbian because they have been hurt by men. I beg to differ cause I've never dated a guy, ever, like ever in my life and it is going to be that way because of who I am. I am just a lesbian woman who falls in love with women, that's it. (Meiki)

The preceding excerpts by Zee and Meiki provide illustrations of how identities can be used as vehicles that can contest gender norms for the emergence of new possibilities that problematise and disempower them, in both nuanced and more obvious ways. The latter may involve the selection of sexual partners. While the selection of sexual partners is likely driven by love or sexual desire and not necessarily by activism, it is inadvertently revolutionary as it disrupts the essentialism and hegemony of particular sexual practises.

Such essentialising practises are centred on the expectation that sex or any kind of sexual activity must occur only between a man and a woman. Such homogenous norms are used to maintain systems that marginalise the female body in order to maintain male privilege and power in society. While heteronormativity may attempt to impose certain identity performances because of how it reads the body, these women demonstrate that identity can be contested. Mpumi illustrates this in the excerpt below.

The person I was with between grade 10 and grade 12, till today, she doesn't date men and she never tried at all, she was just firm and said no. (Mpumi)

Particular attention needs to be paid to Mpumi's use of the words "firm" and "no". By using the word "firm", Mpumi speaks to heteronormativity and how it is tends to thrust itself as though it were natural when it is a social construct. The use of "firm" and "no" speak to a resistance to an assumption that suggests homogeneity and conformity. It speaks to a strength one needs to hold in the face of dominant culture.

Lives such as those of Mpumi's partner described in the excerpt above disrupt traditional patriarchal and heteronormative systems that intend to maintain a patriarchal social order, largely because they police masculinity in the female body. Masculinity is therefore not the preserve of men. Thandi's use of words "firm", "no" illustrate the agency that a woman can

have over her body. It is an example of how one can select an identity for themselves and resist heteronormativity. Such resistance constructs the narrative of the golden lesbian as it speaks to the transgressions of sexual binaries. However, while identity performance can eschew dominant culture, the latter can still constrain the former in both subtle and obvious ways.

> *During Christmas, they [parents] buy you everything you want. I would go straight to the boy's section and take like a packet of underwear and put them on the till. You could see her face change, she would look funny, and she would ask "Who's are these"? And I'd say, "They are mine", with confidence".* (Thandi)

This is also exemplifies how permeable and fragile heteronormative boundaries are, even though society may insist on making them look rigid. Although Thandi is biologically categorised as a female, her identity performance allows her to transgress that gender boundaries that is set out to limit her. She is able to perform an identity she has chosen for herself even in the face of the disapproving gaze of her parents.

The excerpt above reflects Thandi's ingenuity to bend gender systems for her needs, but it also demonstrates the pervasive power of heteronormativity. Dominant discourses such as religion mostly disallow the performance of identities that combat cis gender norms and heteronormativity. While a lesbian woman can perform her identity, religion may pose limits for her.

> *My life was not that complicated compared to other lesbian women. Some discover their feelings at a later stage. Some of them have kids and afterwards they realise that, actually, I'm comfortable with other women you see. But then it becomes complicated by the community that – "how come this one has a child but then she is a lesbian, how is it possible"? I mean, you look at Somizi, people always ask, "he's gay but he's got a kid"? Some situations, it's like a pressure, pressure from home. To be honest, I also couldn't understand why a person like me would have a child, honestly I used to judge. Like when I was in college. But as you grow, you learn. I couldn't understand because I have never been with a man before".* (Lindi)

The “golden lesbian” is generally centred on a particular kind of narrative. This speaks about a lesbian woman who knew from a very young age that she is attracted to other women. It appears to apply to butch lesbians as they are understood to be less “bi-sexual’’, unlike femme lesbian women. Butch lesbians are understood as those who embody masculine attributes and are more visible in their non-conforming sexuality. Moreover, the narrative of butch lesbians appears to have a masculine trajectory since early developmental years. This narrative is centred on women who grew up playing “boyish” games with boys, wearing boy’s clothing, having romantic or sexual relationships with girls from a young age and never sharing sexual experiences with men.

The trope of “corrective” rape is aimed at disciplining women who eschew sex with males. The prevalence of this form of gender based violence suggests that golden lesbians are a threat to heteronormativity. However, the fact that golden lesbians persist in living their lives on their own terms illustrates the performative possibilities enabled by gender identity and sexual desire. Identities such as the “gold star” lesbian and other kinds of lesbian identities exemplify resistance, as Foucault would state that “where there is power, there is resistance” (1978, p.95-96).

Although heteronormativity is a dominant discourse, because of the multiplicity and fluidity of identity, resistance is possible. Considering the “economic diversity” of South Africa, which speaks to the racial history of the country, class plays a significant role in performance of identity. It is evident that identity is fluid, as Butler (1990) argues, “woman” is not a stable category. Although most participants identified as women, they also identified as lesbian and one of them as a transgendered man.

Feminist scholars have contested the idea of a “universal woman” and have argued that “woman” itself is a contested and fractured terrain (Nash, 2008). This talks to intragroup difference, illustrating the importance of recognising that although one may be a woman, other dimensions of their identity, such as sexuality, shape their experiences in a unique way. The experience of “woman” is constituted by multiple dimensions of identity (Crenshaw,

1991). The theme below provides an analysis of class and its role in how black lesbian women navigate leisure, space and identity performance.

4.3 Islala: Niphuza Ibhiya Till The Morning

The title above translates: "Spending all night drinking beer". The term "Islala", is specific slang that describes a particular context, especially the context in which the participant speaks. This is a slang used mostly in townships to describe spending all night drinking at a tavern. This then hones in on class and explores how one's socio-economic status mediates the performance of gender non-conforming identities. The quote below by Kamo explains this:

> *There is no way I would sit in a tavern… cause like there is no way you would chill with guys, a bunch of guys and till morning nishaya'islala, niphuza ibhiya.* (Kamo)

Kamo describes a situation in a local tavern at the township where locals spend all night hanging out and drinking beer until dawn. It is important to notice that Kamo uses words such as "tavern", and "drinking beer until the morning". This describes a classed and gendered context that is normally the preserve of working class men. It paints a picture of a particular kind of leisure in a township, one that working class individuals engage.

> *I was with my friend and we went in the tavern to buy beer, take away. The only time we are there is when we buy and then we leave. We got in and bought, he noticed that I didn't speak to him and probably thought to himself, 'this girl'. When we got in, he started shouting, 'yebo, yebo, amadod'ethu' (yes, yes, our men). He thought we would respond and give him attention. I told my friend what happened. We just looked at him and kept quiet.* (Thandi)

In the quote above, Thandi brings an interesting perspective of what the tavern represents. Both she and Kamo emphasise their avoidance of the tavern space. Since they too would like to drink beers, toxic masculinities inside the tavern means that they have to avoid it. It is a space loaded with violent masculinities that are unwelcoming towards lesbian women. The comments directed at them by the man are symbolic of the ways in which black lesbian women are treated in leisure spaces in the townships. Their avoidance of the space demonstrates how they navigate leisure and the spaces they occupy in the township. Below, Thandi's response is a clear explication of what the tavern represents in terms of class and gender. Taverns are commonly found in rural or township areas in South-Africa.

> *When I pass there I greet them, if they ask for a bottle of beer depending on my mood, I can give them a R20 or R50. But if I don't want to, I just tell them 'its hard times you know'. And they say things like, 'I like being a high sauce'.* (Thandi)

Thandi describes a situation where she passes by a tavern in the township and sees men sitting there as they ask her for money, when she refuses, the response tends to suggest that she then perceived to being "bourgie". The tavern appears to be a significant class marker that identifies the working class. The men also seem to be using the word "high sauce" to describe someone who does not belong to that space because of an imagined economic class, the phrase suggest a middle or upper class person who considers themselves better than others.

While taverns are a marker for the working class and financially easier to access, lesbian women are made to feel unsafe in such a hyper masculine space that is not accommodating to other identities. Lesbian women are not available for the consumption of men and they therefore challenge the hegemonic masculinities of taverns. In township spaces, we observe that access for lesbian women is conditional. It appears that lesbian women who cannot afford to patronize urban leisure spaces create alternative spaces where they can feel safer. Below, Thato describes alternative spaces for leisure:

I like being indoors with my friends playing games and drinking indoors so that if I feel like sleeping I can just go to sleep. I like being with my friends and having a braai in the yard, so that we are all in the house and safe, I prefer it that way, and fortunately my friends are like that as well. (Thato)

Here, we find Thato, who is a working class lesbian woman explaining her preferences when it comes to leisure. For her, safety is an important feature of leisure. Thato prioritizes her safety and that of her friends. It appears that indoor spaces are alternative spaces that they create for leisure as working class lesbian women who rarely have access to safer middle class leisure spaces in the city.

Here we see black working class lesbian women actively fashioning alternative leisure spaces in order to enhance their safety (Canham, 2017). Canham further argues that indoor leisure offers a space for networking and establishing solidarity. While there may be growing visibility of lesbian women in townships, the threat of violence continues. As ways of reclaiming their "manhood" and inserting heteronormative culture, men make advances on lesbian women. Thandi shares one experience:

Yeah, severally, even today, you walk on the streets and they will tell you, 'eeh hello baby', like let's say now I walk with my girlfriend, she is like fem, like you, she does her hair nicely and stuff and I'm wearing my jeans, they will never say that to her or anything, just intentionally, they will say it to me, just to provoke me. (Thandi)

South African townships are mostly patronized by working class people. These populations are to a large extent comprised of toxic masculinities and harmful patriarchal beliefs. In the except below, Thandi shows how class influences the ways in which men treat black lesbian women in the townships.

If we are in a place like at the township, strictly I use ladies' toilets because I know those ones don't have brains. Their brains don't function properly… Some may have nasty comments cause in the township someone is watching you, the way you live, that is why I don't go to the taverns there. (Thandi)

In the preceding quote, Thandi points to the fact that her gender identity is more threatening to men than that that of her more feminine looking partner. Thandi uses the words "they don't have brains" and "their brains don't function properly" to explain the kind of men found in the townships. This speaks to class and violent masculinities. There seems to be an assumption that the "men without brains" in the township are the ones that often perpetrate multiple forms of violence against lesbian women.

It is impossible to look at class and space as though they are isolated from each other, when in fact, they affect each other in multiple ways. One of them, which is the focus in this analysis, is the intersection of class and space. We observe how class determines the kinds of spaces black lesbian women occupy. As identity, followed by class, have been the primary focus of analysis above, below I attempt to hone in on the analysis of space.

4.4 *"Ooh So Now They Are Using Our Toilets"!*

Working class black lesbian women are most likely to experience offensive treatments by working class men in the townships. Although identity and class were the main focus in the analysis above, it is clear that space shaped their performativity and subjective experiences in multiple ways. Prado-Castro and Graham (2017) argue that spaces are constructed to mirror constellations of hegemonic discourses and power and thus are made to fit particular identities. It appears that "space" exerts some form of surveillance, which serves to police bodies and "punish" those that do not conform to heteronormative culture.

Ntokozo demonstrates the ways in which dominant culture can constrain identity performance and force unwanted practises on the body.

At church I wear a dress, the entire uniform. After all, I know that I am a girl. I won't now stay behind and not go to church just because I am a lesbian. (Ntokozo)

Here, a note can be made about how Ntokozo, who identifies as a butch lesbian woman, conforms to gender norms in certain spaces such as the church because of the how gender and sexuality is policed in religious settings. By virtue of being in the church premises, she is

"obligated" to dress in a feminine way as part of the heteronormative culture in the church. This illustrates in a real way how bodies can be imposed on by culture and religion. Because Ntokozo has a body that has been biological classified as female, religion dictates the social ways in which her body "should" exist in the world. We see how gender norms are essentialized and how the rules that they create maintain heteronormativity and police identity performance.

In the following except, Thandi relates an anecdote about a sermon that was delivered by the pastor at a church she used to attend.

> *So the pastor continued preaching, saying that, "I don't want people thinking that in my church, Mary and Mary can get married here or John to John".* (Thandi)

In the above quote, the pastor was referring to same sex marriages. He was explicitly speaking against it, and making it clear to everyone there that he will not conduct nor accept same sex marriages in his church. This is despite the fact that same sex marriage is legal in South Africa. The pastor is often the most influential in the church. Such comments therefore legitimise homophobia in religious settings and allow congregants to police identities within the church. It perpetuates problematic gender discourses and maintains that gender is natural when it fact, it is a social construct. While these are stories of how lesbian women can be invisible in certain spaces, the following quotes by Meiki introduce alternative stories of resistance in the church context and articulate the ways in which she navigates the space.

> *But then at first I wore a skirt, and then, until I came out, I explained everything, and everyone was fine with us wearing trousers... At our church we have the youth gatherings, like every week, we've got different factions... in youth we have the 4 c's. We have the consecration, so we have one c every week. So we have this c for creativity, on that particular c we engage on different topics. So there, they came to the understanding of gay people when we were talking about that topic. I spoke to them about it, I shared my thoughts, my stories and feelings.* (Meiki)

I couldn't even believe that I could ever challenge them, I couldn't bealive that I could open their thoughts so they could think about gay people, so it was difficult but I nailed it and like even now I am part of the organisers for gay people. So now they come for advice to me, even parents, they come to me and like ask do you know that, so even parents come to when they suspect that their child is lesbian or gay. (Meiki)

Here we observe how Meiki resists gender norms and claims visibility as a black lesbian woman in a hyper-heternormative space such as the church. She has used the space to forge the visibility of non-cis gender conforming identities. Such stories of resistance prove to show the agency that subjects can exercise, as Foucault (1982) asserted that power is often met by resistance. Contrary to Thato's experience in the church, Meiki insists on performing her identity.

In the following except, Lindi relates how difficult it was for her to have to wear feminine clothes for a job interview.

With my first job, I didn't have a dress I didn't have, you see! So obviously, I had to make a plan, but I would go out with everything in my bag because I am not used to skirts, dresses, so I would change at the garage. I would get off a taxi and change at the garage. I would get in the toilet. I remember with my first interview, it was at the restaurant. Trust me, I changed there at the garage, immediately I changed there, I'd wear you know those tight pants, that jacket you know, yoooo cause I wanted that job so bad obviously…I got the job but I just felt like... Then she [employer] was like well unfortunately now that you are a PA, we are giving you this job and now you need to put on makeup cause now the position is that you are a PA'. I'm like 'yoh'. (Lindi)

Lindi's experience demonstrates the extent of power that different spaces can exert on non-gender conforming bodies. Although Lindi was not given an instruction on how to dress when she went for the interview, because of the dominance of heteronormative culture in the work space, she felt the need to perform femininity.

Such surveillance on the body is clearly invisible but yet powerful and invasive. The instruction that she should wear makeup as a PA is an overt instruction to perform hegemonic femininity. Coming from a working class background, Lindi expresses her desperation for the job and how that led her to temporarily compromise her own identity in order to meet a financial need.

Again, in the except below, Meiki illustrates resistance against being forced to wear feminine clothing in the working environment. Also contrary to Lindi's experience, who had to change clothing when at the work place in order to meet expectations, Meiki rejects heternormative imposition on her body by quitting her job.

> *I resigned this year March. They knew about my sexualliy, I was not the only one, okay. But then the other lesbian women were fine whatever descisions the company made, but I was like hell no. Okay, we had a change of uniform, skirt and blouse, hell no.* (Meiki)

> *When I go to work, I dress like formal. I wear shirt, I wear pants, formal shoes, a tie sometimes… After work I was walking to the taxis and this guy was looking at me. I saw him looking at me and that kind of look of disgust. I don't know, I don't know what to call it but he was looking at me weird and I felt it and I was like,'you know what I have met your type many times, I am not even going to pay you an attention,' and then I started walking. And then he walked up to me and stared hitting on me and then I was like,'dude, seriously, look at me and look at the rest of the females, do we look anything alike, does it look like I want to date you or I would want to be with you in anyway'?* (Zee)

Zee, who shared that he was born female but actually identifies as a transgendered man, contends that he was being very intentional in performing his gender. He also relates his disappointment about the patriarchal and heteronormative culture that enabled the onlooker to approach him and hit on him. Simultaneously, the man that approached him was also deliberate in asserting his masculinity with the intention of undermining Zee's identity performance. It appears that at the man's sense of masculinity was threatened and he felt the need to prove to Zee that he is a man. It is also worth noting that like Meiki, Zee claims his

visibility in the work place by dressing in accordance to his gender instead of heternormative culture.

As it was discussed above, the township appears to be a class marker, it also seems to be a space that is violent towards queer bodies. Zee's experience speaks to how the township as a space, polices gender. Working class males appear to be those that put lesbian women under violent surveillance.

> *We were at the mall that is in the suburbs, and it's okay. But when you are in Thembisa when you are at Soweto, you don't do that, you don't hold hands. Yes you can say 'baby' cause we were just two females so you will never know. But you never hold hands, you don't kiss. But when you are around, and it's true, when you are around white people it's more safer but when you are around black people it's not… It just comes, like it's just what you do, it comes naturally, you don't even think about it, because we also know that in townships, these things are such a taboo. And even if it would be a taboo in suburbs, we know that no one is going to violently act it out, whereas in townships it could happen, so you know. And you make sense of it in terms of your life, you need to keep yourself safe. (*Kgomotso)

Here we see dissociation from performing sexual orientation due to the assessment of space in relation to safety (Canham, 2017). It is clear that space plays a significant role in influencing identity performance. Townships seem to be spaces compounded with violent masculinities that hide behind cultural practices that insist that queer identities are not part of the African identity.

It appears that feeling safe and being able to express identity is largely influenced by the space Kgomotso finds herself in. While she makes sense of her experience in relation to race, I contend that this is also a function of class. She seems to feel safer expressing her affection with her partner in the suburbs and not so in the township. This illustrates that geographic spaces are classed.

Kgomotso does not mention a comment that may be directed at her and her partner by someone in the township. However, she makes an assumption based on her observations of how queer bodies are treated and concludes on how a scenario between her and her partner could unfold if they were to be publicly affectionate in the township.

Kgomotso makes a clear distinction between how she behaves in a township compared to a suburban area. Her response here demonstrates that space can police bodies in very nuanced yet significant ways. Kgomotso illustrates how geography is a marker of difference as it often indicates certain forms of social capital (Canham, 2017).

Thandi and Kgomotso here speak to the issue of homophobia in the townships. Not only are these perceptions but the media and research does in fact show the severe amount of violence inflicted on queer bodies (Matabeni, 2012). It is then clear how such violence affects how they negotiate what they do and don't do in the townships. There is also an understanding about race that Kgomotso speaks to when she mentions that it is safer to be around white people. In this regard, she contends that she feels safer in the presence of white people as she does not expect cultural surveillance from them.

While there can be ambivalence about the issue of safety across a number of townships in Gauteng, Johannesburg offers spaces where some of the participants expressed a sense of happiness and fun. Tina, who prefers male "he/his" pro nouns gives an account of his experience when he first got to Johannesburg from Zimbabwe.

I have enjoyed, it's been awesome, I didn't have a problem. But now, with people who I have been meeting from home, yeah they didn't understand who I was, what was happening. They were saying 'now you are in South Africa, you are changing to be gay…people must know who they are, they can't just go around adopting all the shit'. That one didn't break me, in fact, it turned into joy, until today, I am happy with who I am. (Tina)

Tina experiences the city as a space where he can freely perform his gender. In the following quote, He talks about his experience at gay clubs.

Gay and lesbian clubs are great because I can come to you and tell you that I like you, but in other 'normal' clubs, I can't just walk up to a girl and tell her that I like her, it's easy for me to approach a girl. (Tina)

Tina expressed a sense of freedom to flirt with anyone in a space where he will not fear people's responses. Being in a space where he can identify with other people appears to give him the confidence to perform his gender. While going out to LGBTI clubs can offer a sense of freedom, happiness and safety, there also seems to be preference for indoors leisure. Although Tina talks positively about how fun it has been to patronize gay clubs, he also shares the difficulty of being confronted by homophobic comments made by people from home. This goes on to show how unescapable heteronormativity can be.

Actually we prefer having fun with people we have in common, our friends, and then we go to family fun. (Mpumi)

We don't go clubbing as much as we used to, and if we do go out we want to go out in a group of friends not just the two of us if we going to go out pretty late it should be a group of us, or if we go to a party it should be a house party where we know everyone, everyone knows me, everyone understands that I'm coming with my partner, things like that just for your safety, that's what you do. (Kgomotso)

It is clear that Lindi, Mpumi, Thato and Kgomotso share preferences for familiar places with familiar people, and this seems to provide a sense of safety. Going to places where they feel

understood and being around close others is a significant element when it comes to leisure and selecting spaces for relaxation. It appears that indoor leisure with close others are alternative spaces that they have created for themselves. In these spaces they feel safe and are able to identify with others without heteronormative surveillance. The negotiation of space and the creation of alternative spaces also exposes the homophobia experienced by lesbian women in gender neutral spaces. Kgomotso speaks to this below:

> *But I know people who are just like,'fuck it I'm going to go'. I actually know a friend, actually an ex of mine actually and a friend who both got beaten up the same night and when they called the police they actually arrested them, instead of the guys that beat them up. So things like that, you stop. So when you get told stories like that you actually like,'oh my goodness, why am I even bothering, I could just get a take out and eat at home'. Why would I want to go to a restaurant and not enjoy anything because people look at you funny?What if they follow you home? You know, you get so paranoid after hearing these stories. But you just need to keep living as safe as possible*. (Kgomotso)

Kgomotso demonstrates how homophobic violence has affected the way she perceives 'gender neutral' spaces, and her preference for indoor leisure in familiar spaces with familiar people. Violence is never far from the experience of black working class lesbian women. Below, Thandi relates how she never "hangs out" in a tavern at the township because of homophobic slurs. Thandi explains that the only time she is seen in a tavern is when she buys alcohol with an intention to leave as soon as she is done with her purchase. It appears that the comments and behaviour exhibited by some of the men in the tavern have a direct influence on her choice to avoid spaces such as the tavern which are often patronized by patriarchal and violent masculinities.

> *Because I am from a township, I don't club a lot because of how they treat lesbians, its either they rape you or approach you as if they want you.* (Thandi)

Being a working class person also means that there is limited ability to access safer places in the suburbs as apartheid spatial planning ensured that townships were geographically far from

the suburbs. This may therefore have implications when it comes to negotiating space. Thandi talks about avoiding the tavern with a preference to only buy alcohol and enjoy leisure time elsewhere. Lindi also speaks about being around friends indoors most of the time instead of going out to a tavern in the township. She placed emphasis on avoiding the place by using the phrase: “no way”.

These perceptions of outdoor spaces present ideas about what they think concerning lesbian presentations in certain spaces. It is clear that there is a sense of safety in indoor spaces, however, outdoors seem to present possibilities of homophobic surveillance. This speaks to what some of the lesbian women think about the different kinds of lesbian presentations and how these presentations affect their safety.

> *There is a major major difference when it comes to safety, when it comes to absolutely everything with that because we know that corrective rape is mostly towards masculine looking females, and when… it doesn’t matter what your sexual orientation is, if a black…cause of the stats, we know that it is mostly black men, specifically because we know the stats. If they see you, if they see that, they become so intimidated and they want to show you that you are a woman like you don’t know. They want to rape you, they end up killing you. Me as a feminine queer looking woman I blend in much easier, I don’t have to fear for my safety as much as my partner does, who is more masculine looking. Every day she has to wonder. She can’t walk at night because this and this, she has to always walk with something safe or with someone so that she can always be safe.* (Kgomotso)

Kgomotso speaks to identity performance and how this can determine one’s safety. She believes that feminine looking queer women are safer because they don’t look different. Their appearance does not transgress hegemonic gender performances. She uses the expression “blending in” to describe a body that can occupy space and go unnoticed. This appears to be the reality of the feminine looking lesbian woman only. It excludes the masculine looking woman who cannot blend in.

She also points out to violent black masculinities and emphasises the material effects of her argument by referencing statistics to support her statement. She seeks to avoid making an assumption because of the general association between black man and violence. Kgomotso also speaks about fragile masculinities as she mentions men's intimidation by lesbian women. She shared about a night where she, her partner and friends and cousins went out clubbing. A man started hitting on one of her cousins who was not interested. As Kgomotso asked the man to leave, he started getting aggressive, the bouncers then intervened and attacked Kgomotso's partner.

> *The first person they picked up was my partner to throw her out of the club. So you can see that they should have picked on me cause I went to that guy first but no they went to her first.* (Kgomotso)

This incident demonstrates a need for heterosexual men to impose their masculinities on female bodies. It further objectifies the female body and attempts to reduce it an object of the male gaze. It appears that the lesbians who perform a masculine identity are often undermined as illustrated in their accounts that their partners receive flirtatious attention from men even in their presence.

It appears that such behaviour is a deliberate attempt to maintain heteronormative culture. The preceding account by Kgomotso about her partners encounter with violence within a night club illustrates how a butch lesbian body can be read as a threat to fragile masculinities. This body was disrupting a heteronormative culture in a supposedly gender neutral space and was therefore confronted with punishment.

Chapter 5 Discussion

> "Race, gender, and other identity categories are most often treated in mainstream liberal discourse as vestiges of bias or domination-that is, as intrinsically negative frameworks in which social power works to exclude or marginalize those who are different. According to this understanding, our laboratory objectives should be to empty such categories of any social significance. Yet implicit in certain strands of feminist and racial liberation movements… is the view that the social power in delineating difference need not be the power of domination; it can instead be the source of social empowerment and reconstruction". (Crenshaw, 1991, p.1242)

I open this discussion with a quote from Kimberly Crenshaw, a woman that coined the term "intersectionality". Crenshaw (1989) used this concept when she looked at the issue of employment among African American women in the United States of America (US). This extract embodies a large part of this discussion in that it hones in on the issues this research has addressed, which is identity politics. Specifically focusing on how identity categories intersect and bring about both the marginalisation of certain groups, but also the opportunity for resistance.

Crenshaw points out how it is that social power works through identity axes such as race, class, gender, sexuality and so forth to discriminate and dominate against those that are seen as "others". Apartheid is a clear demonstration of this as race excluded certain groups from patronizing particular spaces. Prado-Crasto and Graham (2017) argue that identity expression among lesbian women in South Africa has been affected by the broader context of violence and prejudice in the country.

Homosexuality was once pathologised as a psychological disorder, (Prado-Castro and Graham, 2017). This has been seen through the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), which has made significant changes over the years because of the resistance and reconstruction of what is seen as "normal". This also emerged because of the marginalisation and exclusion of particular identities, as Crenshaw concludes in the quote above. One can see how the different

lesbian women who participated in this research have resisted against their families and township communities that practise toxic masculinities. It demonstrates how they have persisted in expressing their identities even though they may be discriminated against or even physically threatened and violated.

What Crenshaw fundamentally problematizes about identity politics is not that it fails to transcend differences, but that it often conflates or ignores difference among the intragroup (1991). Such an elision of difference is problematic specifically when it comes to the issue of violence and exclusion. This is because the violence and exclusion that some experience are shaped by other axes of their identities such as race, class and sexuality (Crenshaw, 1991; Canham, 2017).

The question that comes to mind is what then happens to the other dimensions that have contributed and shaped the experience, if only one such is responded to? Discourses that do not include the full complexity of human experiences are therefore inadequate in articulating the full dimensions of exclusions and the marginalisation of black lesbian women. Women can find themselves marginalised in relation to both their class and sexuality, but discourse tends to respond to one dimension of identity.

This is where intersectionality aims to challenge this problem by offering a platform where critical analysis of difference among a group that may share the same race, or the same sexuality, gender or class to be seen in their complex and unique lived experiences. For instance, the preceding analysis makes it clear that butch black working class lesbians most challenge heteronormativity and masculinity and therefore are most at risk of disciplinary violence.

The focus of this discussion is to explore the multiple analytic layers in which intersectionality operates (Yuval-Davis, 2011). These layers include race, class, gender and sexuality. According to the Organization of Women of African and Asian Descent (OWAAD), what was referred to as the “triple oppression” which meant oppression along the lines of being black, woman and working class must be examined carefully. While the media has done extensive work in reporting the oppression and violence faced by black women in

South Africa, especially black lesbian women, the focus here is not to expand the popular narrative, but to look at how identity categories intersect and bring about lived experiences of black lesbian women.

The use of intersectionality as a framework for this discussion aims to be an early indication of how inseparable race, class, gender and sexuality are in how they inform day to day life and performativity. Intersectionality helps us avoid homogenising identities and therefore experiences, facilitating critical analysis in order to avoid falling into a trap where blackness,

womanhood, being lesbian and other ways of being are not seen in their complexities and nuanceness.

Failing to recognize intersectionality when thinking about experience poses a risk where narratives of identity end up serving problematic political projects that overlook and ignore important details of uniqueness of lived experiences. Yuval-Davis (2011, p.195) asserts this view: "Such narratives often reflect hegemonic discourses of identity politics that render invisible experiences of the more marginal members of that specific category and construct a homogenized 'right way' to be its member". Research on black women that ignores the unique experiences of black working class lesbian women is therefore an approach that overlooks some of the multiplicity of identity.

What has been referred to as "corrective rape" and other forms of violence against queer bodies are attempts to enforce the right way of "being" onto a particular body. Humans are complex and dynamic, and so their experience are multiplex. However, one needs to be careful lest this is reduced to fragmentation of identities (Yuval-Davis, 2011). The Australian Human Rights and Equal Commission Issue (2001) warns us about this by arguing that analysing identity as though its aspects exist in isolation of each other is problematic. Crenshaw (1991) makes a very important example that shows how using intersectionality as an analytical tool helps us see the qualitative difference between the experiences of violence between black and white women. The fear of hate crimes and violence can impede the expression of lesbian identities in different spaces (Prado-Castro and Graham, 2007). Using intersectionality as a theoretical framework can therefore allow for one to go beyond

experiential analysis, to one that looks at the difference between different levels (Yuval-Davis, 2011).

Yuval-Davis finds it important to be careful least one intermeshes levels of identity axis by reducing them to "natural functions" by drawing a clear distinction between gender and sexuality, saying " gender should be understood not as a 'real' social difference between men and women, but as a mode of discourse that relates to groups of subjects whose social roles are defined by their sexual/biological difference while sexuality is yet another related discourse, relating to constructions of the body, sexual pleasure and sexual intercourse" (2011, p.201). It is problematic for social and sexual roles to be defined by biological markers and a clear political result of heterosexuality. McEwen & Milani (2014) argue that heterosexuality constitute structures and actions that promote heterosexuality as natural, self-evident and ultimate.

Queer theory in conjunction with geographic research has offered new ways of understanding identity performance in relation to space (Nash, 2011). The intricacies concerning the experience of space and how one exists in it are not to be taken for granted. As Delaney & Kaspin's (2011, p.120) insight demonstrates, space is never neutral but "full of things". They help us understand how non-conforming bodies negotiate their occupation of different spaces at different times. Heteronormativity often acts as "invisible eye" that polices activity in space. Canham (2017) extends on this by drawing from Lefebvre's (2007) assertion that space inhibits and enables the free reign of action. This has gatekeeping implications because it then influences access, identity performance and the sense of safety and comfort in space. Canham further argues that although space is not in itself an intersectional influence, it constitutes the effects of intersection by giving shape to the differences and structures that mould the performance of the black lesbian women identity. He therefore proposes that intersectionality is the best lenses as it exposes the salience of multiple identity dimensions in relation to space.

The findings of this study indicate that space, race and class are intersectional entities that influence each other. Processes of being "othered" and the "us" and "them" dynamics are

lived realities that inform how space is experienced (Mthembu, 2012). Canham (2017) poses a critical question that speaks to the exclusion and inclusion of bodies in space, and the implications for how bodies can access and navigate particular spaces in consideration of their class and sexuality. He draws this question from Billington, Hockey & Strawbridge (1998, p.113) who state "[W]e can only know ourselves and our environment through the maps or metaphors our society makes available to us".

Canham agrees but applies further critical analysis by asking; "what happens when the maps made available are inadequate and do not take certain bodies into account" (2018, p.7). This question invites one to think about how space can socially exclude certain groups and the implications of this process. Through this study, I have sort to include those who tend to be excluded from the category of women. Prado-Castro and Graham (2007) argue that for us to explore the constructions and performances of identity among lesbian women, the broader socio-political and cultural context related to sexuality needs to be carefully considered. The beliefs that South-Africans hold about gender and sexuality has an impact on how people experience and perform their identities in different spaces.

Binnie (2011) poses a question about the particular experiences that have been used or analysed to understand sexuality. Through this study, I seek to understand "space" in addition to the ways that sexuality is typically studied. Binnie (2011) argues that it is heteronormative frameworks that exclude queer voices. I also add queer working class voices, that narratives are being produced. Such questions offer opportunities for conversation that can expose the invisible yet pervasive boundaries found in space. They allow us to further think about who certain spaces are meant for.

For example, the participants in this study suggest that township leisure spaces such as taverns are meant for black heterosexual men. Answering this question means not only thinking about how bodies are not the same though they may share the same skin colour or sex, but it also facilitates recognition of the intersectional nature of identity politics (Binnie, 2011), and how certain communities can be excluded from particular spaces.

Such dynamics are not ahistorical, instead, they are rooted in past actions (Canham, 2017) and relations of power. The denial of access is not a natural process, but a socially constructed one. Spaces are constructed by human beings and how they are experienced by different bodies is the result of deliberate attempts to maintain cisgender and heteronormative culture and "us" and "them" dynamics, and exclusions in other forms such as race and class.

While heteronormative spaces deliberately make non-heterosexual bodies feel uncomfortable, queer bodies have constructed alternative narratives and spaces for themselves that illustrate agency and resistance by challenging such spaces. For instance, lesbian women noted that they socialise together at each other's houses where they feel safe and affirmed.

While the media has done a great deal for the disempowerment of queer bodies by painting narratives that victimise such bodies, stories of resistance have been carved towards re-claiming the legitimacy of non-conforming identities. This feeds into Foucault's idea of how subjects can resist power. This is contrary to how queer bodies often occupy the position of victimhood in mainstream media.

Canham (2017, p. 16) argues that space "can be made an economic commodity, thus controlling access". Access and navigation of space by black lesbian women can be limited by cost which may be beyond their financial means. Thinking about space as an economic commodity provides a platform where one can reflect on how South Africa's racial history impacted on the current experiences of black lesbian women and the spaces they can access.

Looking at most of the participants from townships, since going to the local tavern for drinks and leisure as it is within their financial means was not much of an option, there is preference to rather stay indoors with friends as the next safer option for leisure. The tavern was avoided because it was not safe, urban spaces seemed less of an option than creating an indoor space that offered fun and safety simultaneously because of financial constraints.

Canham (2017) argues that claims to space "reveal the spatial mapping of gender, sexual orientation, race and class identity in Johannesburg" (2018, p16). Comments made at lesbian

women when they walk into taverns such as mentioned by Thandi, demonstrate how certain groups can claim ownership of space. The intersections of identity dimensions become of crucial importance as it is clear that race, class, gender and sexuality cannot be seen as categories that exists in isolation of each other.

The process of meaning making is a constituent of the intersection of these multiple identity axes. Such incidents also show that safety is fluid rather than fixed, and a product of complex flow of power relations (Canham, 2017). Townships, especially taverns prove to be an unsafe space for black lesbian women as it is filled with toxic masculinities who legitimise their manhood by violating lesbian women. The experiences of working class lesbian women point to stark differences compared to middle class lesbian women who live in suburbia.

Sayer (2005) offers an interesting perspective on class. There is a subtle, yet a very clear indication of the intersectionality of space and class in the statement he makes: Class matters to us not only because of differences in material wealth and economic security, but also because it affects our access to things, relationships, experiences and practices which we have reason to value, and hence our chances of living a fulfilling life. At the same time it affects how others value us and respond to us, which in turn affects our sense of self-worth (Sayer, 2005,p. 1).

Sayer makes mention of things one can access, which may include space. Class is largely inherent of the racial history of South Africa. This has particular meanings for the lives of black lesbian women in terms of access to queer urban spaces amongst other things. What Sayer speaks to here, are the ways in which experiences and the expression of the self is moulded by one's ability to access the things. He further mentions how the environment can respond. The environment can be exclusive, thereby, forcing the excluded to create alternatives.

It was apparent that most participants in this study shared similar perception of the tavern as an unsafe place. Their alternative spaces were queer spaces. What was also clear is that comfort and safety are classed, racialised, gendered and sexualised luxuries (Held, 2015). Canham (2017, p.9) uses the term "dirty lesbian", which was used by younger black lesbian

women to describe poor black lesbian women based in townships. He argues that while "dirty" can mean something enticing, it can also mean diminished value, such as how Soweto pride is associated with working class lesbian women (dirty lesbians) while Johannesburg pride us seen as the elitist.

Binnie (2004, p.4-5) problematizes the invisibility of working class queer people, not only in urban spaces, but in literature as well by arguing; The queer cosmopolitan is routinely located within the major centres of gay consumer culture. The other to this cosmopolitan is therefore the rural and provincial… Commentaries on queer consumer culture commonly imagine that the world ends at the boundaries of the metropolis.

He points out that the literature that has focused on the experiences of queer spaces by queer bodies has often been located in major cities and urban areas as queer consumer culture, while little attention has been focused on queer groups who live in spaces that lack institutionalised or visible spaces. This has problematic implications as it means that queer bodies that cannot access urban spaces, particularly, working class queer people, get excluded. While queer communities can share similar oppression along sexuality lines, it is important to recognise that certain experiences can be prioritized because of racial and class difference. Black working class queer women are in the frontline of facing multiple oppressions within gender non-conforming communities (Canham, 2017).

An ethnographic study conducted in Moscow and Ul'ianovsk, Russia, found that gay and lesbian people could only be fully gay or lesbian after migrating to the urban areas (Stella, 2010). The study refer to lesbian women who did not have the financial means to stay in the cities, and would therefore often go to the cities to consume "lesbian themed" events, films, books and culture. This reflects a similar dynamic in South Africa, in relation to the different experiences queer bodies face between urban areas and townships. Townships constantly pose the risk of violence against queer identities, while urban areas offer safety and comfort. This limits identity expression for those living in the townships because of continuous fear of being victimised. Black working class lesbian women are the most likely target (Canham, 2017) and this further increases their invisibility. This clearly mirrors how space is a site of visible invisibility and historical politics.

Space reflects the past, its production is in dynamic tension between the past and possibilities in the future, based on present actions (Canham, 2017). It is evident that space is largely a function of class and race. Black people were forced to reside in townships during apartheid. Township spaces were poorly policed and competition for very limited resources meant that they became violent. White people stayed in the suburbs and were given access to a disproportionate amount of resources.

Such a history brought about the current racial and class segregation that is seen across different spaces (Stevens, Duncan, Hook, 2013). One of the reasons why some lesbian women are more careful in the townships, such as avoiding using the men's bathroom and drinking in the tavern is because toxic masculinities expose them to potential harm. In post-apartheid South Africa, racial and class segregation is still apparent as townships are populated with black working class people, while white middle and upper class people occupy the suburbs. This was apparent throughout the interviews held with participants, most of whom are black lesbian women, are working class and they come from townships.

Although space can be exclusionary through one's available resources to access it, it is in the daily lived experiences of black lesbian women that identity is performed, including the navigation of space itself. The avoidance of taverns in the townships, the avoidance of the township itself and preference for indoor leisure with other lesbian women is telling of how space can shape the expression of identity.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

An analysis of intersectionality has illustrated how multiple categories of identity shape the ways in which black lesbian women experience space and their identities. The areas of analysis were: The black lesbian identity; exploring what it means to be a lesbian woman and the multiple ways in which this identity is legitimised within the lesbian community through ideas around a "golden lesbian"; the significance of class positions in the kinds of leisure black lesbian women engage in and the spaces they have access to; Space as the policing agents of gender discourse, particularly the avoidance and preference of particular spaces in order to secure safety and leisure.

Findings in this study indicate that black lesbian women experience surveillance in different spaces. Such spaces include the church, the work place, and leisure spaces such as taverns in the townships. This surveillance that takes place in different spaces comes in multiple forms. They include policing the way in which black lesbian women are expected to dress in the workplace or church. They also involve the heteronormative gaze by toxic masculinities in taverns located in townships, where a majority of working class black lesbian women reside.

Findings also illustrated that the intersection of identity axes is essential for understanding the kinds of spaces that lesbian women patronize. Working class lesbian women tend to create their own leisure spaces by gathering in doors with friends as that is within their financial means and because taverns have been experienced as unsafe spaces with the potential of harm by the men that patronize them.

While this is the lived experience of working class black lesbian women, middle class lesbian women have the opportunity to negotiate their identity performances as they move in and out of risky spaces such as the townships. Unlike the working class, they have the financial capacity to access safer spaces in suburban areas where they can perform their identities freely without the fear of violence.

Given identity surveillance, how the black lesbian woman identity operates in different spaces, black lesbian women feel safer in spaces where the heteronormative gaze is absent.

While the potential of being violated exists, black lesbian women also persist in protecting and performing their identities. Lesbian women who identify as butch do this by their clothing and claiming visibility in spaces that are exclusionary, while negotiating safety. Black lesbian women are largely a product of their spaces. However, they also claim and create indoor spaces where they perform their full selves as well as living fun and joyful lives.

Theoretically, the value of the study affirms the importance of looking at lives through intersectionality, illustrating the usefulness of thinking of lived experiences by considering multiple identity categories. This study also contributes to policy and points to the importance of not homogenising women and the understanding that working class black lesbian women are more prone to experiencing violence.

The focus of analysis was informed by an interest in understanding how space is experienced in relation to the multiple identity axes black lesbian women occupy. The role that identity categories played in how space is constructed and experienced was central in this study.

While the emergence of feminist literature was useful in the movement towards the visibility of women, acknowledging the difference among women as they have been assumed to be a homogenous group has been key in exploring the daily lived experiences of women. Based on this, I conclude that identity and experience is multi-layered, nuanced and fluid. The ways in which black lesbian women construct spaces is shaped by an awareness of the possibilities of being policed and of opportunities to exercise resistance and agency as well.

6.2 Significance

This research may be useful in thinking about the experiences of non-cis gender identities in South Africa, particularly the black lesbian identity. Not only does the study explore what it means to be a black lesbian woman, but it goes on to study how multiple facets of identity such as gender, sexuality, class and race influence lived experiences and how these shape the

spaces that can be accessed and the ways in which identities navigate such spaces. It has therefore contributed to literature on women's studies and in how intersectionality can be used as a framework in which identities and experiences can be studied.

6.3 Limitations

While the study did explore black lesbian women's experiences of identity and its performances it multiple spaces, the generalisation of the findings in this study remains limited. The researcher does acknowledge that experiences differ because of a number of reasons including age, locatio, and people's own uniqueness. Transformation and social advances that society undergoes can influence different experiences for different generations of black lesbian women. The experiences of black lesbian women may be different because of time and change in society. The findings in this study should thus be used a contribution to literature on the black lesbian identity in relation to space, and not as facts that can be generalised to the population.

6.4 Recommendations

In consideration of the above discussed contributions and limitations of the study, the following recommendations for future studies are made. A different data collection methodology can be useful. Using a focus group as an approach can be useful as engaging with a number of participants in one conversation can generate data that may be different from that which has been gathered in the present study.

Adding an ethnographic method can also be useful as the researcher will have an opportunity to observe and be part of the spaces they study.

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Appendices.

Appendix A Informed consent form



Psychology



School of Human & Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050

Tel: 011 717 4503 Fax: 011 717 4559

I, _____ consent to being interviewed by Phetheni Nconco for her study exploring constructions of identity surveillance and safe spaces among black lesbian women in Gauteng I understand that:

- Participation in this study is voluntary.

- I may refrain from answering any questions.

- I may withdraw my participation and/or my responses from the study at any time.

- All information provided will remain confidential, although I may be quoted in the research report.

- If I am quoted, a pseudonym will be used.

- None of my identifiable information will be included in the research report.

- I am aware that the results of the study will be reported in the form of a research report for the partial completion of the degree, Masters in Psychology

- The research may also be presented at a local/international conference and published in a journal and/or book chapter.

Signed:_____

Appendix B Audio recording Consent Form.

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050

Tel: 011 717 4503 Fax: 011 717 4559

I, _____ give my consent for my interview with Phetheni Nconco to be audio recorded for her study. I understand that:

- The tapes and transcripts will not be seen or heard by anyone other than the researcher and her supervisor.

- The tapes and transcripts will be kept in a password protected computer.

- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report.

- Although direct quotes from my interview may be used in the research report, I will be referred to by a pseudonym.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C Interview guide

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050

Tel: 011 717 4503 Fax: 011 717 4559

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1. What do you like people to know about your identity?

2. Are there times that you believe being a black lesbian woman is dangerous and you would rather people not know about this part of who you are? If yes, which spaces do you find most risky for you and why?

3. Are there spaces where you feel happy and comfortable to fully express your identity without fear? If so, which spaces are these and what about these spaces is liberating?

4. Tell me about the nightclubs that you go to?

5. Do you present yourself differently when you are in social spaces compared to when you are at work or school? If so, can you tell me why this is the case?

6. How do you feel about how people treat you at work?

7. How do you feel about the way people treat you at a lesbian club?

8. Describe to me how you feel about the area in which you live in, how do they treat you?

9. How is that different from other spaces?

10. Do you feel like people treat you differently because of your sexuality? and Why?

11. Have you ever felt discriminated against because of your sexual orientation? what made you feel that way?

12. What do you think about black lesbian women in South Africa and their experiences?

13. Are there spaces that you could classify as safe spaces? If so, tell me why you think these are safe spaces?

Appendix D Participants Information Sheet.

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050

Tel: 011 717 4503 Fax: 011 717 4559

Good day!

My name is Phetheni Nconco. I am currently a Psychology Masters student at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am conducting research for the purpose of obtaining this degree. The purpose of my research is to explore what lesbian women think about how people treat them in different settings and what sense they make out of this, and to also look at how this then influences experiences in these different settings.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. Participation in this study will involve being interviewed by me. The interview should take approximately one hour. Participation is voluntary. Everything you say during this interview will be kept confidential. The interview will be tape-recorded and only my supervisor and I will have access to the tapes. The tapes and transcripts will be kept in a password protected computer. Although I know who you are, confidentiality will be maintained by not disclosing any information that is of a personal nature in the report. I will assign a pseudonym to your information in the report, thus your real name will not be used in any reports. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. You also have the right to refrain from answering any question should you wish to do so. A feedback sheet in the form of a one to two page summary of the study and its findings will be provided to your upon request. You may e-mail me if you would like to receive this. My contact details appear in the signature below. The feedback will be available approximately 16 months after the collection of the data

Before beginning the interview I will need you to read through and sign these two consent forms. These forms just confirm that you are aware of everything that we have discussed concerning confidentiality, feedback and privacy. Please detach and keep this sheet.

If you feel emotionally vulnerable on completion of the interview you may contact me for assistance, my details are provided below.

Researcher: Phetheni Nconco. Email: 745940@students.wits.ac.za

Supervisor: Prof Hugo Canham. Email: hugo.canham@wits.ac.za

Appendix E Ethics Clearance

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	PROTOCOL NUMBER: MACC/17/007 IH
PROJECT TITLE:	Lesbians, leisure and the constructions of safe spaces among black lesbian women in Johannesburg
INVESTIGATORS	Nconco Phetheni
DEPARTMENT	Psychology
DATE CONSIDERED	06/06/17
DECISION OF COMMITTEE*	Approved

This ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application

DATE: 06 June 2017

CHAIRPERSON
(Dr Hugo Canham)

cc Supervisor:

Dr Hugo Canham
Psychology

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR (S)

To be completed in duplicate and **one copy** returned to the Secretary, Room 100015, 10th floor, Senate House, University.

I/we fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure, as approved, I/we undertake to submit a revised protocol to the Committee.

This ethical clearance will expire on 31 December 2019

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES