

Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate the intersectional experiences of black lesbian immigrants living in Johannesburg, South Africa. Research often looks at the experiences of black lesbian immigrants in the context of broader LGBTQ experiences or addresses lesbian identities as singular rather than intersectional. Carrying several subordinate identities (for example gender, racial, nationality etcetera) positions one within an intersectional invisibility. This rank relegates black lesbian immigrants to a culturally unseen role that can have consequences for their well-being and social integration. Due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, individual, semi-structured and in-depth interviews were conducted via WhatsApp, phone calls, Skype and Zoom with 11 lesbian immigrants aged 18-65 years. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data. Research findings demonstrate that divisions within the society based on gender, religion, ethnicity, sexuality and class do not exist independently from one another but rather interrelate and interact, resulting in systematic social inequalities. These intersecting challenges include challenges around documentation, stigmatization in public spaces, discrimination at workplaces, physical abuse, emotional torture and sexual assault.

Key words

Black lesbian, Immigrants, Intersectionality, Johannesburg