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Negotiating post migration identities: the intersectional experiences of black lesbian immigrants in Johannesburg, South Africa

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Negotiating post migration identities: The intersectional experiences of black lesbian immigrants in Johannesburg, South Africa.

A research study presented to

The Department of Critical Diversity Studies

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Masters in Critical Diversity Studies

By

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Supervised by Dr Cuthbeth Tagwirei and Professor Melissa Steyn

May 2021

Declaration

I **Ngwenya Lindile Nontobeko,** student number: **1154041** a student registered for a Master in Critical Diversity studies do hereby declare the following:

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I understand that University of the Witwatersrand can take disciplinary action against me if there is evidence that this is not my own unaided work or that I have failed to acknowledge the source of the ideas or word in writing.

Signature **Date: 23 May 2021**

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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

List of Acronyms

CCMA	Commission for Conciliation Meditation and Arbitration
CoRMSA	Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa
CSVR	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
DHA	Department of Home Affairs
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
GALA	Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ILGA	The international lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex association
IOM	International Organization of Migration
LGBTQ	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer
PASSOP	People Against Suffering, Oppression and Poverty
SADC	Southern African Development Community (SADC)
STI	Sexual Transmitted Infections
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
ZEP	The Zimbabwean Exemption Permit

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION 1

Introduction 1

The research problem 3

The significance of the study 3

The objectives of the study 4

The research questions 5

Sub questions 5

Terminology and concepts 5

Chapter delineation 6

Conclusion 7

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW 8

Introduction 8

LGBTQ immigration to South Africa 8

Attitudes towards LGBTQ immigrants 13

FIGURE 1: WHAT SOUTH AFRICANS THINK AND FEEL ABOUT SAME SEX RELATIONSHIPS (SUTHERLAND ET AL., 2016). 14

FIGURE 2: VIOLENCE TOWARDS NON-GENDER CONFORMING PERSONS 15

FIGURE 3: POPULAR EXPLANATIONS ABOUT SAME SEX ORIENTATION 15

FIGURE 4: VIOLENT ATTITUDE TOWARDS IMMIGRANTS 16

Physical Violence against lesbians in South Africa 19

Socio-economic challenges faced by LGBTQ immigrants 28

Theoretical Framework 32

Conclusion 32

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY 34

Introduction 34

Research Design 34
Study setting 35
Brief description of the study site 35
FIGURE 5: DEMOGRAPHIC POPULATION ACCORDING TO RACE IN JOHANNESBURG 36
FIGURE 6: DEMOGRAPHIC POPULATION ACCORDING TO ETHNICITY IN JOHANNESBURG 36
FIGURE 7: DEMOGRAPHIC POPULATION ACCORDING TO RELIGION IN JOHANNESBURG SOUTH AFRICA 36
TABLE 1: OTHER DEMOGRAPHIC EXPLANATIONS IN JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA (STATS SA, 2018) 37
Study population 38
Sampling procedure 39
Research Instrumentation 39
Data Collection Method 40
Data analysis and interpretation techniques 41
TABLE 2: DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE 41
Ethical considerations 43
Informed consent 43
Informed consent for recording voices in Research 43
Privacy and anonymity 44
Participant Safety 44
Reflexivity 45
How to ensure trustworthiness of qualitative data 45
Credibility 45
Triangulation 45
Confirmability: 46
Audit Trail 46
Reflexivity: 46
Conclusion 46

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS 47
Introduction 47
Biographic details of the participants 47
TABLE 3: BIOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS 47
Black lesbians' perceptions of themselves 48
Perceptions of the broader society 51
Strategies black lesbian immigrants use to deal with multiple forms of marginality 65
Discussion of findings 67
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS 80
Introduction 80
Recommendations 81
Reference list 83
Appendixes 96
Appendix A: Interview schedule 96
Appendix B: Information sheet 98
Appendix C: Informed consent 101
Appendix D: Permission letter for counselling services at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) 103

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Since the advent of a democratic dispensation in 1994, South Africa has become a major destination for African migrants fleeing poverty, war and human rights abuses (Crush and Peberdy, 2018; Adepoju, 2019). The last 10 years have seen an increasing number of immigrants who identify as LGBTQ moving into South Africa in response to discrimination and persecution in their homophobic countries (Zabus, 2009; Martin, 2012). Homosexuality is illegal in many African countries including Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Malawi (De Greef, 2019). LGBTQ individuals do not enjoy the rights afforded heterosexual individuals, couples or families (Redcay, Luquet and Huggin, 2019). Churches, the media and the state contribute to homophobic climates in these countries (Butler, 2004). Resultantly, many LGBTQ people are not protected in their home countries and often hide their sexual orientations and gender identities to avoid daily persecution, which can include, but is not limited to, unlawful imprisonment, blackmail, public shaming, physical and psychological abuse, and sexual assault (Kahn, Alessi, Woolner, Kim and Olivieri, 2017). Often, this leads to mental health issues, such as depression or other post-traumatic stress disorders (Sutter and Perin, 2016). LGBTQ people living in such countries may have to hide their identities or their non-conforming gender behaviours in order to avoid being victimized and their rights violated. (Kahn, et al., 2017).

The article for International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association (ILGA) written by Mendos (2019) highlights that political and state sponsored homophobia is still alarming, especially in Africa. The report indicates that there has not been much change from the previous years when it comes to the promotion of LGBTQ human rights. Homosexuality is still a severe offence in 35 countries within Africa. Three countries can sentence individuals who are found to be in the same sex relationship for life (Mendos, 2019). Four countries' imprisonment sentences range from 14 years to life. One country has a stipulated prison sentence of up to 10 years for those accused and found to be in same-sex relationships and the rest of the countries do not specify the level of imprisonment in their countries (Yang, 2019). Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Rwanda and the Central African Republic signed the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against homosexuality in Geneva in March 2011. Notably, South Africa is the only country on the continent to have both laws in place to protect sexual minorities and same-sex marriages (Ibrahim, 2019).

Reports from activists and social movements indicate that discrimination and violence are the major challenges faced by lesbian people. What makes it more worrying is that they are not protected by the law (Mendos, 2019). In 1995, during a televised public rally in the capital Harare, former president of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, characterized gays and lesbians as worse than dogs and pigs. In 1999, he termed gays and lesbians gangsters and, in the following year, described sexual diversity as a *cultural abomination and rottenness* that Britain was trying to force on Africans (Shoko, 2010). Van den Heever (2015) claims that patriots in Zimbabwe were encouraged to shield Zimbabwe from Western imperialism which came disguised in the form of homosexuality. This kind of homophobia has been propagated in state-controlled media and elsewhere in Africa (Epprecht, 2004). Other former African leaders, including Kenya's Arap Moi, Namibia's Sam Nujoma, Malawi's Bingu wa Mutharika, Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo, and Senegal's Abdoulaye Wade shared Robert Mugabe's sentiments and, on several occasions, endorsed the view that sexual diversity is unAfrican argument (Van den Heever, 2015). All of these presidents are on record for making stigmatising and discriminatory statements (Tamale, 2014).

Immigration or exile is one of the alternatives LGBTQ people find themselves considering. Awondo, Geschiere and Reid (2012**)** report that due to negative homophobic and transphobic conditions imposed on sexually marginalized groups, there is a trend in Africa where LGBTQ people are forced into exile as sexual refugees in foreign countries. The South African Refugee Act 130 of 1998 "grants refugee status based on the fear of persecution of belonging to a particular social group, which could include one's sexual orientation" (Refugee Act 130, p. 8). South Africa is the only African country to enact legislation that prohibits the discrimination of gender identities and sexualities under its highest law of the land, the Constitution, thereby ensuring the protection of enumerated rights and fundamental principles of human dignity and equality (De Ru, 2013). A 2012 report from the People against Suffering, Oppression and Poverty (PASSOP) observes that, as a result, many citizens from all over Africa are making their way to South Africa in the hope of finding a less homophobic, safe living, environment. Among these immigrants are lesbian individuals whose intersectional experiences often go unaccounted owing to predominant tendencies to lump them together with other LGBTQ people or failure to consider the complexities of their multiple identities as lesbians, women, Black and immigrants.

This research taps into the intersectional experiences of lesbian immigrants by recognizing how they are complexly positioned in post-1994 South Africa. Despite the increasing acceptance of

LGBTQ immigrants in the country, belonging to a sexual minority in a society largely oriented toward heterosexuality has its challenges (Meyer, 2003). For lesbian immigrants, the problem is compounded by the realities of xenophobia and gender-based violence, for instance. The result, in some cases, is discrimination based on one's nationality and gender even in countries that are celebrated for having progressive constitutions (Mundangepfupfu, 2019). The research therefore breaks the cycle of lesbian invisibility by connecting certain marginal positionalities, which are often studied independently within social sciences, through the perspectives of lesbian immigrants in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The research problem

Research on LGBTQ experiences tends to mask the distinct conditions which lesbian individuals find themselves in as sexual and gender minorities located within patriarchal spaces. As a group, LGBTQ people share the experiences of homophobia in several of its manifestations such as violence and discrimination. Nevertheless, the nature of these experiences differs depending on how each person is socially positioned along other axes of identity such as gender, race and class. It is for this reason that research on the specific experiences of black lesbian immigrants is key. Though it is possible to draw parallels among LGBTQ people, being black, a woman and an immigrant suggests experiences which a gay, white, man would not go through, for instance.

Taylor, Hines and Casey (2011) observe that the experiences of black lesbian immigrants are often ignored or looked at monolithically, rather than as intersecting experiences. This is despite the fact that carrying several subordinate identities marks black lesbian immigrants for intersectional invisibility (Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach, 2008). The failure to tease out the unique experiences of black lesbian immigrants means policy interventions and activities around immigration, gender, sexuality and race will continue to service fragments of their well-being rather than targeting them holistically. Consequently, these women are relegated to culturally unseen roles, which has consequences for their well-being and social integration (Choubak, 2014). Research therefore needs to centre on how their identities intersect and what this means in terms of their experiences in South Africa.

The significance of the study

This study seeks to examine the experiences of black lesbian immigrants in South Africa in view of their multiple marginal positionalities. Such an approach unpacks the connections

among race, gender, sexuality and nationality as they play out in positioning black lesbian immigrants in certain ways. This breaks the dominant cycle where marginal positions often get studied independently within social sciences. The study therefore explores how individuals with multiple marginalized identities regard and deal with the potentially contradictory identities in relation to the environment in which they find themselves. Black lesbian immigrants' negotiations of shifting identities relating to gender, nationality, race and sexuality are explored through semi-structured interviews to gain a deeper understanding.

Through this endeavour, a significant research gap in the social sciences literature that could guide immigration, sexual orientation and numerous identity studies will be addressed. It is necessary to explore how sexual identity can shape experiences that are rarely discussed in immigration literature after migration settlement. It is also interesting to explore how sexual identity is negotiated with other minority statuses that are not adequately fleshed out in the context of sexual minority research that does not distinguish the ethnic/cultural backgrounds or gender status of the participants. There is limited literature that addresses issues of black lesbian immigrants in South Africa. The failure to tease out the experiences of this category needs to be addressed in order to enrich the existing discourses on migration and gender. Discourses on LGBTQ experiences also need to be amplified by demonstrating points of convergence and divergence among the various individuals who identify themselves as LGBTQ persons. For this reason, the study will address the issues of lesbians only, in the context of their intersectional experiences.

The knowledge gained from this study may help the government and other key stakeholders involved in the same field to draft public policy. Public policies are a reflection of the beliefs, attitudes and values of society. This study will enable the government and policy-makers to be aware of the challenges faced by black LGBTQ immigrants and create awareness on how policy and legislative interventions can be tailored to address them.

The objectives of the study

The research seeks to:

- ✓ Analyse black immigrant lesbians' perceptions of themselves and their host communities.
- ✓ Examine the extent of gender, sexual, racial and xenophobic marginality faced by black lesbian immigrants.

- ✓ Assess the strategies black lesbian immigrants use to deal with multiple forms of marginality.

The research questions

➢ What are the intersectional experiences of black immigrant lesbians in South Africa?

Sub questions

- ✓ What perceptions do black immigrant lesbians have of themselves and their communities in South Africa?
- ✓ To what extent do black immigrant lesbians experience homophobia, gender-based violence, xenophobia, and racism in South Africa?
- ✓ How do black immigrant lesbians deal with various marginal positionings in South Africa?

Terminology and concepts

It is important to clarify the terms that are central to the study to provide an understanding of how they are used. I acknowledge the unease around the term 'homosexual' because of the negative connotations it carries. It is subject to a lot of controversies, and debate. However, it is important to note that, where possible, the term is avoided, but in some cases the word has been recognized and kept to the point of stressing the meaning of the text and what it sought to achieve. Msibi (2011) says that the term 'homosexuality' originated in the West. It was negatively used to mark, pathologize and stigmatize individuals who engage in same-sex relationships. The other term which is used in the research is 'gay'. Some researchers use the term 'gay' to refer to all the experiences of those involved in same sex relationship, including lesbians.

There are also questions around the use of LGBTQ terminology. The use of this abbreviation is not always constant. One of the reasons being the time difference of the period when the articles being referenced were written and published. Secondly, the terminology can be used interchangeably depending on the subject in question. This terminology is not static, and it continues to grow.

The Welcoming Project (n. d) says that in the past years various abbreviations have evolved to represent lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer persons and their allies. They add on to say

that “if letters for all groups are included, these abbreviations can become quite lengthy and cumbersome” (The Welcoming Project, n. d, para. 3). There is no clear consensus regarding the terms to use. LGBTQ is the most used abbreviation. To add, The Welcoming Project (n. d) claims that the term LGBTQ is easily recognized as representative of diversity. To clear this confusion, the term LGBTQ will be used consistently in this research, except when I paraphrase or quote directly from another text.

Chapter delineation

Chapter 1: Introduction

The research introduction is outlined in Chapter 1. The introduction addresses the problem statement, the rationale for the study and research questions, the aims and objectives of the study, and clarifies terminology and concepts.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter 2 reviews literature relevant to the study. It covers key terms used in the research, LGBTQ immigration to South Africa, South African perceptions of same-sex relationships, physical violence against lesbians in South Africa, and the socio-economic challenges faced by LGBTQ immigrants. In addition, intersectionality is discussed at length as a theoretical framework that forms the basis of the study.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

In Chapter 3, methods used to carry out the research are discussed. Details of the methodological process, including the qualitative approach, sampling method, data sources and collection methods, are provided. The conclusion of the chapter clarifies the method of data analysis, study validity and trustworthiness, ethical issues, and reflexivity.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

The analysis and interpretation of in-depth interviews conducted with participants are the focus of this chapter. The results are presented and discussed according to the themes arising from the data. The themes include black immigrant lesbians’ perceptions of themselves and their host communities, the extent of gender, sexual, racial and xenophobic marginality faced by black lesbian immigrants, and the strategies black lesbian immigrants use to deal with multiple forms of marginality.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter provides the summary of the findings. Lastly, based on the research findings, recommendations are presented.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the problem statement, the rationale for the study the research questions, the aims and objectives of the study, and the clarification of terminology and concepts are covered. The significance of the study and the contribution it will make are also stated.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Research on sexual minorities abounds, yet little exists in terms of the experiences of black immigrant lesbians. The reason for this is that scholarship on sexual minorities either tends to focus on LGBTQ people as a group or focus more on the migrant experiences of gay and transgender people. This is not to say literature on lesbian experiences in Africa, or South Africa for that matter, does not exist. However, no sustained efforts have so far been made to consider how being positioned intersectionally as black, lesbian and immigrant invites specific experiences peculiar to those positioned thus. This literature review sets the stage for addressing this gap by discussing some of the scholarly preoccupations related to black lesbian immigrant experiences and demonstrating the significance of intersectionality as a suitable framework for the study. Below is the definition of key concepts used in the study.

LGBTQ immigration to South Africa

There is substantial literature on immigration to South Africa in general and some studies on LGBTQ immigration. A 2019 report from (ILGA) claims that South Africa is one of the safest places in the world when it comes to the rights of the LGBTQI people. This is because of its progressive constitutional laws (Mendos, 2019). However, many immigrants are not welcome to South Africa (Segatti, 2017). This is because the country is also experiencing economic re-emergence, which has resulted in high unemployment and high demand for jobs (Mundangepfupfu (2019). One of the reasons that immigrants are easily identifiable in South Africa is their inability to understand and speak South African languages (Batisai, 2016).

Mundangepfupfu (2019) claims that South Africa is seen as the promised land for most queer people. It attracts queers from nearby countries and further afield. It is the only country in Southern Africa that recognizes the right of LGBTQI (Mendos, 2019; Human Right Watch, 2011). There seems to be a link between movement and expression of one's sexuality (Jennings, 2010). While most states in Africa sought to leave homosexuality in the precolonial past, South Africa remained one country which held the promise of sexual tolerance.

The Immigration Act, 2002 (Act No. 13 of 2002) and the Refugees Act, 1998 are one of the two laws and policies that facilitate the movement of LGBTQ+ immigrants from their home countries to South Africa (Act No. 130 of 1998). Both of these acts place the blame for

xenophobic attacks and discrimination against immigrants in South Africa. To try to ensure immigrants' stay, the Immigration Amendment Bill of 2010 (Amendment Bill, 2010) prominently introduced various types of temporary visas and permanent residence, allowing legal immigration to South Africa (Moyo, 2017). Nonetheless, many foreigners complain that the entry procedures are too strict and rigid. This act also aims to prevent illegal immigrants from entering South Africa and to protect the country from immigration inflows (Moyo, 2017).

In 1998, the Refugees Act went into effect. The act was intended to protect the rights of displaced people and those who were said to be in fear for their lives. The Refugees Act also grants refugees all of the rights outlined in the South African constitution's Bill of Rights, with the exception of the right to vote. These rights include access to health care, housing, basic education, and so on (Refugees Act, 1998). However, the South African government appears to have failed to properly implement the Refugee Act (Memela, 2014). The department of home affairs does not properly monitor applications for asylum and refugee permits, and they take a long time to process. This disadvantages the asylum seeker because they risk being arrested, detained, and deported. (CoRMSA, 2016). Asylum seekers are sometimes discriminated against by officials from home affairs, who demand bribes in exchange for visa renewals or extensions. When asylum seekers refuse to comply with their demands, they face humiliation, xenophobia, and homophobia. Because of these circumstances, many LGBTI refugees and asylum seekers have chosen not to apply for legal documents and instead to live as illegal immigrants.

The South African Constitution (1996) article 9 (3), highlight that “the state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, color, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth” (Constitution of South Africa, 1996, pg. 6). This clause signified a new beginning for the people living in South Africa (Mundangepfupfu, 2019). The 1996 South African Constitution therefore included a non-discrimination clause based on sexual orientation.

It is interesting to note that in the next 10 years that followed, the state formulated a number of policies and laws that considered LGBTQ people's rights (Human Rights Watch, 2011). This was the result of long struggles between the state, the community and LGBTQ people. These laws, often referred to as sodomy laws, were removed from the Constitution. This allowed LGBTQ people access to medical care, insurance, immigration, inheritance, recognition of same-sex marriages, adoption, child custody, change of sexual status and adoption rights for

same-sex couples. However, these progressive laws have not stopped people from being violent and hostile to LGBTQ people in South Africa. A survey conducted in 2016 shows that there is a huge gap between the ideals of the Constitution and people's attitudes towards homosexual people (Sutherland, Roberts, Gabriel, Struwig, and Gordon, 2016).

Mundangepfupfu (2019) identifies the lifestyle portrayed by media such as music, fashion, the ability of people to move freely and exercise their sexuality as a driving force for Zimbabweans to migrate to South Africa. South Africa is seen as a place of independence, socially, sexually and economically compared to Zimbabwe and other African countries (Mundangepfupfu, 2019; Crush 2012). Batisai (2016) argues that one's freedom and movement in South Africa is determined by the positions they occupy. These positions are facilitated by race, socio-economic status, gender status and, most importantly, the status of their documentation.

Many people are therefore attracted to Johannesburg with the expectation of freely expressing their identity (Reid, Graeme and Dirsuweit, 2002). Johannesburg is host to Africans from various cities in Africa such as Kampala, Gaborone, Windhoek, Dar es Salaam, Harare and beyond (Mundangepfupfu, 2019). He adds on to say that the reason why most of them are drawn to live in Johannesburg is because society seems to be more accepting and it seems to be a promising safe haven for queer individuals.

Tabak and Levitan (2014) observe that a variety of push and pull factors can have a huge impact on LGBTI decisions to leave their homes. They add on to say that one of the reasons that influence one’s decision to relocate to another country is closely linked to one’s sexual identity. The push and pull factors include the great desire for better economic conditions and prospects, political and religious freedom and independence etcetera (Tabak and Levitan, 2014). They add on to say that there is a likelihood that individuals who migrate because of their sexuality might have suffered in their home countries. Said suffering might have been in the form of having their human right violated, through discrimination, sexual assault, and other forms of abuses linked to one’s gender identity (Tabak and Levitan, 2014). In some instances, the decision to leave was urgent, a question of life or death. Common types of persecutions that are experienced by sexual minorities worldwide were identified in an article written by Goldberg (1993).These persecutions included “police harassment and assault, involuntary institutionalization and electroshock and drug 'treatments,' punishment under laws that impose extreme penalties including death for consensual lesbian or gay sexual relations, murder by paramilitary death squads, and government inaction in response to criminal assaults against lesbians and gay men.” (Goldberg, 1993, p. 2-3).

Today sexual minorities around the world are still discriminated and persecuted by the state and the civil society (Tabak and Levitan, 2014). There is also systematic criminalization of same-sex relationships. Human Right Watch (2011) report says that some countries like South Africa for example have progressive laws that protect the rights of LGBTI people, but still individuals are not spared from social stigma and strongly held prejudice, violence and murder. Tabak and Levitan (2014) then highlights that such everyday experiences of oppression, prejudice, arrests and stigmatization can be critical factors in assessing the options made by sexual minorities and the attitudes they display when other states detain them after fleeing their home countries.

Moreover, push factors such as discrimination, torture, and persecution in home countries may propel individuals to relocate to places that they deem safe and where they can freely express their sexual identity (Tabak and Levitan, 2014). Tabak and Levitan (2014) claim that recent foreign media exposure to LGBTI rights, freedom to express their sexual identity can act as a pull factor to people staying in communities or countries where same-sex relationships are heavily criminalized. Brooks and Smith (2012) add that because of this coverage on LGBTI families and those who openly and ardently speak out for LGBTI rights, future migrants willbe increasingly aware that there may be greater protection for LGBTI rights outside their home country. Tabak and Levitan (2014, p.10) indicate that the "magnet theory may explain LGBTI migration to countries that are known to be more hospitable for LGBTI individuals, regardless of why they choose to leave. It is clear today that many LGBTI individuals become global migrants". Martin (2012) points out that the individual's decision to migrate appears to be linked to a global increase in irregular migration and the detention of such migrants by hosting countries. Koko, Monro and Smith (2018) claim that the number of LGBTI migrants in detention has also increased as a result.

There also seems to be a connection between migration, travelling and the development of sexual identity (Jennings, 2010). Jennings (2010) argues that it has become usual to notice that migration has become a norm and a step in the coming out process. The latest research in postcolonial and ethnicity studies has influenced those interested in queer studies to look deeper into the concept of gay and lesbian migration through the diaspora and hybridity lens. (Fortier, 2002). Cant presents his edited collection of lesbian and gay narratives on migration by asserting that:

> People flee their families and their communities of origin because there is no place for them there. If migration is experienced as freedom, the family and its values are

> perceived as a prison. The need to escape the shame which you believe your homosexuality will bring to you and your family becomes overwhelming. The unquestioned status of heterosexuality leaves no room for negotiation or the development of alternatives (Cant, 1997, p. 6-7).

Cant asserts that the home of origin may be depressing because it is viewed and considered to be a monolithic place where one is confined, and forced to be ashamed of their identity. He adds that this rigidity and lack of discussion about issues regarding gender and sexual identity in heterosexual families can force lesbians and gay men to migrate to a new place where they have freedom to express their gender identity.

Historians and feminist theorists explain that being away from family and friends seems to play a critical role in women's migration. It helps them to transform their sexuality without being monitored, and being pressurized by familial and cultural expectations (Jennings, 2010). The transformation is important in the cycle of migration, as it allows women to change their sexual and gender roles (Espin, 1999). Espin notes that:

> For both heterosexual and lesbian women, the crossing of borders through migration provides the space and 'permission' to cross boundaries and transform their sexuality and sex roles women who migrate from 'modern' societies may find that alternatives open up for them in the new country because of the distance from the familiar environment and, in some cases, from their families (1999, p. 5).

Cant (1997) claims that migration is a liberating experience for gays and lesbians. This is because being away from home enables them to develop their new identities, to be true to themselves, to find voices and to create their own journeys and histories. However, lesbians' narratives seem to suggest that they remained emotional and physical attached with their families and communities where they were coming from, despite the fact that they were away from home (Martin, 2012). Traditional conceptions of femininity indicated that women were deeply rooted in social networks of family responsibility, economic dependency and residential relations (Jennings, 2010). As a result of these femininity conceptions, lesbians are forced to perform certain roles and duties within their families. These include caring for the elderly, sick parents or relatives, and contributing to the family income. These circumstances determine the right of the lesbian to communicate and negotiate and behave in accordance with the same sex desires (Jennings, 2010).

The study will benefit from drawing parallels from these studies and the research that has been done with lesbian immigrants in other places. For instance, Acosta's (2008) analysis of the experiences of Latina lesbians living in the United States is interesting in how it demonstrates that sexual autonomy is achieved by these women at the expense of racial, class and national freedom. It shows that sexual, racial, and class identities are continually shifting as migration recasts them in new social systems characterized by racial inequality. Dealing with issues of a similar nature in the South African context will certainly yield interesting results. Espin (1999) dwells on the experiences of black lesbian immigrants in Europe. The study looks at the transformations of gender roles and sexuality experienced by women because of migration and demonstrates that crossing boundaries can be both empowering and disabling. This is what makes identity negotiation a key aspect of the experiences of black lesbian immigrants entering new spaces.

Attitudes towards LGBTQ immigrants

Literature on LGBTQ immigrants also focuses on societal attitudes. Mundangepfupfu (2019) states that certain people are continually faced with traumatic events and extreme brutality. Flockemann, Ngara, Roberts and Castle (2010) echoes Derrida by saying: "The foreigner is a destabilizing presence in our midst. By [her] mere presence amongst us [she] is posing questions- questions not only of who [she] is and what [her] presence signifies, but ultimately of who 'we' are and what we signify in relation to [her]" (In Mundangepfupfu, 2019, p. 42). Mungdangepfupfu (2019) honors Flockemann's comment by pointing out that it demonstrates that the immigrant 's presence forces people in many ways to reinforce their confidence in the country, the "we" that ties them together. The immigrant is destabilizing this national identity as it makes the "we" doubt their own existence and position, something they would not have done otherwise if not for her. Thus, in many ways, the immigrant awakens the citizen, and that can often not be a good thing, because the citizen may now become aware of all the flaws of the nation, and instead of defending the nation, targets the immigrant.

Mundangepfupfu (2019) refers to Mpe's novel *Welcome to Hillbrow* to illuminate the existence of homophobia and xenophobia in South Africa, and the intersection of these two forms of violence, especially in the case of double pariahs. Mundangepfupfu uses "double pariah" to explain that those caught between homophobia and xenophobia are disqualified by the State on the grounds of their nationality and sexual orientation. Such two overlapping identities have put them in a difficult position with other fellow immigrants as they face homophobic attacks.

Thus, Mundangepfupfu (2019) calls them the double pariah because they are marginalized because of their sexual identity and their nationality. In Mpe 's text, the double pariah is portrayed as a "contagion and fugitive" that the nation does not welcome (Mundangepfupfu, 2019, p. 46). The book also points to very interesting debates about who the guest is and who the host is (Mpe, 2001). Mpe (2001) gives a striking reflection of what was happening during Apartheid, how black people were seen as invaders, and aliens.

The survey conducted by Sutherland et al, (2016) with South Africans shows that the majority of South Africans feel that immigrants will never be completely respected, embraced and accepted. Gqola (2008),

> concurs that foreign nationals are often defined as nameless people, victims of violence, immigrants from the African continent; and when these marginalizing grammars and vocabularies are institutionalized and become the norm, they produce foreign bodies that are not only different but are safe to be exploited and confined in status and opportunities (p. 211).

Intersecting positions such as one's socio-economic status, one's residential location, one's educational background is said to have a tremendous impact on understanding how in South Africa, those who do not belong negotiate difference and xenophobia. It is obvious then that these binaries are not set, that they can change depending on one's class and how they are positioned in society.

A study conducted by Sutherland et al., (2016) is one of the studies in South Africa and Africa, in general that attempted to provide the demographics of LGBTQ people. It states that there were 530 000 women and men from both urban and rural population groups of all age groups classified as gender non-conforming, bisexual, lesbians, homosexual consistent with similar population ratios in many different parts of the world. Following are the graphical findings of the survey conducted. They show the South African's attitude towards the LGBTQ people.

FIGURE 1: WHAT SOUTH AFRICANS THINK AND FEEL ABOUT SAME SEX RELATIONSHIPS (SUTHERLAND ET AL., 2016).

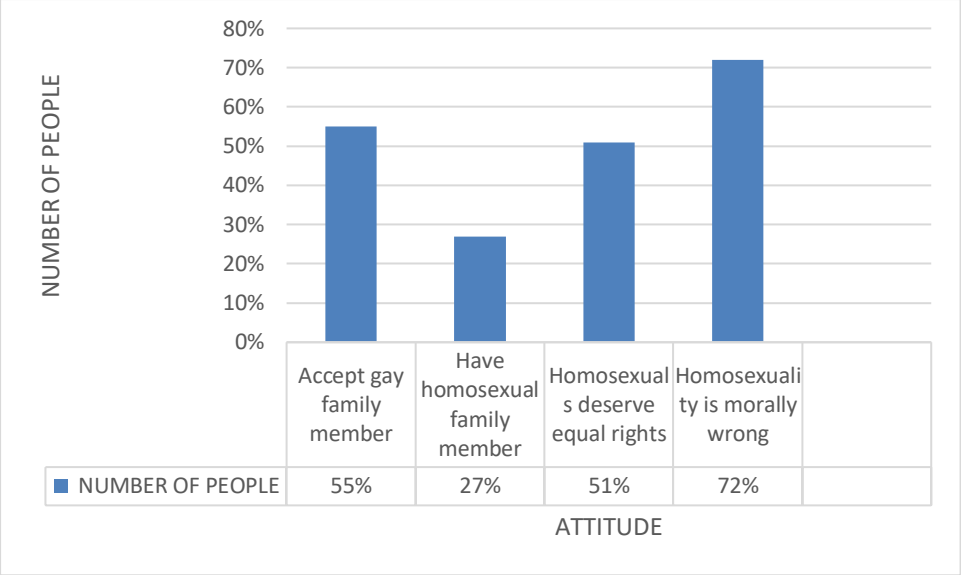


FIGURE 2: VIOLENCE TOWARDS NON-GENDER CONFORMING PERSONS (SUTHERLAND ET AL., 2016).

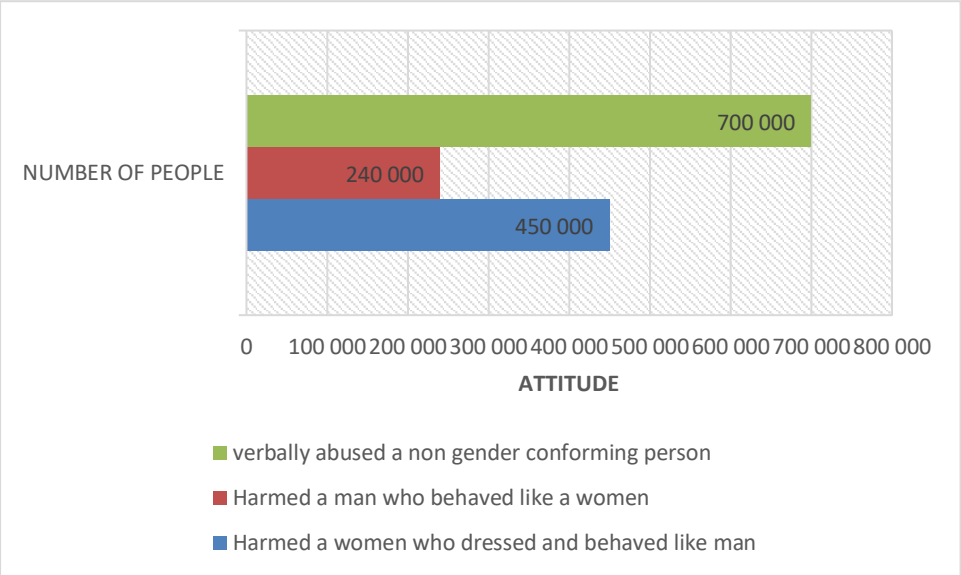


FIGURE 3: POPULAR EXPLANATIONS ABOUT SAME SEX ORIENTATION (SUTHERLAND ET AL., 2016).

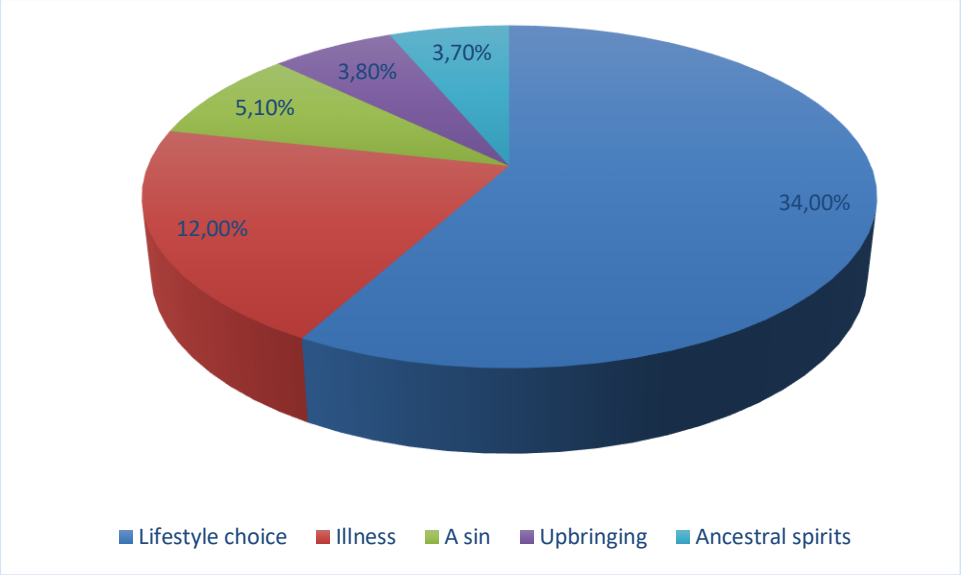
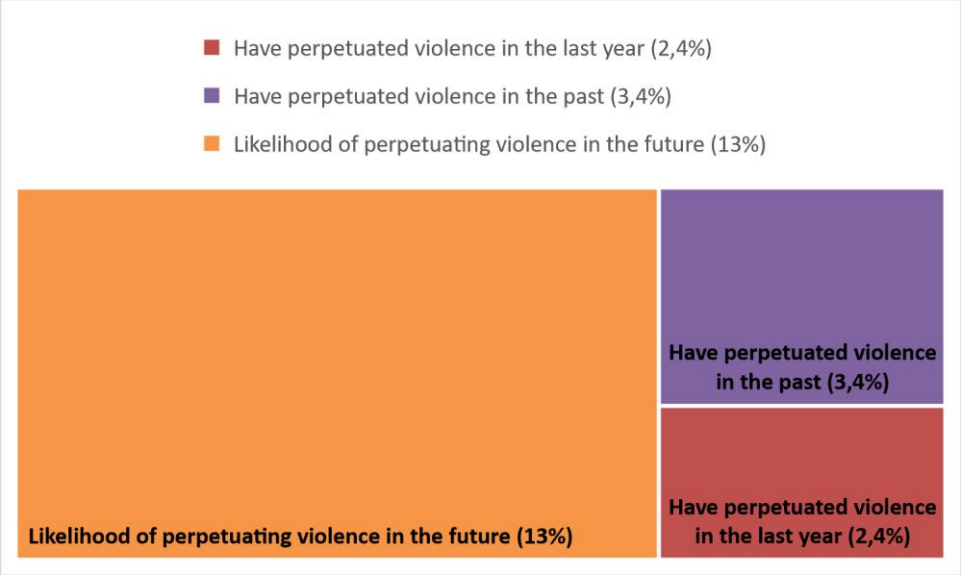


FIGURE 4: VIOLENT ATTITUDE TOWARDS IMMIGRANTS (SUTHERLAND ET AL., 2016)



The graphs show that it is important to look at other factors that influence the people's attitude towards the LGBTQ people in South Africa. These include gender, race, class, educational level, age, religion. Results from the survey show that in all the questions that were asked men are more likely than women to be intolerant of anyone who is gender non-conforming. Those who are above the age of 45 were said to be worse. Black people and coloureds were said to be more intolerant compared to white people, including those who regarded themselves to be highly religious. Moreover, those who had formal education and those who were staying in

urban areas were said to have a better understanding of sexual identity and gender expression. The participants were asked about their attitudes towards immigrants and a majority of them claimed that they might be violent towards immigrants (Sutherland et al, 2016).

A number of explanations are provided as to why some members of society tend to be homophobic. Fransis (2017) points out that there is limited literature available on LGBTQ experiences in schools. He argues that beyond policy, curriculum and pedagogy, there is a need to understand how gender and sexuality are perceived in contemporary schools. The challenges faced by LGBTQ students include harassment, rejection, avoidance, isolation from other students and teachers. Some students may even commit suicide because of that. In some cases, they may be threatened with expulsion based on their sexual identity (Butler, Alpaslan, Allen, and Astbury). Kowen and Davis (2006), too, stress the pervasive presence of lesbian heterosexism in schools and the neighborhoods that lesbians live in. They claim that "in the South African context, coming out means confronting a range of punitive social controls, including, among others, abandonment, rape, physical violence, censorship, and accusations of witchcraft" (p. 82–83)

Some teachers have been said to teach students that homosexuality is contagious. Thus, they had to be careful who they associated with in case they got infected (Msibi, 2012). Bhana's (2012a) study shows that in some schools it was not allowed to come out and it was unacceptable and considered inappropriate. Bhana (2012b) adds that the reason why homosexuals are not encouraged in schools is because the teachers do not want to be responsible for the outcome. All measures were put in place to deny the existence of different sexualities at school. Bhana (2012b), DePalma and Francis (2014) argue that the reason why we have such a problem in schools is because teachers are not equipped with the right knowledge and measures to deal with sexual diversity in schools. Thus, if they encounter such cases, they fail to respond constructively.

OUT LGBT Wellbeing (2016) conducted a quantitative study which included 638 school participants. The findings showed that 55% of the participants had endured verbal attacks; 11% had been raped or sexually assaulted. 18% stated that they have been physically abused, be it being beaten, kicked, or attacked. Those who were threatened with physical abuse constituted 35% of the total; 21% had objects thrown at them; 20% had damaged or lost personal belongings. Bhana's (2012b) study reveals that some of the teachers made it clear that the subject of homosexuality made them uncomfortable, the reason being that they do not have much knowledge about the subject.

In addition, religions also socialize individuals against those considered sexually deviant. Whipple (2012) notes that there are conflicting ideologies between homosexuality and majority of the religious institutions. Islam and Christianity are the most popular religious beliefs in South Africa and Africa at large. Both Christianity and Islam view homosexuality in a similar way in its simplest of ways. Both the Qur'an and The Bible reject homosexual activity, at least left to the widely accepted interpretations. However, in their application of this principle there does seem to be some distinction between the two sects (Whipple, 2012).

The revisionists suggested that the Church should revisit and think more clearly about the discourses of homosexuality, claims Lockard (2008). They suggest that scientific evidence suggests that homosexuality is a permanent state because it is genetically inherited. Thus, the Church needs to begin to be more appreciative of God's creation of different sexualities. (Austriaco, 2003). Lockard (2008) claims that many members of the church seem to have a dilemma as to what constitutes Christian teaching. She goes on to say that those who seem to be liberal have the idea that the Church is missing some point. They argue that the Church needs to make progress and move with the times. They believe that the Church needs to modernize and appoint leaders who are flexible and not stuck in traditional ways of doing things. On the other hand, the conservative and traditional members of the church still find homosexuality problematic and unacceptable within Christian values.

Moreover, Lockard (2008) says that homosexuals feel unrecognized in church premises most of the time. They are not seen and respected as human beings. The assumptions held by the members of the church are that no aliens should be present in the house of God. The fundamental issue facing today's church leaders is whether they should endorse and fight for LGBTQ civil rights. Though, one thing that appears to preclude this from occurring is the fact that Christians are reluctant to take this approach because it is opposed by the Bible and believed to be morally wrong. Instead, Davis (1993) suggests that what is wrong is to contribute to the marginalization, abuse and harming of homosexuals by Christians.

Religion plays a huge role in marginalizing those who engage in the same sex relationship. For example, Islam and Christianity have questioned the morality of same-sex practices. Both religions have served to deny and question the morality and existence of same-sex relationships. Bible verses, laws, are often used as justification to silence those who are LGBTQ especially among Christians (Msibi, 2011). This seemingly inconsistent recognition and use of Christianity obviously raises a problem when it comes to discussing the sodomite-free Africa debate.

Tradition also plays a role in fermenting homophobic attitudes. Kerrigan (2014, p.35) argues that "family and marriage align with the concept of Ubuntu, where the self is perceived to be socially formed and maintained rather than merely through individual consciousness or characteristics". Instead of becoming elements of individual identity, gender and sexuality are also often subordinated to marriage, procreation and family life. Under this context, it can seem alien and immoral to follow a non-related sexual orientation or gender identity. As Epprecht (2015) points out, sexuality was thus not perceived to be an individual preference or sexuality but, in a way, belonged to the broader society.

Epprecht (2015) adds on to say that:

> This sense is extended beyond the present by reverence towards ancestors, so that the social domain merges with the spiritual. Even beyond the grave, social obligations to marry and have children were extended. In order to maintain their memory and power as benevolent spirits through the generations, ancestors needed abundant offspring
>
> (p. 36).

She adds on to say that therefore, social and religious discourses may overlap with each other. The Catholic Church recognizes that some people have very deep-seated homosexual feelings, but teaches that these feelings should be repressed rather than acted upon.

Physical Violence against lesbians in South Africa

Literature on lesbianism in South Africa cannot avoid the challenges that these women face, including violence. In the context of an epidemic of gender-based violence in South Africa, discrimination against lesbians, gays, transgender people and gender nonconforming individuals exists (Human Right Watch, 2011). The normalization of such attitudes and forms of gender expression for women as acceptable or normal exposes them to violence (Human Rights Watch, 2011).

Moffett (2006) claims that South Africa is said to be one of the countries with a high rate of reported sexual assault on women. This is quite disturbing, especially given that it is not a country at war. It is estimated that out of three women in South Africa, one can expect to be raped at least once in her lifetime. Again, there is a possibility that out of four women, one will be physically abused by their partner. Boonzaier (2017) adds the lack of success in combating gender-based abuse produces an atmosphere of injustice and limits the willingness of women to seek justice.

The work of Foucault (1980) points out that there is a link between the exercise of power and sexuality and sexual activities. He stresses that the fact that humans are molded in such a way that they will have to express their sexuality in what society deems normal is a form of control. His claims are supported by Nel who stresses that in our society the politicization and control of sexuality is "still maintained because sexuality is a highly value-laden terrain" (Nel, 2009, p. 36). Tamale shares similar views by pointing out that any deviation from heteronormativity in sexual activity and sexual partners is considered "pathological," "deviant," "unnatural," and condemned in the strongest possible terms (2007, p.19).

Literature on black lesbians in South Africa illuminates the problem of violence which they frequently face. In a society where gender-based violence is prevalent, and women constitute the majority of victims, there are difficulties regarding how best to characterize this violence. When discussing the issue of violence against lesbians, two factors have been identified as problematic. Jody Kollapen, former chairperson of the South African Commission on Human Rights in 2010, said that the first factor had to do with the institutionalized prejudice that resulted from the historical social division of people into different categories, resulting in different values (Human rights Watch 2011). He adds on to say that there is proof that violence against lesbians, transgender people and nonconforming individuals exists in "a wider context of abuse, including sexual and gender-based abuse, misogynistic social attitudes and patriarchal cultural norms" (p. 23). Academics and the activists claim that the legacy of Apartheid and colonialism that centered on violence has been attributed as the main historical explanations of the current violence in South Africa (CSVR, 2008).

Morrissey (2013, p.9) aptly asks: "is it gender violence, sexual violence or racialized violence?". In response to the question, she observes that "what is needed is an account of how the interlocking systems of patriarchy, heterosexism, racism and classism create different layers of vulnerability to violence for different categories of women". To demonstrate this, Morrissey (2013) explains how rape is particularly positioned as a weapon against black lesbians in South Africa and that black lesbians are discriminated against not only because of their sexual orientation but also because of their black subject position. There is therefore a recognition that being black and being a lesbian intersect to create unique experiences.

Mkhize, Bennett, Reddy and Moletsane (2010) tackle the subject of violence by observing how activist discourses on the violence against women take a heteronormative approach at the expense of the violence against lesbians in South Africa. They call for nuanced approaches to gender-based violence, which recognize that the experiences of lesbians are different from that

of heterosexual women. This is a stance Naidu and Mkhize (2005) take earlier in a study of gender-based violence. A Human Rights Watch Report (2011), for instance, reveals the extent of violence perpetrated towards the transgender men and black lesbians in South Africa.

Moreau (2015) sees the continuation of violence against lesbians in South Africa as a failure of the South African justice system based around the Nonkonyane trial which involved the case of a black lesbian who was stoned to death in Khayelitsha Township, Cape Town. The article points out the failures of the legal system to protect the rights of LGBTQ people. It cites examples of extreme homophobic violence in townships and the nature of violence confronting lesbians and how they are projected as outsiders in the communities. The accounts on violence against black lesbians in South Africa are important in raising awareness to what appears to be a prevalent problem. Yet, there is barely information on the degree of violence targeting immigrant lesbians.

In South Africa, homophobia has gendered undertones, with women being "correctively" raped in order to make them "real" and "proper" women. (Msibi, 2009; Nel and Judge, 2008). Research conducted but not published by the Forum for the Empowerment of Women reported that a total of 46 lesbians from the Johannesburg townships participated in the study. Results from the findings showed that 41% of the participants had been raped before and 9% had survived rape. 17% of the participants narrated that they had been verbally abused by the member of the public and 37% cited that they had been assaulted (Nel and Judge 2008). Meises (2009) adds on to say that evidence shows that there are at least 31 lesbian women in South Africa who have been murdered since the period of 1998.

The above figures are extremely high and disturbing. They show the extent of gender-based homophobic violence in South Africa among sexual minorities, where “gays and lesbians continue to be denied cultural recognition and are subject to shaming, harassment, discrimination and violence. Violence against women is increasing and there is a particularly vicious edge to some lesbian attacks” (Cock, 2003, p.41). Gender issues are said to be the main driving force behind violence in society, and men feel that they must assert their power over women and other men as well. Gendered homophobic violence perpetrators justify their actions by stating that through violence, sexual assault and rape, women who try to behave and act like men need to be punished, disciplined and corrected (Nel and Judge 2008; Reid and Dirsuweit 2002).

Msibi (2011) argues that the former South African Minister of Arts and Culture Lulu Xingwana left people in shock after leaving an art exhibition in anger. One of the pictures depicted was an affectionate lesbian woman. When asked about her behavior, her response was that "the exhibition was immoral and went against nation building and social cohesion" (p. 11). On the same note, Jon Qwelane who is open about his homophobic sentiments, wrote an article on his column on Daily Sun in 2008 where he compared homosexuality to bestiality. His justification was based on the fact that he was doing what is good for the society because homosexuality is morally and culturally wrong. What raised eyebrows is the fact that he was not held accountable for his actions but instead, he went on to be appointed Ambassador of South Africa in Uganda by the Zuma administration. Uganda is one of the countries in Africa that has strict policies and laws towards the LGBTQ community.

Matebeni (2011) claims that there would be no justice at all if the discourses of feminism and race were left out when dealing with black lesbian sexuality and gender problems in Johannesburg. She adds that it will compromise the problems that we aim to tackle. Through her study, she provides an account of the problems posed to her by the black lesbian participants from Uganda, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Namibia. Matebeni (2011) states that being a lesbian in Africa is a constant struggle to negotiate one's identity and to be conscious of the danger associated with it, such as detention or violation of human rights.

Being recognized as a lesbian seems to be complicated and liberating in a sense, as lesbians can easily approach one another, accept one another and create a sense of belonging as they share the same identity. However, one is exposed to victimization and violence because of their sexuality. Pride is one of the types of activism that has gained prominence over the years in Johannesburg. The townships, such as Soweto and the nearby areas of KwaThema, have also gained prominence. Matebeni (2011) says that, more often than not, gays and lesbians have to be mindful of their dress code, their conduct, their mannerisms, and how they portray themselves for fear of being judged and discriminated against.

Experiences of rape and other forms of sexual torture directed at lesbians due to their sexual identity have been identified by many participants, especially from the townships (Matebeni, 2011). Research findings from Matebeni's (2011) paper highlights some of these abuses. In her article, for example, she says that, 19-year-old student Lerato narrated her ordeal by saying that a gang in her community abducted her and her girlfriend when she was 15 years old. They were abducted for five days when they were going to school. During those five days they were both gang raped, and they were told that they are being taught a lesson for being lesbians and

rejecting men. Four years after that incident Lerato was able to share her story while her partner was still suffering from psychological trauma. No arrests were made even though the perpetrators were known in the community. Lerato therefore remains in constant fear that they will be a repeat of the traumatic ordeal. Matebeni (2011) notes that the painful thing is that if a member of the family presents as a lesbian, the entire family is at risk of being assaulted. 35-year-old mother of four Hlobo says that her children were abducted and gang raped because of her sexuality. The perpetrators were community members and they claimed that they were curing them because they did not want them to be lesbian.

Steyn and van Zyl (2009) assert that women's bodies are located at the center of the violence act. This position argues that "it is the meanings attached to non-hegemonic bodies and their desires that othering is perpetuated, and upon whom different forms of exclusion, oppression and violence are perpetrated. The body becomes the site of discursive power and struggle" (Steyn and van Zyl, 2009, p.4). This power struggle is made visible by bodies seen to carry and transmit disease, lesbian bodies and bodies that are independent of the sexuality of the men.

There are two frameworks that can be utilized to understand the forms of violence that are happening in this context. Salo and Gqola (2006, p.4) describe these as "men's desire to control women's sexuality." Examples of the South African rape crisis, where one out of every four men admits rape (Smith, 2009), indicate this. That can be seen in how violence toward lesbians is geared against their sexual identity, alleging that the sexuality of women is seen as property of men. The second framework is the concept of "corrective" rape. A number of organizations working with the lesbian community report that they receive numerous cases of lesbians being raped because of their identity. Curative corrective rape has been identified as a trend, that is being done with the intention of sexual torture and harming lesbian women who do not conform to heterosexual expectations (Mkhize, Bennett, Reddy and Moletsane, 2010; Bucher, 2009; Muholi, 2004).

Apart from the rape cases that have been reported, a number of lesbians are said to have been murdered because of their sexual orientation. Matebeni (2011) says that cases of murder are difficult to contextualize compared to cases of rape. This is because it is often unclear if the murder of the victim was linked to their sexual orientation or not. In both cases, the arrest of the suspects seems to be a challenge. This is because, at times, there is no police investigation, there is a lack of evidence and other unspecific delays. Currently violent acts committed out of prejudice are treated in South Africa the same way other violent acts are treated. This means that hate crimes are not classified as different forms of crimes.

There is no legislation per se that categorizes hate crimes. This makes the recording, documentation and prosecution of these crimes difficult or impossible (Matebeni, 2011). Report from Human Rights Watch (2011) alleges that the South African Police Service reported all the violent crimes in one registry. This means that any crimes committed as a result of prejudice or hatred towards another person, homophobic crimes, were registered as forms of assault under one category. The challenge of having all violent crimes recorded under one category is that violence or hatred directed to some people remain invisible or hidden in police records. Gontek (2009) and Muholi (2004) point out that efforts are being made, mostly by activist groups, to ensure that hate crimes are included in the legislation as a separate category of violence. They attest to the need for legislative clarity. This means that the prosecution or sentencing of such crimes is clear and justice is served. Unfortunately, these are still not advanced (Matebeni, 2011). However, the government has recently attempted to develop policies and legislation to combat these types of intersecting marginalities. One of the steps taken by the government is the creation of a National Action Plan to combat racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance (National Action Plan, 2019).

Kohn (2001) points out that the problem lies within the justice system. He says that "generally the society is premised on a hierarchy of social classes- based on race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, wealth, education level and so on. This social hierarchy transfers to the legal realm. Those accused of offending someone above them in social status are likely to be handled more severely than those offending someone below them" (p. 259). Instead of fighting to include legislation on hate crimes, Kohn (2001) argues that the criminal justice system is the key to ensuring a fair and secure community. He maintains that it is based on these social hierarchies and that this needs to be challenged. He concludes by saying that the means of invalidating, erasing and silencing lesbian sexuality work in ways that show unfairness, injustices, human rights violation in our democratic society (Kohn, 2001).

A number of reports on violence against women are available. However, it is unfortunate that many of them do not include the lesbian experience. Matebeni (2011) says that even in studies that look at violence against women, lesbians are often forgotten. She says this is very problematic in the sense that anti-lesbian violence cannot be separated from other forms of violence directed at women. Violence against lesbians is experienced in many ways: as women, as black women, and as lesbians.

There are some people in South Africa who believe that sexuality can be changed by sexually attacking those who are gender non-conforming (Booysen, n.d). This can be demonstrated by

the number of cases of corrective rape in the country (Booysen, n.d; Matebeni, 2011). Corrective rape happens when non-gender conforming people are sexually abused with the intent and expectation that they will be healed or that their sexuality will alter (Boeshart, 2014; Koraan and Geduld, 2015). Lake (2014) attests to the fact that it is the hetero-patriarchal that enforces these attitudes.

Booysen (n.d) echoes Crenshaw's (1991) definition of intersectionality as she discusses the intersectional history of black lesbians in South Africa. She shares that their discrimination is related to their sexual orientation, gender identity and race. Brown (2012) continues to say that the problems of homophobia, gender inequality and racism have been put to bear by the apartheid era and colonialism. Lewis (2011) point out that the African body and sexuality have been depicted as hypersexual, barbarous, grotesque in contrast to white bodies and their sexuality. White bodies were depicted as pure, civil and the reflection of beauty.

Evidence shows that South Africa is one of the top countries in the world with the highest number of violence against women (Boeshart, 2014). The whole nation is said to have joined hands in the fight against the abuse of children and women. However, the issues of marginalization and violence against black lesbians in particular are often ignored, not only by the public, but also by health workers, police officers as well. Additionally, there has been a significant amount of work on sexual assault, rape and violence against women, but not specifically on black lesbian women. Black lesbian women are especially at risk of continuous discrimination in sexual violence media coverage, which frequently create the issue as a person or minority problem rather than a societal problem (Booysen, n.d). Those who have tried to report their cases to the police station confess that they have found the police to be homophobic and xenophobic, they also get ridiculed without their cases being heard (Human Rights Watch, 2011). Booysens (n.d) says it is rare for us to hear about the violence of black lesbians in the media or in the papers. Cases of violence against black lesbians are rarely reported or publicized.

Lesbians are also not spared from intimate partner violence. Campo and Tayton (2015) are of the idea that intimate partner violence has not received much recognition in policy and practice. They add on to say that the society has not yet recognized its existence, yet research shows that LGBTIQ experiences intimate partner violence in the same way as heterosexuals. However, as of late, such cases seem to be recognized by countries like Canada and Australia (Ball and Hayes, 2009). Factors such as transphobia, heterosexism, homophobia have a major impact on

how intimate partner violence is perceived within the LGBTIQ community (Campo and Taylor, 2015).

Calton, Cattaneo and Gebhard (2015) claim that much has not been done in relation to this type of violence. Assumptions that intimate partner violence occurs only within the heterosexual framework whereby males are perpetrators and females are victims have overshadowed government efforts, policy-making, the justice system, research and other practical responses to address the issue of intimate violence within the LGBTIQ community (Ball and Hayes, 2009).

In addition, the other reasons why intimate partner violence is not given much attention is because of the failure to recognize that abuse can exist outside the dominant gender power dynamics (Irwin, 2006; Ristock, 2011). Domestic and family violence, intimate partner violence, have all been viewed and understood through the lens of heterosexuality. Calton et al., (2015) observe that there is no specific theory per se that can help us understand intimate partner violence within the LGBTIQ community. Intimate partner violence within the LGBTIQ community can be understood as a result of existing gender inequalities, traditional gender attitudes and roles, as well as patriarchal structures (Bell and Naugle, 2008; Woodin and O'Leary (2009). This is compounded by negative attitudes such as stigmatization, discrimination that is often associated with people who engage in same-sex relationships. These kinds of attitudes act as a barrier to collecting data and recording partner violence in LGBTIQ communities as many cases go unreported (Lorenzetti, Wells, Callaghan and Logie, 2015).

Campo and Tayton (2015) argue that research has shown that homo / bi / transphobia and heterosexism are measures that violent partners use to exercise their power within LGBTIQ relationships. Some of the forms of abuse also include threats to disclose the partner's HIV status or their partner's sexuality. These kinds of threats can result in one losing their job, their family, their children or their relationships (Ball and Hayes, 2009; Calton et al., 2015).

An abused partner may be manipulated to believe that no one will believe their story if they have to report it because of the negative attitudes that have been fostered around the LGBTIQ community (Campo and Tayton, 2015). The fear of loneliness and isolation may also force the abused partner to stay in the relationship (Parry and O'Neal, 2015). Kay and Jefferies (2010) add that understanding violence as something that occurs within the heteronormative lens is also a contributing factor to the understanding and perception of intimate violence by the

abused partner. They believe that it only happens between a male and a female, whereby the male is the perpetrator and the female is the victim (Campo and Tayton, 2015).

Campo and Tayton (2015) explain that people often tend to assume that women do not exercise physical power over women, and therefore issues of intimate violence among lesbians are often ignored. She adds that the results of research with LGBTIQ survivors of intimacy violence show that some abusers tend to lie or play victim in queer communities, shelters or support groups. Therefore, it is significant for service providers to listen carefully to the story that is being told in order to intervene accordingly (Peterman and Dixon, 2003). According to the report from AIDS Council New South Wales [ACON] (2011) there is a lack of understanding between service providers, such as social counsellors and those in the health sector, of possible remedies that may be required by abused LGBTIQ persons. The matter may be sensitive as well as some may intentionally or unintentionally discriminate. The situation is also aggravated by the fact that the police are judgmental when it comes to the LGBTIQ matters.

Research has also addressed how violence against lesbians is framed. Zway and Boonzaier (2015a; 2015b) say that there is a tendency to make lesbian victims of discrimination and assault instead of seeing them as survivors. Morrissey (2013) points out that society needs to change its mentality and the language that it uses when it engages with survivors of assault and discrimination. Positive interaction and mindfulness of the language they use can empower them help them acknowledge their agency. Morrissey (2013) adds that the media portray black lesbians as unnatural and unAfrican, which encourages a culture of violent rape. She adds that even the language used in films, reports, documentaries, newspaper articles should not be underestimated in reinforcing hierarchical discriminatory views on women's sexuality. Macnamara (2005) concludes by saying that the media has so much power to influence public opinion on specific issues, as well as how information is provided and received by the public.

Boeshart (2014) analyzed how the 2009-2013 newspaper reports portrayed survivors of sexual assault. She argued that media reporting has shown indifference in favor of political and social unity to the living conditions of homosexual women in South Africa. The study shows that cases of lesbian sexual assault are not reported fairly to the public. Reports often suggest that violence against lesbians occurs only in townships. These kinds of media narratives silence the experiences of other lesbians who do not stay in townships. In addition, those staying in townships are stigmatized and viewed as victims of sexual assault even if they are not.

In addition, Booysen (n.d) postulates that the media tend to paint the black township of South Africa as dangerous. The media also portray black men as the primary perpetrators of violence, and the victims as women of some class (Boeshart, 2014). Van der Schyff (2015) also studied how newspaper articles covered sexual harassment and rape cases among lesbians. Therefore, the salience of media accounts of sexual harassment against lesbians is diminished when contrasted with rape coverage.

The UNAIDS report (2015) emphasizes the importance of language in shaping our beliefs and shaping our attitudes. The report is against the use of the term "corrective rape." They argue that the term corrective rape implies that something is wrong and needs to be corrected. Instead, they suggest using the term "homophobic rape" (UNAIDS, 2015). Hames (2011) says that the repeated use of “corrective rape” has created an image of lesbianism as unnatural and pathological. This reinforces the notions of division, labeling and othering, which make it appear as if violence against black lesbians and their sexuality is justifiable.

Socio-economic challenges faced by LGBTQ immigrants

The literature on the challenge’s LGBTQ immigrants face mainly focuses on the broader community and less on the distinct communities which comprise the LGBTQ community. Matebeni (2011) notes that the social and economic position of lesbian people plays a major role in their experiences. She adds that those of the middle class have different experiences of discrimination and prejudice compared to those who are economically and socially vulnerable. Similar findings are noted by Marnell, Oliveira and Khan (2021). For example, they claim that “it is not just their identities that put them at risk, but also their economic position” and “those who are poor are made more vulnerable by their inability to access social support” (p. 15).

Reports indicate that lack of transportation and secure housing exposes LGBTQ people to violence and vulnerability (Human Rights Watch, 2011). The report was conducted with 121 people. The authors claim that most of the interviewees stressed that the rigid cultural and social norms of the desired masculine and feminine behavior led them to live in fear and anxiety (Human Rights Watch, 2011). They had to be aware of their sexuality all the time. This affected their school relationship. Some ended up falling out, they experienced challenges in getting and keeping a job, and they were often mistreated and ridiculed in their homes and public spaces.

It is noted that only a few people report cases that have been committed against them. It's the same case with sexual abuse that happens to the larger population (Sutherland et al, 2016). The few people who report are often treated badly and discriminated against by the police and other service providers who are supposed to help them (Human Right Watch, 2011). Geographical location appears to have a huge impact on the experiences of LGBTQ people. Organizations working with LGBTQ people note that black lesbians and transgender men living in informal settlements, peri-urban areas, townships, rural areas have been the most vulnerable among the LGBTQ population in South Africa. The report further states that this is due to the history of South Africa, which has led to inequalities and other forms of social ills in society.

Black lesbians struggle with finding safe spaces in South Africa. Canham (2017, p. 1) observes that "occupation of physical space is deeply informed by the intersecting confluence of race, class, age, sexuality, and place". The study uses the occupation of the city's social spaces to measure the extent to which lesbians in South Africa can exercise their rights. The argument conveyed is that geographical location has a bearing on the individual's status in society. For instance, there are sharp distinctions in terms of the spaces white lesbians and black lesbians occupy. Most black lesbians find themselves in spaces where they are perpetually at risk. Salo, Ribas, Lopes and Zamboni (2010) observe that in the black townships of South Africa, the claim of subtle lesbian and gay identities arises from the racial and socioeconomic divisions that have marked the urban landscape since apartheid. As a result, sexual minorities are still occupying marginalized places in townships where their lives remain precarious.

While much attention has been paid to the experiences of lesbians in South Africa, especially around matters of health and violence, there is little on black lesbian immigrants. Work by Martin (2012), for instance, focuses on the notion of safe spaces for LGBTQ refugees. The study cites cases of corrective rape against lesbians and the constant threat of violence gay and lesbian refugees face especially in the townships. The study is nevertheless about broader LGBTQ experiences in Cape Town. For much of the discussion, gay and lesbian appear together. The sections on lesbian refugees are limited to the question of violence which is just one of the many challenges black lesbian immigrants are likely to face based on the multiple positionalities. While this study provides many insights on lesbian migrant experiences, especially around questions of security, the approach does not dwell much on how identities coalesce to create a unique experience for black lesbian immigrants.

Husakouskaya (2017) looks at black transgender internal migrants in Gauteng and the challenges they face in negotiating spaces of belonging in South Africa. The research is useful

in demonstrating the complexities of transition from one space to the other as a sexual minority. Similarly, Camminga (2019) looks at the circumstances surrounding the migration of transgender-identified individuals, from other African countries, to South Africa.

Mundangepfupfu (2019) says that the availability of refugee camps for asylum seekers and refugees in most countries upon arrival is a blessing for many refugees. Nevertheless, asylum-seekers and refugees in South Africa do not have such access due to the unavailability of refugee camps. They are forced to adjust within the community upon arrival (PASSOP, 2012). Although housing is a critical issue for most immigrants arriving in South Africa. The case is aggravated if someone identifies as LGBTQ immigrant in a community that is xenophobic and homophobic.

The PASSOP (2012) report, which was conducted with 25 refugees and asylum seekers highlights the challenges of seeking accommodation. Discrimination and violence were some of the challenges faced by LGBTQ immigrants in the communities they lived. Many who described themselves as queer suggested that their sexual identity was an obstacle to accommodation access. They were discriminated against by their tenants, neighbors and even the society at large. In some cases, they were also evicted from where they were living if the landlord found that they were queer.

Besides housing, immigrants were also struggling to get a job and those who were working emphasized that xenophobia and homophobia were the order of the day (PASSOP, 2012). The Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) is said to be incompetent to respond to conflicts brought forth by queer immigrants (Mundangepfupfu, 2019). These individuals are rejected on the basis of their national and sexual identities. The PASSOP report however states that it is not always the case that the CCMA is incompetent, but that the process and specifications required to resolve the cases are always tedious and almost impossible. Mundangepfupfu (2019, p.bb) says that we should not hesitate to differentiate "between a body that just experiences xenophobia and a body that exists at the intersection of xenophobia and homophobia".

There is a considerable focus on South African black lesbians' failure to access adequate healthcare and the physical and psychological problems they face as a result of discrimination and the challenges of coming out. The literature generally looks at access to health, occurrence of sexually transmitted illnesses, responses to illnesses, treatment experience and discrimination. Daly, Spicer and Willan (2016) highlight the discrepancy between policies on

sexual rights and health efforts around the risks faced by women who have sex with other women. Müller and Hughes (2016) take a broader approach by looking at the general state of health among sexual minority women in Southern Africa.

What is clear from the literature is that black lesbians face a lot of discrimination in their attempts to access health care in South Africa. This also arises from myths around lesbianism and sexually transmitted illnesses (Wikramanayake, Paschen Wolf, Matebeni, Reddy, Southey Swartz and Sandfort, 2020). Health practitioners lack knowledge or deny the fact that women who have sex with other women are also vulnerable to sexually transmitted illnesses. Interestingly, forced sex among women in general has contributed to some of the challenges that lesbians face in Southern Africa. These experiences of forced sex are common among lesbian and bisexual women in Southern Africa (Sandfort, Frazer, Somjeni, Matebeni, Reddy and Southey-Swartz, 2015). As a result, sexual minority women end up battling HIV/ STI, Drug abuse and mental problems because programs and interventions around HIV and AIDS have ignored lesbians (Matebeni, Reddy, Sandfort and Southey-Swartz, 2013). Sandfort et al. (2015) point out that the policy makers and those working within the health sector must address the health challenges that are faced by lesbian and bisexual women. They add on to say that the negative attitudes towards the lesbians and laws which criminalizes same-sex relationships should not be used as a tool to deny the lesbian access to health care facilities.

Mundangepfupfu (2019) recalls the events that occurred in South Africa in the 2000s during the HIV pandemic when immigrants were denied access to health care facilities as they were considered to be carriers of the virus. He further challenges the South African Constitution as to whether it lives up to its word. He continues by stating that it is surprising that most detainees have been violated and access to medical care services has been limited. Mundangepfupfu (2019) gives an experience of neglect at the Lindela Repatriation Center. He provides a description of the death of Danai, a Zimbabwean queer immigrant, whose death was not explicit but points to the lack of access to his medicine. The report provided summarizes the Lindela repatriation center as “an unsanitary environment, littered with abuse, neglect and failure to respect the rule of law” (Mundangepfupfu, 2019, p. 89). The detainees at Lindela claimed that, for example, they were not exposed to any form of medical check-up or screening prior to being taken to detention centers, which means that those in need of medical attention are left to suffer and die very slowly (Washinyira, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

What the literature review has shown is that literature on the intersectional experiences of black lesbian immigrants is scant. There is therefore need for research to tap into this area and provide information on how black lesbian migrants as people variously located in minority spaces negotiate their intersectional experience. In order to achieve this, intersectionality will be used as the theoretical frame of the study. This is in recognition of the fact that black lesbian immigrants deal with multiple oppressive systems which coalesce to shape their experiences in South Africa.

Intersectionality "is a term which was coined by Crenshaw to describe overlapping or intersecting social identities and related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination" (1989, p.149). Crenshaw argues that the key aspect on intersectionality lies in its recognition that multiple oppressions are not to be treated independently, but should be looked at as one experience. Identities interact in constructing experiences and oppression which cannot be fully captured by simply adding subjectivities associated with these identities (1989). The notion of a single identity politics fails to consider differences within groups. Intersectionality looks at patriarchy, racism, class, gender, age and other categories as divisions that create inequality among different groups of people (Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectionality, therefore, provides a nuanced understanding of how race interlocks with sexuality and nationality. So far there appears to be a recognition of how race and sexuality intersect. Yet, it is difficult to ignore the other layer of oppression, being a foreign national, which black lesbian immigrants have to deal with.

Taylor, Hines and Casey (2011) assert that identities interact in constructing experiences and oppression which cannot be fully captured by simply adding subjectivities associated with these identities. The notion of "a single identity politics" fails to consider differences within groups. To speak of black lesbians in South Africa is to homogenize experiences which are varied along the lines of class, geography and nationality, among other iterations. Differences within sexual minorities should be disaggregated in order to specify those differences and have a more nuanced understanding. Intersectionality will therefore be utilized in this research because it allows for the exploration of the experiences of black lesbian immigrants at the intersections of social identities rather than as single entities.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the literature related to this study. The literature included definitions of key terms used in research, LGBTQ immigration to South Africa, South African's perceptions of same-sex relationships, physical violence against lesbians in South Africa, socio-economic challenges faced by LGBTQ immigrants. The intersectionality framework was also discussed and how it forms the basis of the study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology that was used in this study. It includes the research design, and data collection methods, a description of the study sites and participants as well as the data analysis. The chapter concludes with a reflection on ethical considerations and reflexivity.

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is "a systematic method used to study meanings, experiences, understandings, views and the behaviors of individuals. It is based on an interpretive perspective, which explains that reality is defined by the participant's interpretation from their own views" (Silverman, 2016, p.32). This approach was suitable for the study because it sought to collect experiences, interactions, stories and narratives of black lesbian immigrants who came from different parts of Africa. Key to the research included their narratives of selves and the host communities where they find themselves, their awareness of marginality and how they were variously located, and the strategies they adopted in order to deal with the challenges which they faced.

A qualitative approach was chosen due to the following advantages: it created openness allowing the researcher and the participants to engage deeply on the topic that was being discussed. It used a fluid operational structure instead of rigid guidelines. It was also subjective (Taylor, Bogdan and Devault, 2015). Silverman (2016) says that the research questions ask the what (i.e., describes what is going on) and the how (i.e., how opinions are fashioned), as compared to the why questions, which seeks to find a comparison, like in quantitative studies. Therefore, the qualitative approach enabled the research to gather participants' perceptions, meanings, behaviors, views, experiences which cannot be quantified.

The qualitative approach was exploratory. An exploratory design is conducted for a problem or theme that is under-researched or has not been clearly defined (Creswell, 2013). Taylor, Bogdan and Devault (2015) explain that an exploratory research design aims to gain insights into problems, phenomena or individuals when it seems less, or no research, was done. The study was exploratory because its intention was to "discover new thoughts, meanings and gather new understandings" (Cresswell, 2013, p.135) and increase knowledge of post migration identities and the intersectional experiences of black lesbian immigrant in South Africa.

An exploratory qualitative approach was significant for this research as it addressed the research questions, aims and objectives. The choice of this approach was motivated by the fact that there is limited literature, within or outside the context of South Africa, which explores the intersectional experiences of black lesbian immigrants. Creswell (2013) proposes that the qualitative approach is especially useful for an exploratory study where there is limited knowledge on the topic that is being researched on. Another reason of considering using qualitative approach in this study was the fact that it enabled the participants to tell their lived experiences through their personal stories.

Study setting

The research was carried out in the City of Johannesburg.The selection of Johannesburg as a research site rested on two important reasons. Firstly, Johannesburg is identified as one of the main destinations for various types of immigrants coming from different countries in Africa (Landau, Ramjathan-Keogh and Singh, 2005). This makes the city suitable pool for participants who meet the study criteria. Secondly, the researcher is based in Johannesburg and has links with lesbian individuals and The Fruit Basket organization as well as GALA, an organization based at the University of Witwatersrand which works closely with the LGBTQ community.

Brief description of the study site

Johannesburg is situated in the province of Gauteng. In South Africa, it is said to be the largest city and an economic hub for many. It is often famously referred to as Jo'burg, Egoli, or Jozi (Municipalities of South Africa, 2018). It is also known as the city of migrants (Crush, 2012). At the beginning of the 1800s, settlers from all over the world and the country flooded into the city to work in the gold mines. South Africa and (in particular, Johannesburg) became an enticing destination for workers, merchants, visitors, tourists, asylum seekers etcetera after 1990 and the fall of Apartheid itself (Crush, 2012).

The 2020 population of Johannesburg is now estimated at 5.8 million (World Population Review, 2020). The population of Johannesburg was 910,550 in 1950. Since 2015, Johannesburg has increased by 797,943, which represents a 3.01 percent annual change. The following graphs and tables represent the diverse population in Johannesburg, Gauteng.

FIGURE 5: DEMOGRAPHIC POPULATION ACCORDING TO RACE IN JOHANNESBURG (WORLD POPULATION REVIEW, 2020).

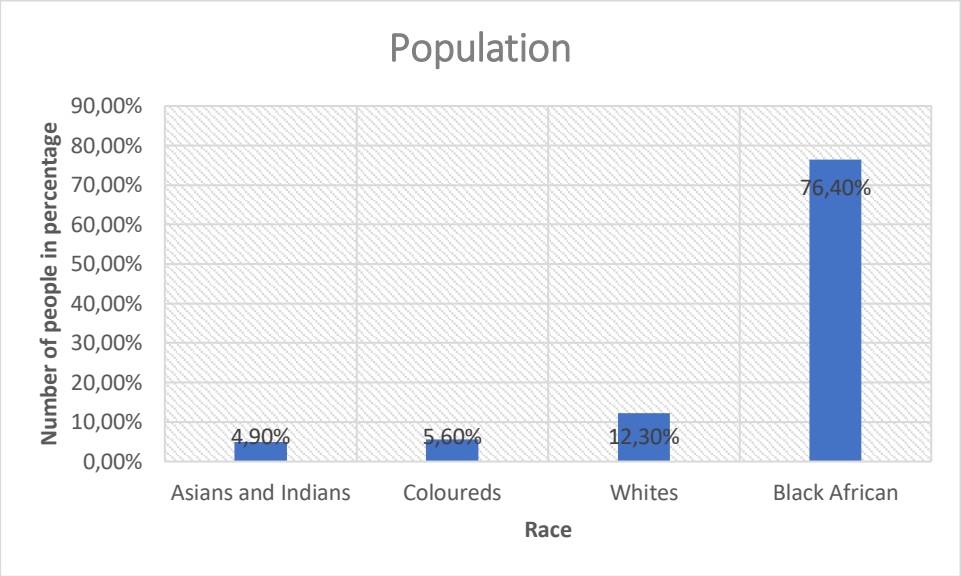


FIGURE 6: DEMOGRAPHIC POPULATION ACCORDING TO ETHNICITY IN JOHANNESBURG (WORLD POPULATION REVIEW, 2020).

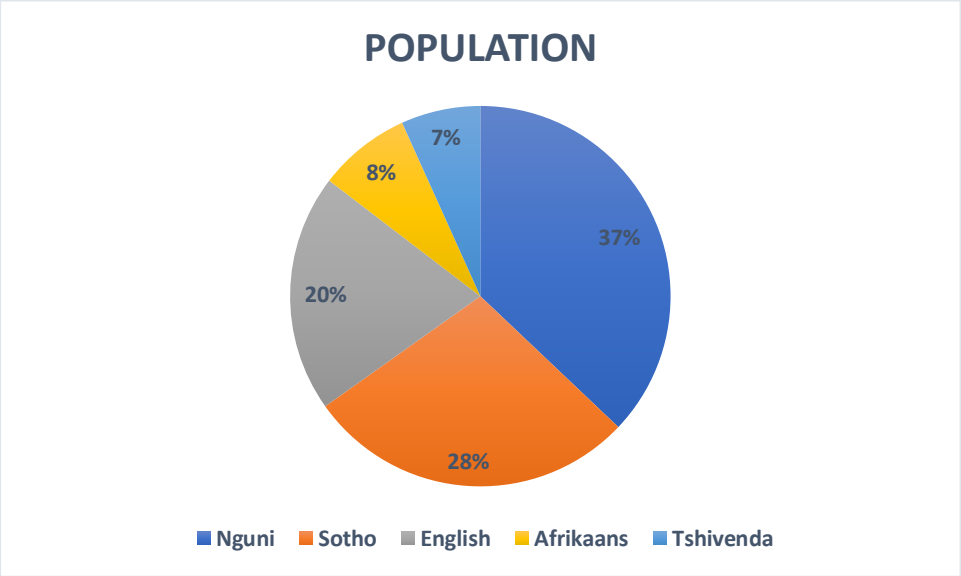


FIGURE 7: DEMOGRAPHIC POPULATION ACCORDING TO RELIGION IN JOHANNESBURG SOUTH AFRICA (WORLD POPULATION REVIEW, 2020)

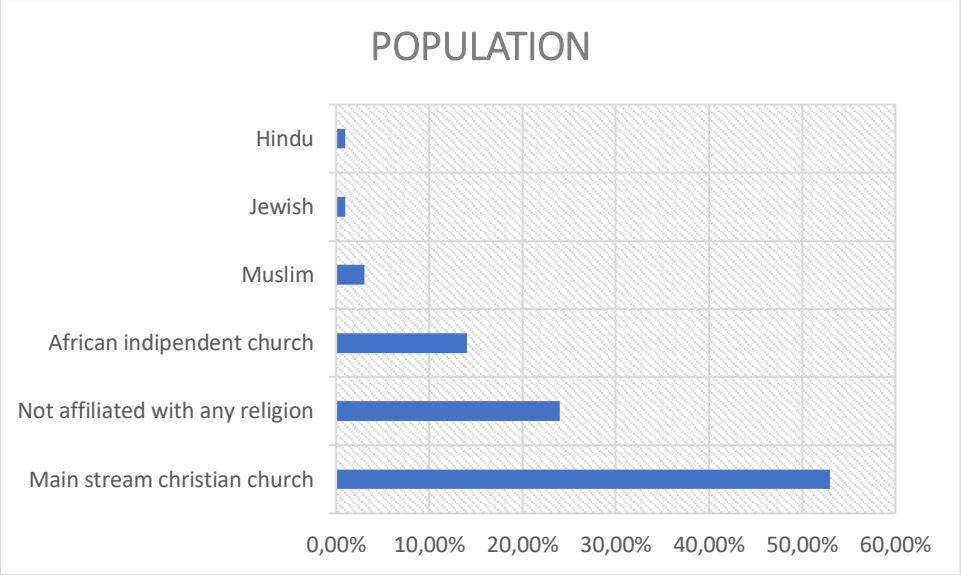


TABLE 1: OTHER DEMOGRAPHIC EXPLANATIONS IN JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA (STATS SA, 2018)

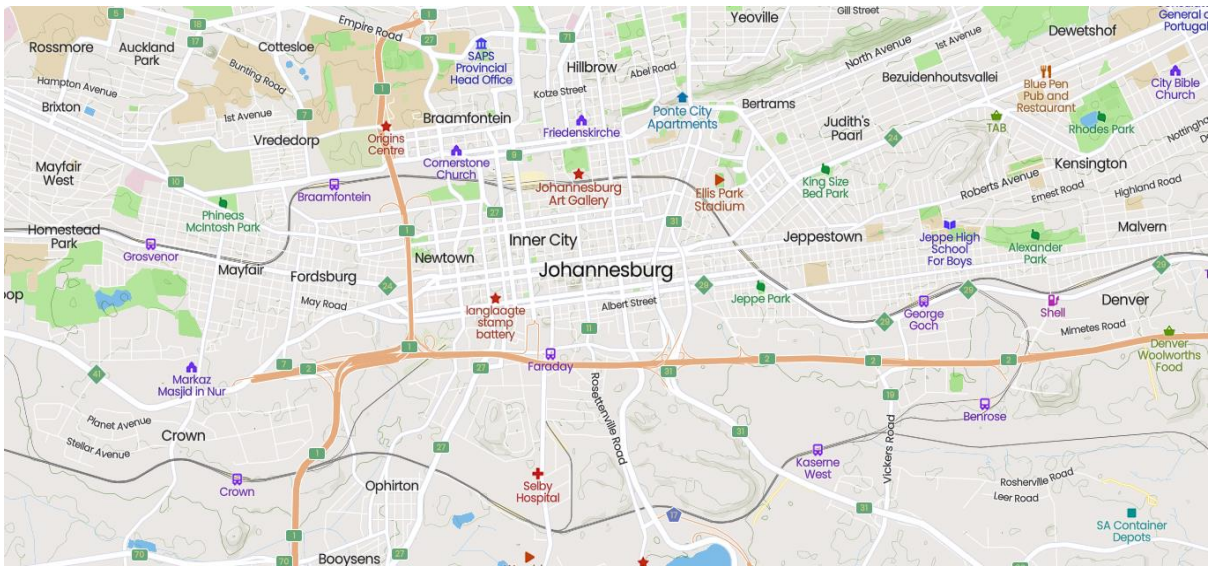
POPULATION	**NUMBER OF PEOPLE**
Illiterate	7%
Primary education only	3,4 %
Household headed by single person	66%
Live in informal dwellings	29%

A report from the Stats South Africa argues that between 2016 and 2021, South Africa is expected to receive a net immigration of 1.02 million people. The majority of foreign migrants reside in Gauteng (47.5%), while the least is located in the province of the Northern Cape (0.7%) (Stats SA, 2018). De kadt and Parker (2018) claim that Gauteng is considered to have a lot of economic opportunities in the country. Consequently, both international and local migrants from rural provinces such as Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape migrate to Gauteng to seek economic opportunities. There are many reasons that drive individuals to migrate. These are classified into economic, social-political, cultural or environmental categories. Such categories often refer to what is known as "push" or "pull" factors (Nkau, 2013). Gauteng's economic strength relates to "pull" factors that affect its attractiveness to migrants. Njilo (2020) claims that for the period from 2016 to 2021, Gauteng is to receive the largest number of migrants of about 1, 553, 162. Some factors that make Gauteng an attractive

destination are better economic opportunities, jobs, and the promise of a better life (Stats SA, 2018).

A research conducted by Stats SA (2018) reveals that the largest proportion of those born outside of South Africa who lived in Gauteng came from SADC countries, and they constitute 81.7% of the proportion of immigrants. These were accompanied by people from the rest of the African continent (6.6 %), the United Kingdom and Europe (6.3 %), while Asia and other countries had very little contribution. There were 311,255 international immigrants from SADC countries in the city of Johannesburg. This population contributed 80.8% of the total population of immigrants in Johannesburg. It is also reported that there were 24,426 immigrants coming from the rest of African countries. This population contributes 6.3% to the overall immigrant population in Johannesburg, South Africa.

FIGURE 8: JOHANNESBURG CITY MAP



Study population

De Vos, Delport, Fouché, and Strydom (2011) define a population as objects or individuals that have similar characteristics. The target population for this research were black lesbian immigrants from different parts of Africa aged between 18 and 65. The rationale for targeting this age group was that the participants were legally mature and were going to explain their experiences in detail compared to minors and they did not have to seek parental approval from their guardians to be part of the study. Moreover, the age gap between the two groups of women

(participants who are in their 20's and the participants in their 60's) presented an opportunity to take a historical perspective of black lesbians' lives, spanning the early 1990s to the present.

Sampling procedure

Maree (2007, p. 41) explains that "the idea of sampling emerges from the inability of researchers to test every person in a given populace. The sample must be illustrative of the populace from which it is drawn and should have a decent size to warrant measurable examination." In this study, snowball sampling was used.

Snowball sampling "is a method used to obtain research and knowledge, from extended associations, through previous acquaintances. It uses recommendations to find people with the specific range of skills that has been determined as being useful. An individual or a group receives information from different places through a mutual intermediary" (Leshan, 1991, p. 62). The reasons for snowball sampling owed to the sensitive nature of the study. Lesbian immigrants were less likely to be eager to participate for fear of their security. It was therefore necessary to draw them into the researcher's confidence by using a referral approach which involved someone known to the prospective participants.

In particular, a lesbian acquaintance who stays at Observatory, Johannesburg, assisted in identifying and recruiting participants. A total of 11 black lesbian immigrants between the ages 18 and 65 were purposively selected. The sample comprised participants from different parts of Africa (Zimbabwe, Zambia, Uganda, Ghana, Malawi, Kenya, DRC, Somalia, Nigeria, Tanzania and Ethiopia). Among them were nine documented and two undocumented immigrants. The reason for choosing both documented and undocumented participants is the fact that their experiences are different. I wanted to gather rich and comprehensive data so that different kinds of experiences from these participants could be drawn out.

Research Instrumentation

The researcher constructed an interview schedule for this study. According to DeVos (2002), an interview schedule has a list of questions that guides the researcher to remain on track and not get lost. Having the interview schedule beforehand enabled the researcher to reflect and think deeply about what needed to be discussed in the interview (DeVos, 2002). Some of the questions that were in the interview schedule, for instance, included the length of residence in South Africa, safety and security, negotiation of public spaces and relationship with LGBTQ community. This was the most appropriate instrument because one of the main objectives of

my research was to get more detailed, clear information about the challenges and experiences of immigrant lesbian. Therefore, this approach allowed the researcher to clarify questions to the participants.

Data Collection Method

Books, records, biographies, newspapers, published censuses, statistical data, data archives, internet articles, journal research articles by other researchers and databases like Google scholar were used as secondary data. Creswell (2012) asserts that secondary data collection starts before fieldwork. For instance, it is used mainly in compiling literature review as well as in the process of analyzing the data. Secondary data helped the researcher to identify the shortcomings within the literature, it helped with the theoretical framework, the research context and in augmenting the primary data. The researcher looked at relevant legal frameworks and legislation concerning immigration. The analysis of legislation, for example, was included in data analysis. This helped the researcher to assess the role of government in handling homophobia, xenophobia and other social ills. Some of findings from secondary data were confirmed by participants during primary data collection process.

The researcher used semi- structured and in-depth interviews to collect primary data. Legard, Keegan and Ward (2003) note that the exchange of information is guided by semi-structured interviews. This data collection method helps to guide the researcher to keep the interview on track. Various arranged questions were incorporated into semi-structure interviews. However, the researcher had options of altering the wording and questioning (Creswell, 2013). Similarly, this encouraged and motivated the participants to provide more information on the issue being addressed (Taylor, et al., 2015). In order to solicit in-depth information and details, probing and follow-up questions were used.

In light of national restrictions owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, conducting face-to-face interviews with the participants proved to be impossible. The researcher had to adapt towards online modes of data collection. The researcher used WhatsApp, Skype, phone calls and Zoom to collect data. These types of data collection approaches were discussed with participants prior to interviews. Participants then chose the methods that was best for them. The participants were sent the consent form, and consent was recorded verbally. The participants' anonymity and confidentiality were maintained even when alternative electronic platforms were used. The interviews lasted between 1 hour and 1 hour 30 minutes. The researcher was taking notes, and some of the interviews were recorded. The information was later transcribed.

English was used as a medium of communication. The researcher had explained to the participants that they could choose an interpreter they were comfortable with for purposes of confidentiality in case they did not understand English. Some of the participants understood, spoke and could type in English. Two participants had challenges in typing correct English henceforth they preferred using WhatsApp voice note throughout the interview.

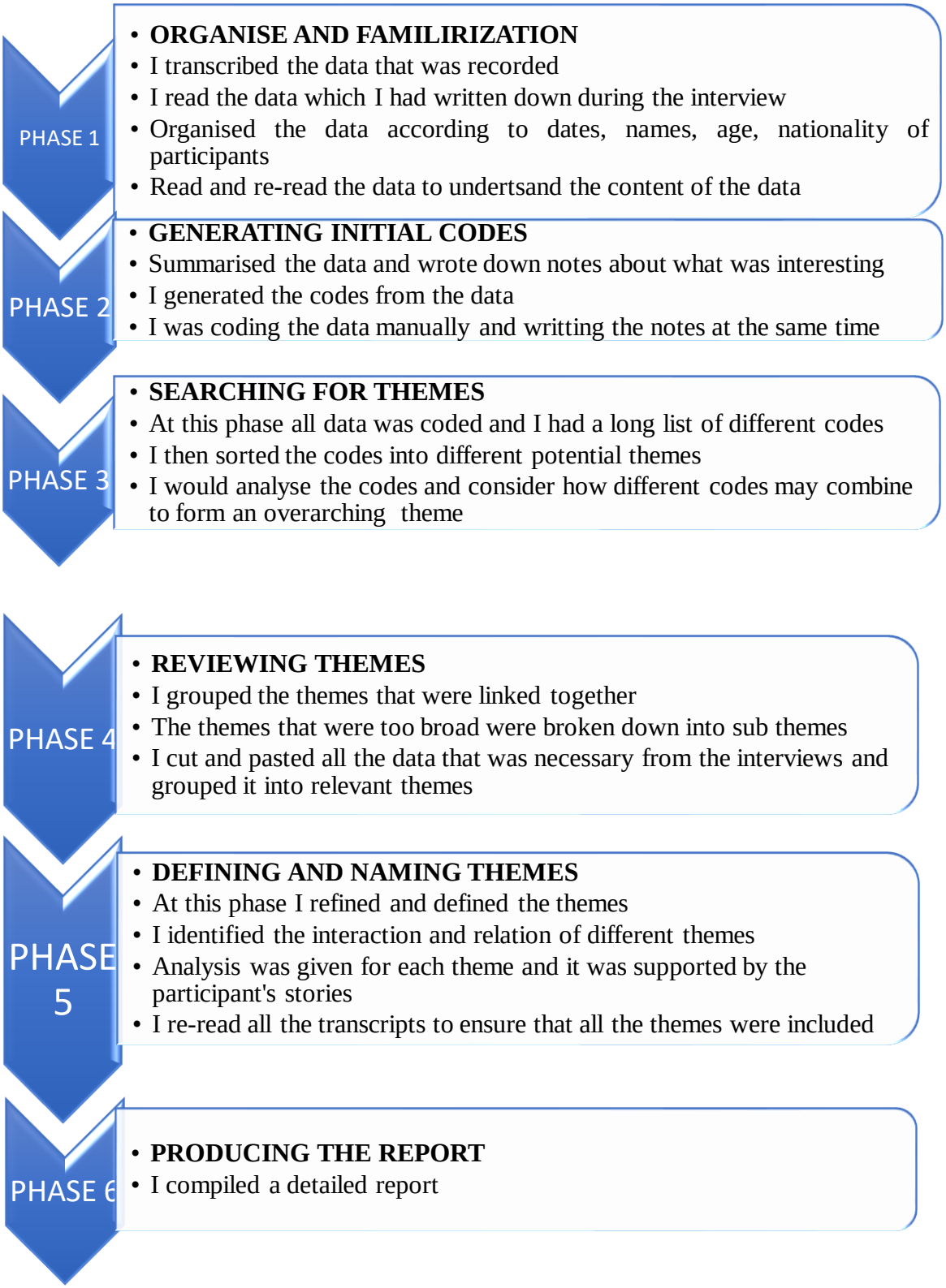
An interview schedule was created in order to keep the interviews on the right track (DeVos, 2002, p.45). This was an appropriate instrument for the research because it allowed for detailed, clear information about the experiences of black lesbian immigrants. The participants were interviewed once. However, the researcher informed the participants that follow up interviews might be conducted especially during the data analysis period when the researcher needs clarification on something.

To provide deeper insight into the research aims and objectives, the use of in-depth interviews with the participants was essential. Patton (2002) shows that in-depth interviews allow the interviewee as well as the interviewer to engage in constructive discussion without coercion or intimidation in a comfortable environment that allows the interviewee to express their views, feelings and experiences. During the interview, I considered the way in which the participants presented the answers and I took the participant's, "emic perspective," and not the viewpoint of the researcher, or "etic perspective" (Patton, 2002, p. 267). I also took down notes as a back-up method for clarifying the collected information.

Data analysis and interpretation techniques

There are various types and processes of data analysis such as discourse analysis, narrative analysis and content analysis. A thematic analysis was used in analysing the data. The researcher followed the steps highlighted by Brann and Clarke (2006) to analyse the data. These steps are organizing and familiarization with the data, generation of codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and namely themes and lastly producing a report. The following table illustrates the steps that the researcher took when analysing data using thematic analysis.

TABLE 2: DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE


PHASE 1
• ORGANISE AND FAMILIRIZATION
• I transcribed the data that was recorded
• I read the data which I had written down during the interview
• Organised the data according to dates, names, age, nationality of participants
• Read and re-read the data to undertsand the content of the data
PHASE 2
• GENERATING INITIAL CODES
• Summarised the data and wrote down notes about what was interesting
• I generated the codes from the data
• I was coding the data manually and writting the notes at the same time
PHASE 3
• SEARCHING FOR THEMES
• At this phase all data was coded and I had a long list of different codes
• I then sorted the codes into different potential themes
• I would analyse the codes and consider how different codes may combine to form an overarching theme
PHASE 4
• REVIEWING THEMES
• I grouped the themes that were linked together
• The themes that were too broad were broken down into sub themes
• I cut and pasted all the data that was necessary from the interviews and grouped it into relevant themes
PHASE 5
• DEFINING AND NAMING THEMES
• At this phase I refined and defined the themes
• I identified the interaction and relation of different themes
• Analysis was given for each theme and it was supported by the participant's stories
• I re-read all the transcripts to ensure that all the themes were included
PHASE 6
• PRODUCING THE REPORT
• I compiled a detailed report

Ethical considerations

Yin (2016) says that before conducting research, the researcher needs a written approval from the university management. I submitted my request for approval to the Ethics Committee and the Faculty of Humanities, and it was granted. The permission was granted by the ethics committee of the school of social sciences, which is part of the university's human research ethics committee (non-medical). DIV200423 is the clearance certificate protocol number. The following ethics were adhered to from the beginning of research up to the last stage of producing a research report.

Informed consent

Informed consent is defined as "A procedure for ensuring that research participants understand what is being done to them, the limits to their participation and awareness of any potential risks they incur" (Social Research Association, 2003, p. 28). This entails giving necessary true information to the participants about the research such as the purpose of the research, the aims and objectives and the risks involved in the research. This enables the participants to make decisions on whether or not they want to participate in the study. Informed consent also helps with the withdrawal of participants, which might be a setback in than research. The participants have to know their role in the research and whether or not they will be affected (Yin, 2016).

Before conducting the interviews, the researcher explained the purpose of study to the participants and invited them to sign a participant's information sheet and informed consent form to prove they were not forced to participate in the study and that they were informed about the research. However due to Covid-19, the participant information sheet and informed consent were verbally discussed. A note of agreement was sent by the participants to the researcher, for those who had their interviews via WhatsApp.

The informed consent form had all the necessary information such as the study site, researcher's contact details as well as the supervisor's contact details. Participants were given sufficient time to consider their involvement in the study. The participants were given at least 48 hours to think and consult families, friends or other advisors. Participants were told that they could withdraw from participating at any time with no consequences.

Informed consent for recording voices in Research

The researcher asked for the permission to record the participant's voices before starting with the interview process. The participants were informed that they were not being forced, they could refuse to do so if they were uncomfortable. The researcher explained that the reasons for recording the interviews were to capture participant responses accurately and avoid misrepresentation. The researcher also explained to the participants that taking notes was time-consuming and there were higher chances that some of the most important details might not be captured. The researcher however, kept in mind that the participants had to choose whether they wanted to be recorded or not.

Privacy and anonymity

The privacy of participants was paramount. The researcher did not require participants to divulge any identifying information and participants were guaranteed confidentiality by using pseudonyms during interviews and in naming the recordings. Recordings from interviews were stored in a password protected computer and all identifying features were anonymised in the process of transcribing the interviews. The data which was collected through WhatsApp was transcribed and kept safe at a protected computer. All the chats and messages were cleared and evidence was sent to the participants.

Participant Safety

The principle of doing no harm in research was adhered to. "Harm can come in many forms, from blows to self-esteem, looking bad to others, loss of funding or earnings, boredom, frustration, or time-wasting. It is good practice to assume that every research project will involve some form of harm and to consider in advance how best to deal with it" (Ethical issues in research, n. d, p.1). This is very important considering that some of the immigrants might have undergone traumatic experiences in the past. The researcher acknowledged that the questioning could evoke emotional reactions. The researcher had arranged with the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) to offer counselling services to the participants who could probably need it. Details of other support services were provided to participants. Before doing so, the researcher consulted with the CSRV counselors about the participants who would probably need these services. Feedback and organizational details were provided and explained to the participants including other information that could be necessary or was needed by the participant.

Reflexivity

In the process of compiling my research I was aware that one of my major challenges would be the type of language that I was using. I had to keep check of my language every time. This is because of how I have been socialised and my background as a researcher, coming from a community, and country that heavily criminalises homosexuality. I was aware that the language had a potential of not reflecting very well in the experiences of young lesbian women since I identify as a cisgender, heterosexual student writing on matters that concern mainly lesbian women, some of them coming from the marginalized communities.

A reading from Steyn (2015) conscientized me about how I had to present my thoughts and writing so that I challenge my cisgender and research power and privilege. I could not ignore the fact that issues like sexism, and homophobia are systemic and are not always readily available in our consciousness. This social order has a way of creeping into our research affecting the researcher's epistemology.

During the data collection process, I kept a reflexivity journal where I recorded my feelings, thoughts, and challenges. I would have debriefing sessions with my supervisor about my field work experience now and then. I understood that I am not an expert, and that this was a learning journey for me. As a human being, I was bound to make mistakes. I would keep check with my supervisor and I constantly reflected on some of my behavior and how it had an effect on my research.

How to ensure trustworthiness of qualitative data

Credibility: The role of the researcher is to connect the findings with reality to prove the validity of the findings from the research (Shenton, 2004). To establish credibility, I adopted one of the most common techniques which is triangulation (Johnsen and Jehn, 2009).

Triangulation: This meant using different data sources, theories, methods of collecting data, and observers. This allows for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied by the researcher (Johnsen and Jehn, 2009). I used two different types of triangulation which are both source triangulation and analyst triangulation (Flick, 2004). Source triangulation included using multiple data sources in that same procedure, interviewing people at diverse times and analyst triangulation meant having someone else verify the results. This is seen as useful for highlighting blind spots in the process of analysis (Flick, 2004).

Confirmability: Shenton (2004) observe that confirmability seeks to authenticate whether the findings are based on honest, that is the findings must be shaped by the participants more than they are shaped by the researcher. To establish confirmability, I adopted two techniques which are audit trial and reflexivity.

Audit Trail: Leung (2015) says that an audit trail is whereby the qualitative researcher gives thorough details about the whole process of collecting data, how they will analyze and interpret the data. To achieve this, the themes and topics that emerged during the data collection process were noted down, I also highlighted my thoughts about the coding process as well as providing reasons why particular codes or themes were merged together and what that meant.

Reflexivity: I kept and maintained a reflexive journal in order to achieve reflectivity. In the reflective journal I clarified what transpired in the research process, the challenges, the fears that I encountered, what I learnt and the hopes I seek to achieve.

Conclusion

This section discussed the process of collecting data, the approach used, the sampling procedure, the data collection methods and the data sources which were used in compiling the report. The chapter also discussed how the research was carried out. Steps taken to analyse the data, validity and ethical issues, including issues of trustworthiness and reflexivity were also discussed.

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The study sought to examine the intersectional experiences of black lesbian immigrants in Johannesburg South Africa. The previous chapter looked at the methodology that was used to collect data during the research process. This chapter presents and discusses the findings from the collected data. An overview of the participants' perceptions about themselves, perceptions about their host communities, and the different forms of marginality which include gender, sexuality, race, nationality are discussed. The strategies adopted by black lesbian immigrants when dealing with various forms of marginality are also highlighted before concluding the chapter. Below is the demographic information of all the participants. All the names used are pseudonyms.

Biographic details of the participants

Eleven black lesbian migrants participated in the study. The participants came from different African countries, were between the ages 23 and 48. While some were in possession of documents which made them legal in South Africa, some were undocumented. The table below summarises the biographical characteristics of participants.

TABLE 3: BIOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

Name	**Country of origin**	**Age**	**Migration Status**
Anesu	Zimbabwe	36	Zimbabwe Exemption Permit (ZEP)
Tamanda	Malawi	29	Work permit
Ijeamaka	Nigeria	35	Work permit
Emmy	Tanzania	22	Undocumented
Lara	DRC	27	Asylum seeker
Adwoa	Ghana	33	Refugee permit
Niyaat	Ethiopia	26	Refugee permit
Nyamwali	Zambia	47	Permanent residence permit
Assah	Uganda	23	Undocumented
Zahra	Kenya	48	Permanent residence permit
Su'aad	Somalia	28	Asylum seeker

Black lesbians' perceptions of themselves

Findings from the research reveal that coming out as lesbians meant appreciating and making peace with their own identities despite the perceived consequences from families, friends, and society. It was also evident that perceptions of self were linked to the process of coming out and how the news was received. Most participants saw coming out as an empowering process by which they affirmed their trust and resilience, whether the coming out was involuntary or voluntary. The participants also argued that recognizing and making peace with the fact that they were lesbians was self-fulfilling. Zahra said:

> *I dated boys before making peace with the fact that I am a lesbian. I was well aware that I had feelings for girls, but I thought it was a stage. All those years I felt like I was in prison. When I was in high school it happened that I was in a relationship with a lady who was mature, she was 10 years older than me. She taught me to be confident and true to myself. I learned to be in control of my life despite people's attitude towards me. Coming out has its challenges. I lost friends; I grew distant with my relatives but at the same time it was an empowering process for me. I learned to be independent and to set boundaries about my narratives (Zahra, Kenya).*

Findings from the research also revealed that even though the participants were rejected by their family members the fact that they were now out in the open was a relief. The decision to affirm their sexuality seemed to be more important than the fact they were going to be rejected. Some of the participants had already anticipated their parent's responses but they still went ahead to reclaim their power and affirm who they were. Niyyat told her mother with whom she had a close relationship since adolescence. Keeping her sexuality hidden was affecting her. Hence, she wanted to be supported and be open and true to herself. She said:

> *My mom and I have always been close. I was going crazy and suicidal. I told her about my feelings for girls and she did not respond. Our relationship has changed since that day. At times I regret why I told her, but I couldn't keep it a secret anymore. I had to do what was best for me. I am glad that I was brave enough. It was killing me inside. One way or the other they were going to find out. I don't remember how many times I heard her crying at night and praying that I change. She was hurt, and she is still hurt, but I also deserve to be happy (Niyyat, Ethiopia).*

For some participants, the process of coming out was involuntary. They were either caught in the act and had to confess or a relative spied on them, and they had no choice but to come clean.

Some of the participants pointed out that the family did not take the news very well. The family tried, by all means, to suppress their sexuality by controlling and manipulating it. Others felt the need to compartmentalize and hide their sexual identity with the fear of being marginalized by their family members and the community. However, despite all these odds, the participants showed resilience. They fought for their happiness and their identity. Anesu narrated her painful story by saying:

> *When I was in boarding school, I was caught with a girl at the age of 9. Then I came out, but I was forced to stay in the closet. During that time, I was raped countless times and forced to marry. Right now, I have a 16-year-old daughter. I was only able to be out there and be me at the age of 30. I am happy and I know that I am a strong woman. I have been through a lot but I am still standing and happy. Being open about my sexuality has taught me to be patient, empathetic, and bold. Despite all the challenges that I faced, and that I still face I am not shaken, I still fight for my happiness (Anesu, Zimbabwe).*

As may be seen, in order to meet societal expectations, to fit in and avoid disappointing their families, some of the participants tried to suppress their feelings. However, despite the challenges they encountered throughout their journey, the process of coming out appears to have been liberating for all the participants.

Black lesbians' immigrants' perceptions of the host community

Perceptions of host community are divided into two; perceptions of their social networks and perceptions of the broader society. This section is divided into these two parts in order to demonstrate an understanding of the black lesbian immigrant's relationship with the immigrant population and the general public outside their network circle. In addition, it is to show the unique experiences from both parts of these communities.

Perceptions of their social networks

After leaving their home countries, the participants had to decide where to go and where to stay. Some of the decisions were taken before migration, while some were taken when the participants were already on their way. Most of the participants already knew someone who was in South Africa and they were in contact with them. Upon arrival for the first time in South Africa. Almost all the participants pointed out that they had been accommodated by a relative, a friend, or someone they knew from home. Some of their social networks were aware of the

sexual orientation of the participant and they were welcoming, while some of them were not. Tamanda says:

> *My brother was very accommodating. He is the only person who accepted my sexuality in my family. He took me from Malawi to come and stay with him In South Africa because he was scared that they would hurt me back home. He even sent me to school. My dream was to study fashion design. I came to South Africa in 2007. Unfortunately, he died in 2008 from blood Cancer (Tamanda, Malawi).*

However, it was not all glitz and glamor for the participants who were still in the closet. After their sexuality was exposed, tension arose between them and the person/ people that were taking care of them. One of the common ways that the participants suffered seems to have been to be chased out of the house. For those who were lucky, and had made friends around them, the friends came to their rescue during this period. Emmy narrated her story by saying that many young lesbians face emotional isolation and rejection from their parents. She had been evicted from her home several times. This negation leads to problems such as self-hurt, depression, and drug and alcohol abuse. She said the following:

> *It was very bad. My sister threw me out of the flat, beat me up, and threw all my clothes outside. I didn't have a choice and I didn't have anywhere to go. My girlfriend had to take me in. I was depressed. I felt like I was a burden to people. I did not know what to do. I was thinking of drinking poison. (Emmy, Tanzania).*

Even though the South African Constitution recognises same-sex relationships, it is not everyone who has complied with these tenets and provisions. People still maintain their traditional and religious beliefs about why they will never accept same-sex relationships. The choice of destination seems to influence the black lesbian integration experiences as well. Lara said:

> *The biggest challenge is that many foreigners prefer to stay in groups according to their nationality and ethnicity. They're a lot of Congolese people in Yeoville and Hillbrow. These are people from home who will help me even if we don't know each other on a personal level. Here in South Africa, we are treating each other as a family. You see I am one of them as a Congolese, but not as a Congolese lesbian (Lara, DRC).*

As noted above, one of the main challenges faced by lesbian immigrants is lack of acceptance due to their sexuality. It has created tension and conflict with the wider immigrant population, creating a barrier for them to seek assistance and help.

Perceptions of the broader society

Upon arrival in South Africa, all the participants pointed out that they wanted to be legally recognized and fully protected as citizens of South Africa. Despite the length of their stay in South Africa, their hopes have proven to be in vain for some of them. Anesu said "It is hard to get documented. It's taken a long time. I'm using a ZEP permit now. I'm not sure if it's going to be renewed after next year, it's expiring. I hope to obtain a permanent resident permit" (Anesu, Zimbabwe*).*

Findings from the research reveal that as immigrants the participants were expected to carry their documentation all the time declaring that they were in South Africa legally. Hence it was a stressful situation for participants who were undocumented because they were always in fear of being stopped by police and arrested at any time. The participants narrated that they did not have any issues with carrying their documents all the time, as requested by the Immigration Act. Their fears were centred around the fact that South Africa has a high crime rate. Crimes such as theft, pickpocketing, among others, were very prevalent. Participants emphasized that they had to be cautious with their belongings all the time, particularly when moving to CBD. Adwoa claimed that:

> *The other time I was mugged in the city and my bag was taken, my documents were inside. It's stressful to have the papers replaced. They're still telling me to come to their offices and check up until today. I was trying to get a letter from the police station to speed up the process, but it didn't make any difference. If I had the money, I'd get someone to connect me and replace my papers (Adwoa, Ghana).*

The delays at the Department of Home Affairs seemed to frustrate many individuals who ended up resorting to quick, fast, and illegal methods to get documented. Not all of them were lucky, however. Some lost a lot of money to fraudulent people who lied about having connections at Home Affairs. Despite losing a lot of money, despair forced many participants to continue searching for other ways of documenting themselves. Assah said:

> *I have lost a lot of money bribing people trying to get a permit. Home Affairs people are slow and they do not care, they do not like foreigners you know. Being undocumented is holding me back. I cannot do anything without papers. I cannot be bribing the police all the time. My refugee status application was declined they said I did not provide convincing evidence based on my sexuality (Assah, Uganda).*

All the participants narrated that they were aware that they were not wanted in South Africa. These negative attitudes that are directed to immigrants have been fuelled by the reports from the media. This exposed them to vulnerabilities and different forms of marginalization. Adwoa said “at times the messages that circulate on social media are disturbing. Everything is blamed on foreigners. I am not saying we are clean but we are not to be entirely blamed for everything bad that is happening in the county” (Adwoa, Ghana*).*

Zahra stressed out how the lack of knowledge was destroying society. She said:

> *People need to be informed because they have misplaced ideas about migration issues. It's not everyone who wakes up and decides to pack their bags and move to another country willingly leaving their families behind. They're not always supposed to paint us as victims, troublemakers, disease carriers (Zahra, Kenya).*

Ijeamaka added on to say:

> *We are visible and we are invisible as well. The media rarely reports on LGBTQ issues. It's as though we don't exist. We must beg to be acknowledged. We are always making headlines at the same time as foreigners. This invisibility and visibility push us to the edge at the end of the day and exposes us to violence and discrimination (Ijeamaka, Nigeria).*

The above narratives show that South Africans have different attitudes towards immigration. The media has been identified as perpetuating xenophobic attitudes towards immigrants, making it difficult for immigrants to survive in South Africa. Furthermore, the quote emphasizes the intersections of these migrants' situations. According to Ijeamaka's story, the only time they receive attention or are in the spotlight is when the media portrays migration issues negatively. When confronted with critical issues such as discrimination, murder, and so on as immigrant lesbians, the same media shy away and remains silent.

Experiences of marginality among black lesbian immigrants in South Africa

The need to be aware of which places to go and which places to avoid, whether documented or not, was stressed by all the participants. All the participants stressed their fears of being attacked because of their gender, sexual identity, and nationality. Anesu who stays in the suburbs said:

> *Yes, there is a lot of homophobia and xenophobia in South Africa. However, depending on your position in society, we experience it differently. People in townships have more*

challenges than we do. I've got friends in Soweto, Kempton Park. In the suburbs, that doesn't happen. People here value privacy and they mind their own business. I'm not safe, but I'm safe here as well (Anesu, Zimbabwe).

The geographical location appears to play a key role in the protection or vulnerability of lesbian immigrants. The same sentiments were shared by Zahra, who said:

But just to say that I'm staying away from areas where I think people are homophobic. I'm staying in the suburbs, and, to be honest, we rarely hear cases of xenophobia or, if not none of them. Maybe there are cases of racism. Well, I haven't suffered or experienced anything tense when it came to racism, but one of my friends did (Zahra, Kenya).

Nyamwali noted that she had to be careful about the places she was visiting. She had to bear in mind that she would be harmed because of her gender, her sexuality, and her nationality. Participants also stressed how they needed to be on the lookout for the kind of people who have access to the same places as them to minimize the risk of being exposed to vulnerabilities. Nyamwali said the following:

I think we're careful where we're going, whom we're going with. You also built a kind of resistance and a kind of map of places where it might or might not be a good idea to go, but for me, it's on the xenophobia side and the homophobic side that I feel I have to self-preserve (Nyamwali, Zambia).

Ijeamaka pointed out that her sexuality, nationality, gender identity has put her in a lot of disadvantageous situations. These identity markers seem to determine which place she should have access to and which place she should not have access to. However, no matter how much she tried to be cautious and self-preserve, one of these identities exposed her to vulnerabilities. She narrated her ordeal as follows:

The fact that I am a black, woman before a lesbian and Nigerian in South Africa is complicated enough. A South African woman is not safe here. I feel like I am 10 times more vulnerable compared to her because I am black, I am a black woman, I am a black lesbian, I am a black lesbian who is an immigrant. Yes, I can hide my sexuality, I can choose not to disclose my nationality but at the end of the day my accent will sell me out. The moment I start talking people will know that I am not a South African (Ijeamaka, Nigeria).

For example, even places of socialization like clubs seem to be frustrating for many lesbians because they have to be more than cautious. It was tiring; a situation that Emmy called ‘abnormal’ and ‘boring’ and ‘insignificant’- to have to choose places that have people who are tolerant of their sexuality. Emmy added:

> *Because you don't feel safe anywhere, so you've got to find these gay spots. And sometimes you don't want to be around gay people all the time; you want to have dinner with everyone. You don't always want to be like, 'oh, my gosh, I'm going to a gay place.' Even though it's nice most of the time, you just want to be normal, you can't be there all the time. It loses meaning. When pride comes along you like to go to pride, but imagine pride every day of your life. Then you know it will not have any significance (Emmy, Tanzania).*

Affection is one of the key things that were mentioned by the participants. Some demonstrated how their relationship with their then or current partners helped them grow, nurtured them to be better people, independent and fearless. Whereas for some participants it was torture. There was the abuse that affected the participants, physically, sexually, mentally, and emotionally. Some participants felt that the abuse occurred because they did not have any means of income and because they were immigrants, they did not have anyone to turn to. Emmy narrated her ordeal by saying that:

> *I don't want to say much about it, but all l can say is l was treated like a foreigner than l was in the relationship, also l understood that after they found out about my sexuality, it was more of considering l wasn't in the best terms with my family, so it was very hectic for me. I was also not financially stable at that time. (Emmy, Tanzania).*

Tamanda, who also suffered abuse in the hands of her partner, said:

> *So many things happened in that relationship. I wouldn't like to talk about them. She accused me of cheating and she physically attacked me. She said I'm giving you food, I'm giving you a roof, and you go around and sleep with everybody. I was not financially stable at that time and things were bad. I was depending on her for everything (Tamanda, Malawi).*

As for Emmy, she was angered by the fact that her partner was not remorseful about her actions. Instead, she boasted about how vulnerable Emmy was and that no one was going to help her. Narrating about how she was put in a disadvantaged position because of her nationality and financial state, Emmy added to say:

> *What broke my heart is that she was not even sorry, and she knew that she was wrong. She told me that instead of her being arrested, I would be arrested because I didn't have documents and no one was going to believe me if I went to report her to the police (Emmy, Tanzania).*

These fears have been exacerbated by the fact that the community and people like the police officers who are supposed to offer protection and security do not take these issues seriously. Assah said "they never take partner violence seriously, nor do they consider its existence. Instead, they will laugh at you and make you look stupid. So, when something like that happens it's as if we are proving them right" (Assah, Uganda).

Being a lesbian and undocumented can position one within an economic disadvantage. As reported by Emmy her sexuality, nationality, and economic status are what pushed her into an abusive relationship. These intersecting margins seemed to overcome Emmy's sense of autonomy and strength. She got minimal support from her friends who were coming from the same country because they did not approve of her sexuality. Emmy's intersecting forms of identity also blurred the support she received from the LGBTQ community. She believes that this was based on the fact that she is an immigrant as her abuser was a South African. Hence her LGBTQ community friends were biased in handling the matter fairly. She was unemployed, undocumented, and homeless during that time. She recounted her story by saying:

> *I knew they would still take her side, and protect their very own since it had happened before in most cases with the neighbours and her friends. She sheltered me and helped me financially during my job search when my family didn't want anything to do with me. During that time, I didn't have anyone I could talk to, I had nobody because people do not understand, instead, they are judgemental. Everyone will tell you to report the matter to the police, leave the relationship, and question your mental state on why you are still in that relationship. No one will understand that I was in a situation and the worst part of it is that I could not go to my family because we were fighting about my sexuality (Emmy, Tanzania).*

The narratives from the participants also illustrate that what seemed to fuel abuse and manipulation within the relationship was the pressure to start a family. The pressure came from their families, their colleagues, and the entire community. In so many ways, a femme, who possesses feminine qualities in the relationship is expected to carry the child. Assah recounted her painful tale by saying:

Because she had a child, she continuously pressurised me to have a child. she was 6 years older than me. She was physical, emotional, and sexually abusive. I don't know whether it was love or I was scared of her. She threatened me and said that she was going to get someone pregnant, carry the child, and give the child to us after birth (Assah, Uganda).

The fact that lesbian partners are unable to conceive naturally places a great deal of strain on their relationships. The negotiations for the creation of the family were not discussed fairly with their partners. It was more like a command for some participants. Emmy added on to describe the difficulties she faced during that period when she said:

She forced me to have sex with a man, not that she put a gun on my head. It was my decision too because I did not want to lose her. I slept with that man. She then assumed that I was in a relationship with him after going through my messages. I tried to explain to her that she was the one pressurizing me to have sex and fall pregnant. I had to keep the man interested at all costs. The plan was to fall pregnant and not him. We fought and she said that I was cheating on her with boys. She said that what was her family going to say because she can't get me pregnant (Emmy, Tanzania).

One of the things that worsened these abuses among the participants was the longing for love, protection, and security. Assah believes that she had support and protection from the LGBTQ community, but as a lesbian immigrant, she did not win everyone's hearts.

I used to feel secure around my partner, who was buffy. She would protect me all the time when people were harassing us. She would pay the rent, buy food, take me out and sometimes give me money to send back home. But she was very insecure and controlling especially when she was high or drunk. She would swear and threaten me. I was also scared to leave her because I was not working and I did not have anywhere to go. I thought she was going to send people to harass me after the break up you know; she is a South African (Assah, Uganda).

For some participants, the understanding of gender roles and expectations within the lesbian community created tension within their relationships. The reciprocity of heteronormative norms, such as the man being the family provides also appears to exist within the lesbian community. Emmy expressed her thoughts:

Ok, the femme carries the baby. These people (butches) are very difficult. I don't think there is a butch who would agree to that, unless if she is mature or you guys understand

each other and you guys know what you want, of which that rarely happens. She will tell you that a man cannot carry a child that can't happen (Emmy, Tanzania).

Assah shared the same feelings and thought as well when she said:

It depends on the kind of butch that you meet. Some will tell you that they do not do 50-50. You can be both females, but you will have to treat her as the head of the relationship like she is the man. Even when you get married you will have to treat her like your husband, not just a female partner. So, since she's going to be the head, it is her responsibility to pay lobola, she takes all the obligations directly, just like a straight relationship (Assah, Uganda).

When it came to baby-making, the unavailability of finances led these couples to have limited options. They resorted to what Emmy called the 'cheap', 'easy method' or 'sacrificial method', where one partner gets impregnated through natural means by a man and the couple keeps the baby. At the end of the day, those kinds of choices exposed the other partner to violence and abuse. Emmy said:

Even up to now I can't get that incident out of my mind. I feel like I was sexually assaulted. It is the pain that I will have to endure for the rest of my life. It was an easy and cheap method available to us. It's like you are sacrificing yourself you know. We were unable to afford other methods of conceiving. Even though I approached the guy, it is not what I wanted and it is not what I like. I am happy the baby did not happen. The whole thing was very wrong and toxic (Emmy, Tanzania).

For some participants especially those who were mature and in their late 40's. The understanding of family and childbearing seemed to differ from the participants who were in their 20's. The participants who were in their '40s were less about who bears children but if children could even be born. Nyamwali said "nooooo I carried Trey who is 6. My partner carried Milo who is 4. We had an Indian sperm donor" (Nyamwali, Zambia).

The same feelings were shared by Zahra who stressed the importance of partnership and respect when it comes to negotiating family.

You are well aware that our situation is different. What is important is to have a mutual agreement with your partner, and you both go for what you are comfortable with. You should both be happy at the end of the day. After all, we are chasing happiness in this life (Zahra, Kenya).

Narrating about her intersecting experiences in South Africa, Ijeamaka, said that, she is not easily identifiable as a lesbian, except when she is with her partner, She stressed her concerns about the intersecting difficulties she must endure every day of her life because of her nationality, gender, and sexuality. She argued:

> *Sometimes my biggest fear is being raped because I am a lesbian, or they see me so many times with one woman then they feel like, 'ok I feel like I have ownership over her body'. I think it's a daily struggle for all women. Sometimes you don't know if you are going to be harassed, discriminated against, abused because you are black, because you're a woman or because you are lesbian, you can be attacked for all three in one day and that's when somebody hits the jackpot you know. Based on that, I won't just say, it's because I'm a lesbian, but then it's because I'm a woman. And so, the threat is big whether I'm lesbian or not, it's always because I'm also a woman you know. There is always a bigger threat in that as well (Ijeamaka, Nigeria).*

Adwoa, who shared the same sentiments as well claimed that they always have these kinds of discussions because a day never passes by without a woman being abused, raped, or killed. What worries her is that sometimes it is not clear whether these discriminations only happen based on the fact that they are women or lesbians, or both:

> *I know some people, it wouldn't be something I want to go into detail because I have also faced some things where I'm just like, but why? And you don't know at that moment if it's because you are a lesbian or because you are a woman or because you are both. But I have seen, I remember my partner and I were talking about this the other day. One of her friends got gang-raped, and then a week after that her girlfriend got gang-raped in front of her, you know, things like that. It's killing me inside, so many people can be cruel for no good reason, just because they see you guys holding hands or whatever (Adwoa, Ghana).*

Nyamwali believes that she is not only marginalized because of her sexuality but because of her race and class and class status as well. The victimization goes beyond that and also extends to her nationality. Her chosen name and surname, accent, and physical characteristics (height, complexion, colour, and texture of hair, the shape of eyes, lips, and nose) make her more susceptible to xenophobic attacks. She said:

> *Of all my identity markers the fact that I am not a South Africa worries me more than anything else. The fact that I am a potential target of xenophobia often overrides the*

fact that I am a potential target of homophobia. Maybe this is because I present in a way that is relatively inoffensive to homophobes (Nyamwali, Zambia).

Nyamwali went on to bring the discourse of racism and power relations. She stressed out how these are embedded and engraved in society's minds. The public spaces are daily torture to her daily life because they are a constant reminder of her race, sexuality, class position, and nationality. She said:

You know the four of us don't immediately read as a family [Her partner, and her 2 sons] and sometimes it is helpful, to be honest sometimes it protects and sometimes it is offensive and painful. You will have to completely deal with everybody's assumptions of what is going on. And being in South Africa there is a way in which I often read as Kia's (her partner) nanny. That is an experience that I always have. There is a series of hypersensitivities that we have that are beyond the label. Like this is not about who identifies as what because in our experience it doesn't really matter at the end of the day. I am also not a label. I am not going to label somebody (Nyamwali, Zambia).

The kind of battles that these partners have to fight in different spaces has also determined these kinds of power dynamics. These include the need to negotiate their interracial relationship with their mixed-race children, and sexual identity, and prying eyes. Nyamwali is black, her partner is white, and they had an Indian sperm donor. She stressed that:

At times it is funny, they are funny and sometimes they are just not. Kia is much more interested in interrupting people's assumptions about what they see when they see us. She likes it and I am much more sub-protective and it is not something that I seek up. I think we are careful about where we go and we have learned to avoid certain places. For Kia, identifying as a lesbian at some point was important and it hasn't been like that for me. It freaks me out. I know that the word itself freaks people out especially from Zambia. I mean we can't live anywhere else on the continent (Nyamwali, Zambia).

Being aware of these intersecting forms of discrimination forces the participant to be sub-protective. She, therefore, prefers to be more cautious about their affection as a couple especially in public spaces. Her partner who is white, South African, wants to be more open about the nature of their relationship even though she is also aware of the misconceptions that they carry along as an interracial couple. Talking about racism Zahra did not openly admit that she has experienced racism before. She was more concerned about the challenges she was facing within the black heteronormative xenophobic and homophobic society. She said:

Ahh, those I don't mind them. They don't bother me that much. Whatever that they say or do has little impact on my life. I haven't suffered or experienced anything tense, but my friend once did. It is black people that I am worried about especially at work. Abuse, insults, rape, you know, xenophobic people in taxis, work, and homophobic people almost everywhere (Zahra, Kenya).

Some of the participants' social-economic status, particularly those who had challenges in securing employment because of their sexuality and lack of documentation, stressed how this contributed to the existing challenges they were already facing. That is what Lara said "but since I do not have money and other resources that is why I feel like ohhhh man I am just stuck here having to endure all the insults as a poor black lesbian foreigner" (Lara, DRC).

Some of the participants said that they had to deal with discrimination and homophobic sentiments from individuals from their home countries. The fact that they are not protected by the government from their home countries as their sexuality is considered a threat and illegal is what has made these immigrants more vulnerable. Respected leaders have shown negative attitudes towards homosexuality and crimes have been seen as unforgivable for these acts. This gives the public the urge to hate, harass, discriminate, and rape lesbians because they understand that these crimes are going to go unreported. Tamanda narrated her story by saying:

There is a guy from my country, He calls me names you know like, you gay why can't you find a husband things like that. Sometimes he will send me provocative and disturbing messages and images. He will say I want you to be my girlfriend. You have to give me children and stop the nonsense that you are doing. I even told his friend that I will get them sued. So, if he is arrested, they should not ask why I did that to someone who is from Malawi, like my fellow Malawian you know. (Tamanda, Malawi).

In particular, for lesbian couples with children, the bureaucratic nature of immigration policies and international traveling arrangements has proven to be exhausting and somewhat discriminatory. Nyamwali said:

We go to Zambia and we cross the border frequently. I mean when we are going to Zambia, I have to go through the citizen's queue with Milo and Kia, through the SADC queue with Trey. It is very hard not to end up in the same queue. We can't be answering those kinds of questions. it doesn't matter how you identify or what you call yourself. I don't know it is just about different ways of trying to make a straight passage for us or our kids in the world. (Nyamwali, Zambia).

Anesu stressed how, regardless of how much she tries to avoid society's perspectives, their assumptions and the normalization of heteronormative relationships always find a way out to disturb her peace. For her, the struggle was between choosing which fight to fight and the one she could win. She recounted her story by saying:

> *There's always a struggle to fight, you know, xenophobia, homophobia, patriarchy. These are stumbling blocks that continue to build around you to a point where you lose your voice and your strength. You get to a point where what is important must be prioritized, which battle you can fight and win. I am not saying that we are giving up but they're too much to take. I don't think the world is ready to deal with these marginalities but we will not stop fighting for the good cause, we will not give up (Anesu, Zimbabwe).*

Nyamwali added on to say that:

> *I think it happens in small ways often. You know home affairs, government offices, boom gates. There are official markers of authority and mostly being hetero-normative. With those markers on the play. Assumptions are being made that I am somebody's wife who is a man. Sometimes I correct them and sometimes I don't. As I said I feel more exposed as a non-South African rather than a lesbian (Nyamwali, Zambia).*

As for partners with children, what has proven to be more difficult is trying to negotiate safe spaces for themselves and their children. The participants indicated that they were raising their children as gender non-conforming. However, they were afraid of the reception that their children will receive and how they will navigate different spaces. Nyamwali indicated that as parents it was their obligation to fight their own battles and those of their children. That said, Nyamwali emphasized that:

> *This is tricky and it is a daily struggle. The boys for example Milo at the moment likes bright colors, pink. He likes coloring rainbows and flowers and he has a pink hat that he wears to school every day. He has a best friend called Ian and Ian wears a dress to school and it's great. But also, between my house and school, it's cool but I am also aware of other people's judgment of that and passing negative comments. There is a lot of gendering that happens. It is difficult for us at times because how do we fight it without making it a big deal and not letting them be caught in between. We worry about him being perceived in a particular way. How do we sort of avoid him being reprimanded in the world because he is too much? (Nyamwali, Zambia).*

All participants face the risks of being raped and sexually assaulted by frustrated, straight men who argue that 'having sex' with a real man will cure them of lesbianism. By saying that, Niyyat emphasized her frustrations:

> *A lot of people are being abused, lesbians are being raped, they are harassed. People will tell you that you don't have space in this world, you are a woman, you cannot date other women. They don't give you that space to breathe, you are always afraid, in constant fear that you are the target. They are always insulting and their comments are bad, like how do you guys even have sex (Niyyat, Ethiopia).*

Tamanda also related how she was sexually assaulted in a lift by two white boys. She was batting with the event asking herself a lot of questions as to whether it was meant for her because she was a woman, or because she was black, or because she was a lesbian, or because she was both. By saying that, she told her story:

> *There is no place for people like me. This other time we were coming from a club. I was left behind because I was taking a phone call. When I got into a lift there were these two white guys. They looked high. The other one pushed me from behind as if it was a mistake. When I turned to look at him, he showed me his penis. And they both laughed. So, it did not matter to them that it was a public space. What if someone got inside the lift. I was so angry, but then again, what can we do? That's the kind of stuff we experience every day. Do you think that if the platform was given to them, they would not rape me? Worse, I'm black, for that matter, a lesbian. I'm sure they're doing this to other black girls as well (Tamanda, Malawi).*

Corrective rape among the lesbian community has been noted to be prevalent. Research findings show that the participants knew or were close to someone who had previously been raped because of their sexuality and had to deal with sexually harassing comments from men daily. To say that, Adwoa added "a lot of men would push themselves on you, saying 'I can fuck the gay away" (Adwoa, Ghana).

They also emphasized their fear that they would not be able to protect themselves and fight back. Their daily struggle is the fear of being killed or being raped and infected with diseases such as STI and HIV.

> *Every day you will have to be grateful that you are alive as a woman in South Africa. As a lesbian, you have a lot to be thankful for. It's just small things, some other people will never relate or understand. A lot of us are being killed every day, raped you know.*

You will have to live with the damage forever, bruises, HIV, trauma. That's if you survive (Anesu, Zimbabwe).

Although the South African Constitution and legislation strongly condemns discrimination in workplaces on the basis of one's sexuality, gender, race, nationality etcetera, some participants stressed that they were not in control of the attitudes of people towards their sexuality and nationality. Zahra who left her job and they started their clothing line with her partner said that:

I quit my job because I found myself treated differently from other people. At times my colleagues will gossip about me and then when I make a big deal out of it, they will be like no I am out of line, or you didn't even hear or understand what was said. I mean those are the type of things I would have to experience daily. (Zahra, Kenya).

With the fear of losing their jobs and being treated differently, some participants continued to hide their sexuality in their workplaces. Emmy said that she was well aware that being discriminated against at work because of one's sexuality was against South African policies. Exposing one's sexuality can place one in a vulnerable position. They're always going to be monitored, and they're going to try to find anything that's wrong. These are the tricks that employers can use when they don't want to directly dismiss someone from work because of their sexuality, echoed Emmy. She narrated her story by saying:

They're not going to look at me the same way, that's my fear. I don't even want to think about how they're going to treat me. I'm talking about it from experience. I ended up leaving the job, the environment was no longer friendly. People were growing distant, and they started to have these small groups that I didn't understand, you know (Emmy, Tanzania).

Lara emphasized how she wanted to draw boundaries between her work and her personal life. She wanted to maintain the same relationship they had from the beginning, so she thinks opening up about her sexuality is going to compromise that relationship. She arguing as follows:

I made up my mind; I will not disclose my sexuality. The only people I open up to are people who are my friends, but not my workmates. I don't have to tell them who I am, you know. Some bosses, just because of who you are, can stop doing what they're doing for you. I know they might be suspicious because of how I look and dress. I don't think it is a good idea (Lara, DRC).

Assah also stressed her frustrations that at times they were being worked and the amount of pay was not equivalent to the amount of job that they were expected to do. Abuse by employers based on nationality and citizenship seemed to be prevalent as well among immigrants. She said:

> *Sometimes it is working overtime and get paid less, or no payment at all because you are undocumented. They take advantage of us because we are foreigners, you can't even complain or report them you know. I don't want to even involve my sexuality in the picture. I can't disclose that when I am looking for a job. Who will hire me? (Assah, Ghana).*

Emmy added on to say that:

> *My former boss was an Indian. Those guys were cruel. They would pay me late. She would call me names. At times she would threaten to call the police, especially when I demanded my money. She knew that I was not going to report her because my papers were not in order. It is difficult to get a job in South Africa you know. South Africans don't like us. They say we take their jobs (Emmy, Tanzania).*

In terms of their sexuality, some participants pointed out that they were harassed just like any other woman and just like any lesbian in South Africa. But they had to endure the threefold oppression. The fact that they identified themselves as immigrants has added a further threat to these already existing identities. Strong anti-immigrant sentiments that facilitate the poor integration of many immigrants in South Africa were identified by all participants. Tamanda said the following:

> *They often remind us that we are amakwerekwere[1] and a threat to the south African economy and decaying the South African society with our immorality. This other time, this other guy said he was going to discipline me because I am a foreigner and a stabane[2] and I had brought my homosexual demons to South Africa. He said that by the time I leave South Africa I would not be a stabane anymore and I would be speaking Zulu. I was pissed, I didn't respond, because there were a lot of them. They all laughed (Tamanda, Malawi).*

[1] Amakwerekwere- It is a derogatory term used to refer to an African foreigner in South Africa (Saayman, 2016).

[2] Stabane - A term used to describe "same-sex attracted men and women as "half man-half woman," hermaphrodite or intersex" (Sigamoney and Epprecht, 2013, p. 100).

Narrating her story about how she has been discriminated against because of her race and gender. Nyamwali said that:

> *It feels like not being treated equally with other people around you. Not being treated equally or humanly. It feels like there is some standard of humanity that you fall short of and you don't get to be treated like those people who qualify within those standards that they are holding, and it is usually white and male. It feels like being treated less than a person (Nyamwali, Zambia).*

For some participants, it was not only the fact that they identified themselves as lesbians and immigrants but also the fact that their skin complexion which is associated with their ethnicity put them on the brink of being victimized or hated in South Africa. Lara said:

> *They scrutinize our culture and ethnicity. This other time we were at the hospital with a friend of mine. She was pregnant. Someone passed the comment and said these black people who are always covering their faces are always pregnant with having small kids. They need to stop coming to South Africa and making babies. We did not respond. I could see that she was hurt. She just said let them be, just ignore them, they always talk nonsense I should not allow them to break me (Lara, DRC).*

The experiences of black lesbian immigrants show that identifying as a minority group in terms of sexuality, nationality, ethnicity seems to have harmful effects on their integration into society. Even where they are supposed to receive help and protection, they are often stigmatized and discriminated against by the wider society. Indifference and silence seem to be used by many participants to cover up their pain.

Strategies black lesbian immigrants use to deal with multiple forms of marginality

Despite all the challenges that the participants face in South Africa. They seem to have adopted strategies that help them cope with the different forms of marginalities. Anesu said:

> *I got assistance from this NGO. They offer counselling and group therapy. It Is quite helpful. I was suicidal and depressed. They are helping me to deal with that. Meeting other lesbians who are going through the same challenges is so comforting and strengthening. Usually, we call each other, go for drinks, and check up on each other more often. That is the kind of support I need. The results are positive. I am emotional and psychologically stable right now (Anesu, Zimbabwe)*

Assah went on to narrate her experiences as follows:

> *I love Prides and parades. I've met friends from different places, considering that there are only a few people in my country who are out about their sexuality. I have made friends with South Africans and people from different parts of the world. Trust me that they are so supportive. I have never been discriminated against because of my nationality. The lesbian community is so overprotective (Assah, Ghana)*

Nyamwali said that being with other queer friends has helped them to find strength and be able to deal with these types of marginalities. She pointed out that another way to deal with these forms of discrimination was to groom her family to be open-minded. She wanted to empower her children and educate them about the significance of being different.

> *In many ways, at some level, there is like no explaining to be done. The only real explaining is about different kinds of family setup. The only thing we have pestered them about is for them to know that there is a whole range of family structures. We have a lot of queer families, friends who also have kids, fortunately. Some have dads, some have two dads, some have 2 moms, some live with their grannies, some live with their aunts you know what I mean. The kind of explanation has just been about love and accepting who we are and appreciating that we are different people (Nyamwali, Zambia).*

Nyamwali's narrative indicates that there is a need to teach children about sexual diversity. By equipping them with these kinds of tools, they will be able to be open-minded and aware of some of the issues that affect them in society, such as the recognition of stigma and the challenge of discrimination and harassment.

Discussion of findings

Drescher (2004) postulate that it takes another level of self-acceptance for one to identify themselves as gay or lesbian. He adds on to say that "coming out to oneself is a subjective experience of inner recognition, a moment filled with mixed emotions. It is a realization that previously unacceptable feelings or desires are part of one's self. It is, in part, a verbal process putting into words previously articulated feelings and ideas. It is a recapturing of disavowed experiences" (Drescher, 2004, para. 16).

Research findings reveal that during their adolescent stage, all participants became aware of their sexual identity and acted upon their feelings. They claimed that despite the expected consequences, it was a huge relief that their sexuality was finally out in the open. Hiding it affected their well-being. '*I was going mad, depressed, feeling suicidal, I would cry at night, isolate myself'* are some of the phrases that were used by the participants to describe the nature of their situation by that time. The situation was worsened by the fact that these participants knew no one they could approach who had similar experiences to them. The lack of gay culture, due to the illegality of such has made the burden worse as they cannot seek advice from anyone who has had similar experiences as them.

However, the participants' perceptions about themselves seem to be evolving as evidenced in the research. The use of phrases such as *strength, brave, empowerment, taking control, bold, confiden*ce highlights the participant's narratives and how they viewed themselves besides all the challenges that they were facing. Coming out seemed to be liberating for all the participants who had had fully acknowledged their identity despite the rejection from their family and community members.

The study reports that participants received more resistance and non-acceptance from their social networks, which were already living in South Africa. These tensions were all about the sexuality of the participants. Some ended up being chased off into the streets, kicked by their relatives out of their house. The situation was aggravated by the fact that immigrants also try to connect and remain as a community when arriving in South Africa. They carry their attitudes and mannerisms from back home. Therefore, the participants narrated that it was a huge challenge for them to get support from people from their home countries due to their negative perceptions about their sexuality. These negative attitudes affected their settlement and well-being in South Africa as they had not established strong networks outside their circle. On this note, Gordon (2015) echoes that friendship networks of immigrants in South Africa present an

important source of assistance and support for resettlement and integration in a new environment.

The participants highlighted that they felt unwanted by the State and unwelcome by the local people. There were several dimensions to the discrimination they experienced. To begin with, the image portrayed by the media, of immigrants being criminals, dirty, liars had a huge impact on their wellbeing and self-esteem (Smith, 2011; Lawlor and Tolley, 2017; Danso, 2001). Secondly, the immigrants are not welcome by the host population in the communities where they are staying (Memela and Maharaj 2016). This situation makes them feel isolated from society as well as marginalized by the state. The combination of institutional and societal discrimination excluded them from mechanisms that may have served to integrate them or at least provide support and advice (Memela and Maharaj, 2018).

Findings from the research suggest that getting documented and the legalization of their stay in South Africa validated their existence and they were regarded as fully human beings. Moreover, getting documented means that the participants can enjoy the rights in the country and also have access to basic services such as health care facilities, applying for a job, opening a bank account, purchasing items such as a phone etcetera. After losing their documents and other personal belongings, participants used expressions such as '*it's not life*,' the same sentiments are shared by another participant who says '*it's holding me back, I can't do anything without document'*, which means that there were a lot of challenges that they would have to face in their everyday lives if they didn't produce their identity documents. These include constantly being stopped and questioned by the police on failure to produce identity documents, hence they had to bribe the police to avoid being arrested.

The procedure for applying for documents appears to be very stressful and has proved to be far too costly for many participants. Poor service delivery at Home Affairs is another issue that affects the participants. Some participants pointed out how poor service delivery has affected their well-being and violated their rights as asylum seekers. They claimed that the delay in obtaining the required documents at the postulated time threatened their stay in the country because their ability to access certain services depended on their possession of the right documents. For example, Memela (2015) claims that the applications for asylums are not properly monitored and they take a lot of time to be processed. This is a disadvantage to asylum seekers because they are at the risk of being arrested, detained, and deported.

The number of immigrants in South Africa in need of legal documents has increased considerably (Crush and Peperdy, 2018). One can tell that the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) is experiencing several difficulties in providing the services that immigrants require. The challenges faced by the participants were linked to the replacement of the lost documents, the renewal of the permits, the submission of applicants, and the obtaining of permits. Some of the participants pointed out that if they want their documents processed quickly, they have to bribe those working at the DHA. Again, perhaps the delay with the processing of documents is linked to corruption. The priority seems to be given to the individuals who have money, which is problematic and unfair to the applicants who cannot afford to bribe as they would have to wait for more than the stipulated period to get their documents processed.

Aside from bribery, there are other factors that contribute to the delay in processing the papers. These include limited resources, which result in backlogs, and limited government funds. CoRMSA (2014). The increasing backlog and poor service delivery at DHA have been an issue of concern to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Rights Commissioner (UNHCR) (2016). The UNHCR (2016) links the growing backlog at DHA to the large number of economic migrants who abuse the asylum privileges and procedures to legalize their stay in the country. UNHCR (2016) claims that not only does this delay the processing of asylum papers for the individuals who are illegible for such services but it also puts a strain on the limited resources at DHA.

The main challenge for participants who identified themselves as lesbians was to provide concrete evidence to prove that their lives were at risk because of their sexuality. Some of their claims were regarded as untrue and therefore their applications were rejected. Narratives from the participants indicate that if one is an immigrant and has money, chances are higher that their experiences and challenges will be different from the rest of the population, especially those who are struggling to make ends meet. Thus, these intersecting experiences based on nationality, social class, and in some cases, sexuality are the challenges faced by lesbian immigrants in South Africa.

Negative attitudes towards immigrants have been fostered across the globe. Migrants are viewed as problematic and burdensome to the receiving nation or continent (Jansen, 2016). The arguments have been raised that if the migrants are freely allowed into the country, they are a security threat to the nation (Wray- Lake, Wells, Alvis, Delgado and Metzger, 2018). The majority of the countries including South Africa have thus implemented policies to repress the flow of immigrants, especially the low-skilled (Juss, 2016). These would include both the

externalization of border control and interior social control such as increasing the number of countries of origin that require visas (Trianfadyllidou, 2016). In South Africa, migration control measures include arrests and deportations, militarizing border areas, imposing harsher penalties on those who violate immigration regulations, restricting employment access to undocumented immigrants etcetera (Machinya, 2020).

Findings from the research suggest that legalising one's stay in South Africa is a challenge. The problems are bigger if one does not have strong social capital. The social capital points to having people that have connections, especially at Home Affairs. These people make the work easier for many immigrants because they do not have to go through the process of queuing and getting rejected at the end of the day. For the participants who did not have such networks, they narrated that they had to suffer trying to go through the whole process of getting documented. For those who had the networks, they had to have money to get their papers on time. However, on the other hand, such desperation to acquire documentation led to some participants getting robbed of their money by fraudsters who claimed to assist them.

Canham (2017) purports that geography is an additional marker of difference as it often signals access to particular forms of social capital. Findings from the research suggest that geographical location also plays a major role in the marginalization and vulnerability of lesbians. Participants who were staying and/or once stayed in the townships, for example, said that they felt more vulnerable compared to participants who stay at low density suburbs. The participants who stayed in the suburbs said they were aware that their experiences differed from those in the townships. Narratives from the participants indicate that townships are characterized as homophobic and xenophobic, and there is no privacy. The lack of privacy in these communities exposes their sexuality, nationality or both. In addition, Marnell et al., (2020) report similar findings. They conclude by saying that most of the time violence occurs "in areas where working-class black people live with little policing and few community safety mechanisms" (p. 15).

Judge (2018) talks about how the middle class has different experiences compared to the working class, upper class. The Apartheid township designs aimed to constitute black lives as violent and unbearable. Nyamwali who stays in Norwood feels safe in her living place, as she is very aware that it is hyper-monitored and protected by security and police compared to townships. Nyamwali's biggest fears and concerns are that of taking her children to government official offices that reside outside of her living space.

According to the findings, those who live in townships have different experiences and narratives than those who live in suburbs. However, the research findings show that, while geographic location played a role in bringing out different experiences and forms of marginalisation among the participants, they still faced multiple forms of discrimination regardless of where they were located.

The spatial policy of Apartheid pushed many blacks to remain in the townships, while the suburban areas were occupied by a majority of whites (Canham, 2017). Anesu remains in the suburbs, emphasizing that she is in a better position because compared to participants who stay in the townships, she does not suffer much xenophobia and homophobia. '*We are safe, but we are not safe'* could imply that they may be exempted from some challenges but they are not wholly excluded from some of them despite being in a place that seems safe. One of the participants said that '*maybe cases of racism'. 'Well, I haven't suffered or experienced anything tense when it comes to racism but one of my friends has'*. The narrative of the participants suggests that although she did not fully admit that she was once a victim of racism, there were instances where, because of her race, she encountered something similar. However, her friend has implied that there are instances of racism around black lesbians.

The narrative *'haven't suffered or experienced anything tense'* needs to be scrutinized. The question of how black people measure racism is then a subject of question and debate. On the other hand, taking into account the background of the Kenyan participant, it is quite interesting. Considering Kenya's history, the country gained its independence from Britain in 1963. That was before the participant was born. There is a possibility that by the time the country got its independence, cases of racism were dealt with and they are not that extinct compared to countries like South Africa. Moreover, there is an unavailability of literature reporting on cases of racism in Kenya. Thus, from the above, there is a possibility that cases of racism are not always readily available to the participant's consciousness compared to the participant who grew up in Arizona in the USA where racism is a daily struggle.

The findings suggest that immigrant lesbians experience xenophobia and homophobia differently because of their class position in society. The fact that they can afford and, at some point, have the option of avoiding homophobic and xenophobic spaces makes them advantageous compared to those who do not afford that kind of luxury. Thus, the intersecting experiences of nationality, sexuality, race, and class render the lesbian immigrants in South Africa different experiences. Individuals who, because of their sexuality, nationality, and class, are oppressed and marginalized face extreme challenges. When examining the experiences of

the participants it is thus important to take into account the multiple forms of identity their class, gender, immigration status, ethnicity. There are also underlying multiple factors within these categories that contribute to the marginalization of these immigrants, these include language barriers, physical appearance etcetera.

Findings from the research show that there is a clear difference in the understandings of childbearing between participants in their 20's and the participant in her 40's. The women in their 20's enjoyed the labeling and identification of their sexual preference, to the point that it even controlled their roles and expectations in the relationship, for example, who was to bear children within their lesbian relationships. For the 40-year-old, however, there seemed to be a clear understanding that as lesbians, their relationship status and family perception on living their life together trumped who was playing the role of the heterosexual mother in their relationship. Their issue was less about who bears children but if children could even be born.

Most of the participants mentioned the pressure to start families. They mentioned that they received pressure to have their children from their partners, their peers, their friends, their families, and from the community. What made it more difficult is the fact that they had to resort to artificial techniques that are costly for most of them because as lesbian couples they cannot conceive naturally. These financial constraints in the end fuelled abuse within their relationships. The fact that the other partner had to sleep with a male figure to fall pregnant was one of them. These forms of manipulation and control propelled some participants to feel like they were sexually harassed.

However, for other participants, there was a thin line between their decision and what their partner instead demanded. Some participants reported on the violence that they experienced from their partners. This included sexual violence and the pressure to offer sexual intercourse to any man to get pregnant. For this participant, there was no clarity on how their agreement was going to work, but because of the need to start a family, she had to choose, even though she would say she '*had no option'* but to agree to a contract that was not well-explained, nor did she ask for clarity, as it might seem. These blurred decisions often resulted in more powerful acts of unsafe sexual intercourse. There was a clear difference between financially stable participants because they had options on how to start a family compared with those who were financially unstable.

The centrality of family is one of the major challenges facing LGBTQ community in Africa today (Kerrigan, 2014). She adds on to say that the "view of marriage and family aligns with

the idea of “Ubuntu”, where identity, the self, is conceived as being formed and maintained socially rather than only through individual consciousness or attributes” (Kerrigan, 2013, p.35). Cheney (2012) points out that homosexuality is seen as a major threat to reproduction. She goes on to say that it raises questions about how the clan, the family, the tribe, or, let alone, the human species should continue if there are non-procreating individuals.

Evidence from the research indicates frustrations surrounding the concept of family and reproduction when one participant said ‘*what was the family going to say because she can’t get me pregnant’*. This narrative could imply that there was pressure for this participant to start a family. Owing to her sexuality, the family believes that she is unable to bear children. They didn't care how she was going to do it, but they expected the family to grow, and that was her responsibility.

Heteronormative society expects one to be married or have a family at a particular age. This exposes many lesbians to discrimination, violence, and stigmatization. To start their own families, they then try various methods that are readily available to them. Participant narratives show how lesbians become vulnerable to violence from their partners, exposed to HIV/AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases. Emmy and Assah, for example, felt the pressure to start a family and have children. They did not sit down with their partners and have a mutual understanding of the benefits, disadvantages, and hazards associated with their decisions.

The phrase ‘*you can be attacked for all three in one day, and that's when someone hits the jackpot you know’* reflects the intersectional experiences the lesbians have to undergo. Research participants' findings suggest that one can be oppressed, violated because of their race, raped because they are women, and raped because they are lesbians or because they can fit in all these categories. These different categories, when combined, are seen by men as a jackpot. These lesbian identities are often viewed as essentialist rather than intersectional. The jackpot could mean carrying several subordinate identities that place one within intersectional invisibility. Thus, the jackpot could also imply that even when these cases are reported, there is a likelihood that they will not be considered intersecting crimes, rather that they will be charged under one category, such as rape for example. Evidence from the literature suggests that currently violent acts committed out of prejudice are treated in South Africa the same way other violent acts are treated. This means that hate crimes are not classified as different forms of crimes. No legislation per se categorizes hate crimes. Which makes the recording, documentation, and prosecution of these crimes difficult or impossible says Matebeni (2011).

The desperation that encircled many participants, due to their nationality, economic status, and sexuality, exposed them to intimate violence. Research findings indicate that it was difficult for the abused participants to leave the relationship with the fear of being independent in a foreign county and having to fend for themselves. Those who had partners that had income, specifically those who were in a relationship with South Africans, had to take them in and provide for their needs. However, this dependency turned into a violent nature as some of the participants anticipated that the abuse was based on their nationality and economic status. The abusive partners took advantage of the fact that their partners were not on speaking terms with their families, so they knew they would not get any support from them. Findings from the research thus indicate that migration status, poverty, and discrimination intersect to reinforce intimate partner violence among these lesbians.

The failure of police officers to protect the LGBTQ community has been used by some abusive partners to manipulate and control the victims not to report these cases. The survivors of these abuses were manipulated and made to believe that no one will believe their story. Hence, they turned to suffer in silence. The declaration that '*they never take partner violence seriously or consider its existence'* implies that some members of the community and the police force do not believe that there is abuse within same-sex relationships. Research findings confirm the work of Campo and Tayton (2015), who posit that there is a belief that abuse occurs only within heteronormative spaces.

Matebeni (2011) says that research focusing on lesbians would be strongly judged if it did not mention the roles, sexual styles, and identities of femme or butch lesbians. Findings from the participants who were in their 20's and 30's sighted that there is a clear distinction about the type of lesbian that they identified with. Comparing them to the participants in their 40's and 50 who claimed that they did not attach any labels to their sexuality. The roles and responsibilities that one had to embark on the relationship were also facilitated by these thin lines between the kind of lesbians with which one identified. Most of the participants said that the butches were in control, they had to pay rent, and they had to be like the man in the house whereas the femme had to take on the feminine roles. Nestle (1981) contends that the feminist theories claim that the femme and butch type of relations is a clear indication and imitation of male and female roles of heterosexuality.

McKanders (2010) cites that Intersectionality scholars acknowledge that there are many debates and disagreements among scholars on "whether intersectionality exists at all times and in all places (even if it changes forms) or whether under some conditions, one category might

supersede the other in determining labour market experiences and outcomes" (Brownie and Misra, 2003, p.492). Anesu said that; *'there is always a battle to fight, xenophobia, homophobia, patriarchy you know. You get to a point where you have to prioritize what is important, which battle you can fight, and win'*. Ijeamaka also said, *'there is always this bigger threat in that as well'*.

The above narratives insinuate that at some point in time one form of identity makes them more vulnerable and it overlaps to create other forms of marginalization. The issue of citizenship for example was discussed at length and how it ended up creating overlapping forms of subordination such as the challenge to secure employment, report cases of abuse with the fear of being arrested, and deportation. Mckanders (2010) reported similar findings in her research with indigenous immigrants' women in America.

The research findings also highlight how interracial relationships in society tend to be perceived. With her multiracial family, Nyamwali cannot be seen in public as anything more than just a nanny. Nyamwali is a Zambian national who is married to Zimbabwe national but is now a citizen of South Africa. They have two children they acquired from an Indian sperm donor. Talking about racism and her interracial relationship experience the participant said, '*sometimes it is helpful, it protects and at times it is offensive'*. It could be protective and helpful in a sense considering the misconceptions that still surround the black-white relationships in South Africa, which are rooted in the legacy of colonialism and apartheid where white is seen as superior and the master and a black person a servant. It may also be a protective factor in the sense that, because of these master-servant misconceptions, the participant and her partner and children do not immediately read as a family so most of the time people are not homophobic towards them. Thus, the findings show that one cannot be entirely free if they are subject to these intersecting experiences. Getting rid of any of these forms of discrimination does not mean that they are exempted from other forms of discrimination. Nyamwali could get away with her sexuality, but at the same time discrimination overlapped to determine her class and racial position.

Intersectionality theory highlights various forms of oppression that intersect with each other. In this case, Nyamwali's struggles are larger than just her sexuality, for her it starts with her race and gender, and how these are paired together to predict her class. Her body is already alienated from particular environments, where the myth is that black people cannot reside in white-dominated spaces as anything higher than workers can. In Nyamwili's case, and what she calls the '*small things'*, are that of frustration, spending time with her children and partner

in a public environment cannot protect her from the prying eyes of heteronormativity. That her partner and she do not carry a marital status, but rather that of a master-servant relationship. Just like how her children cannot be of her own, and this is regardless of the myths around the normativity of the LGBTQ family versus the normativity of the nuclear family.

The threat of being raped by frustrated, straight men who claim that 'having sex' with 'real men' will cure lesbianism is faced by all participants and their friends. What we see here is a form of sex that is supposed to occur. An aggressive and dominant action to which 'real' men claim to have the right, to the extent that they see no problem forcing themselves on these women. It is fascinating how the heteronormative community has normalized the sexual intercourse process. It's supposed to be between a woman and a man, with two body parts, a penis, and a vagina. This can be demonstrated by the questions and comments often raised about lesbian sexual intercourse. Thus, anyone who deviates from these norms must be corrected, even by harsh means.

Evidence from the literature suggests that immigrants experience an extremely difficult time entering the labour market upon their arrival in South Africa because of several factors such as lack of permits, valid papers, low levels of education, language restrictions (Crush, 2017). The need to secure employment also propelled the lesbian immigrants to hide their sexuality especially at their workplaces with the fear of losing their jobs. The statement '*some bosses they can stop doing what they were doing to you just because of who you are'* could mean things like promotion at the workplace and simple favours from the bosses.

Thus, from the above when examining the experiences of these immigrants it is important to then take note of these multiple identity markers which include their gender (lesbians) class (some of the low class), immigration status (undocumented), race (African). From the participant's narratives, there seem to be underlying factors as well such as the participant's lack of legal representations and familiarity with South African laws (for example CCMA protocols), language barriers that exacerbated their subordination. Hence, all these intersecting margins intersect with one another, thus disempowering the black lesbian immigrant.

Afro-phobia sentiments rooted in South African exceptionalism seem to perpetuate discrimination and xenophobic attacks. These conceptions seek to suggest that there is a foreigner and that there is a better foreigner. According to the study participants, these categories are based on geographical distance, accent, physical characteristics, such as skin colour. All this hatred seems to be fuelled by the misconceptions that have arisen as a result of

those particular countries or ethnicity. One participant gave an example that immigrants from Zimbabwe were in a better position because they were very close to home and some of them could understand Nguni languages compared to some of the participants whose first language was not even English. Participants' narratives, particularly those from West Africa (Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, DRC) show that their sexuality and visible physical characteristics have been used as markers of difference (e.g., hair texture, skin tone, nose temples, and faces) compared to the rest of the population in South Africa.

Some participants narrated that in the process of fighting violence against women, homophobia, and xenophobia they were also caught in between the ethnic divisions in South Africa. It was also violent to them and their identity that they had to give priority to which cultures to adopt, which languages to learn first to be accepted and integrated well in society. Research findings also show that participants had to endure different forms of marginalization because they were not familiar with the cultures of South Africa. Failure to assimilate in these communities posed a threat to local South African men, who even harassed them and told them that they will be raped for their sexuality. Moreover, the participants were accused of being arrogant for the mere fact they could not understand the culture and South African languages. Thus, dominant ethnic groups tend to marginalize other groups on that basis.

Batisai (2016) argues that many black immigrants have trouble talking to South Africans because of language barriers. She adds that language has been used as an exclusion tool. Batisai (2016) adds that language can also be seen as a form of racial violence. She notes that the historic conflict between blacks and whites sends a message that if one is black, they must be able to speak Bantu languages, especially in public spaces. Thus, upon failure to do so one is judged and their African identity is monitored. Thus, according to Batisai's narrative, the Africanism of immigrants is questioned because of a failure to speak in local languages.

Findings from the research also illustrate that despite some people being homophobic the participants also had to deal with issues of patriarchy, especially from black men who considered themselves to be African and traditional. The idea that a woman can have the autonomy to choose the partner that they want (another female) for that matter did not sit well with many men. Participants' narratives seem to highlight that they are taken in comparison to property, where males can own and control them. The participants' findings indicate that the idea that men [especially those born within the confines of South African borders] feel that they have control of everything that happens in the nation is absurd. The need to control the woman's sexualities was said to be '*sick'* and '*old school'* by many participants. It is viewed as

old school in the sense that women have been fighting against patriarchy for many years. The current policies and laws in this era problematize that, yet some men still do not see any problem with it.

Research findings also suggest that abuse is directed at these lesbians because of their race. Tamanda, who was sexually assaulted by two white boys in an elevator, raised questions as to whether she was assaulted because of her race or her sexuality, or because of both. These are some of the intersecting experiences that black lesbians have to undergo. They don't seem to have a safe space because they are assaulted in both public and private spaces.

Many participants also condemned colourism, as it was a technique used to discriminate against them. '*These black people'*, as one of the participants, said, when talking about her experiences, is used in such a demeaning manner to draw boundaries between what is local and what is foreign. Assah, Ijeamaka, Adwoa identified themselves as black beauty, with too much melanin coming from West Africa. In South Africa, where lightness is associated with belonging and dark-skin as foreign, skin tone discrimination has been a debatable topic. Lupita Nyong'o, a famous actor born in Kenya, refers to "colourism as the daughter of racism" (Maharaj, 2020, para, 1). This type of debate is why we now have so many women resorting to skin lightening products to fit into the expectations of society about what defines beauty (Gabriel, 2007). Thus, Jones concludes by saying that "society attached various meanings to these colour differences, including assumptions about a person's race, socioeconomic class, intelligence, and physical attractiveness" (Jones 2000, pg. 1500).

Discussing the strategies that the participants adopt to fight against all these forms of marginality, most of the participants especially those who were in their 20's narrated that the Pride parades reaffirmed their identity. They felt at peace, secure, and appreciated for who they were. They stress the importance of social networking and how it worked to their advantage as a marginalized group. This could mean networking in terms of job-seeking, meeting up with other immigrants' lesbians who were in hiding as well as seeking a romantic relationship. A social network often assists in reducing loneliness among newly-arrived immigrants and promotes a sense of belonging (Crush, 2017). On the other hand, the absence of friendship among immigrants, in many cases, leads to feelings of alienation and isolation. These experiences affect the emotional and psychosocial well-being of many immigrant women

In conclusion, research findings demonstrate that divisions within the society based on gender, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, class etcetera do not exist independently from one another but

rather interrelate and interact resulting in systematic social inequalities and what Kimberlie Crenshaw calls *Intersectional* experiences. These social divisions could also create systematic inequalities and oppressive behavior towards certain minority groups as seen with narratives from the black lesbian immigrants. Research findings showed that migration might have been empowering for these lesbians as they were in a country where they can be true to themselves and express their sexuality without fear of being arrested and victimized. Absurdly, migration also intensifies vulnerabilities to abuse, xenophobic attacks, homophobia particularly especially when the migrants are low skilled or without proper documentation.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of findings, concludes and offers recommendations for continued research. The aim of this study was to investigate the intersectional experience of black lesbian immigrants in Johannesburg South Africa. Black Lesbian immigrants in South Africa have distinct experiences through the intersecting margins of ethnicity, sexuality, race and class. Individuals facing these multiple oppressions encounter extreme challenges. Research shows that the narratives of the LGBTQ people are silent and have been made invisible by the wider society due to these intersecting marginalities.

The absence of black lesbian immigrant's narratives in literature has pushed them to the edge. It has created barriers for them to counteract the multiple oppressions that they face. The findings show that one cannot be completely free if they are subject to these intersecting experiences. Suppressing any of these forms of discrimination does not mean they are exempted from other forms of discrimination. Some participants were able to get away with their sexuality because they presented themselves in a way that was not offensive to the homophobes, but at the same time their accent, physical features, marked their bodies as foreign and therefore a subject of xenophobia and racism. Intersecting margins of nationality, sexuality, gender race overlapped in order to determine their class position.

Research also argues that one of the key challenges for participants was how they negotiated their national and sexual identity with other forms of identity, such as gender, ethnicity, race. The experiences of the participants and the attitudes of the wider society show that at some point, the participants had to hide some of their identities and prioritize the identity that matters most. In some cases, balancing and navigating in different spaces with these multiple forms of oppression has proved impossible. For example, some of the participants chose to hide their sexuality and only presented themselves as immigrants when they were looking for a job. They did this in order to protect themselves from these multiple forms of stigmatization and oppression. The study has also shown that social divisions that cut along the axes of sexuality, race, gender, nationality, class, ethnicity, etcetera cannot be discussed independently, but as intersecting positions that lead to systematic social inequalities at the end of the day. As demonstrated by research evidence from the black lesbian immigrants' narratives.

Further, research results showed that these lesbians could have been empowered by migration as it allowed them to come out and explore their sexual identity without fear of arrest and victimization. Due to the flexibility of the laws and policies towards lesbians in South Africa, some of the participants even managed to marry and start families. Absurdly, migration also exacerbates vulnerabilities to abuse, xenophobic attacks, particularly when migrants are poorly qualified or without proper documentation. Church groups, gay clubs, PRIDE festivals have been identified as safe, unifying places of socialization where black lesbian immigrants without the fear of being harassed or victimized can form their social networks. Such social networking environments have empowered black lesbian immigrants to strategize on how these intersecting marginal positions can be challenged.

Recommendations

The role played by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as The Fruit Basket Refugees is widely recognized and appreciated by all participants. The participants, however, indicated that they were receiving limited services due to a number of factors such as lack of funding at the organization, an increasing number of immigrants seeking help, and so on. They noted that government, NGOs and other stakeholders need to develop strategies to ensure access to the rights of LGBTQ immigrants and to promote their well-being in the host countries. These can include mobile clinics for undocumented immigrants, availability of counselling organisations for LGBTQ immigrants etcetera.

The South African Police Service (SAPS), the South African Human Rights Commission, and the Department of Home Affairs need to find mechanisms to facilitate working relationships with civil society to promote the rights of all LGBTQ immigrants living or working in South Africa, regardless of their legal status. There seems to be a need to extend the period of validity of Section 22 of the permits for asylum seekers and to ensure continued access to the asylum process for immigrants who have been persecuted.

In the national syllabus, discussion of sexual orientation should be included. Children should be taught at an early age about various forms of identity, being branded with such information at an early age could help to raise awareness, facilitate a constructive dialogue about LGBTQ in society, encourage ally behaviour, and reduce the number of LGBTQ people being victimized and stigmatized.

Opening a queer library or a queer children's book shop was also seen as a way to combat ignorance in the community about LGBTQ problems. The lack of knowledge and limited

resources has led to a lack of social commitment within society and to the exclusion of the sexual minority.

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Appendixes

Appendix A: Interview schedule

Biographic Information

1. Age
2. Country of origin
3. Residence in South Africa since
4. Ethnicity
5. How do you identify yourself? (Butch, Femme et)
6. Relationship status
7. Occupational status
8. Were you married, if so, what was the gender of your spouse?
9. Which religion do you identify yourself with?
10. Where does your family live?

SECTION B

RESEARCH FOCUSED QUESTIONS

1. Please briefly tell me about yourself and where you are from, and why did you migrate to South Africa?
2. What were your hopes when you decided to come here, what were your perceptions about South Africa? Did you have any social networks or links to South Africa before coming?

3. What are the religious, cultural and social attitudes towards the LGBTQ in your country? Do you think your country is doing enough to assist the black lesbians?
4. Were you ever harassed, discriminated or arrested because of your sexual orientation? Where did you get assistance?
5. Do you feel safe in South Africa with regards to your sexual orientation and nationality?
6. Please tell me about your experience of living in South Africa as a black lesbian immigrant? Which of these was the most difficult experience and why?
7. Do you understand and view yourself differently after migrating to South Africa? If so, what is that has changed? Are there any parts of yourself that you have not made peace with, considering what has happened in the past?
8. Was the relationship with people around you affected after disclosing your sexual identity. If so, how do you manage this and feel about it. Do you feel you can present all the aspects of yourself to everyone in your social network?
9. Do you feel more or less accepted by a certain race/nationality/community of people?
10. How do you identify with your native culture and how is the South African culture different from yours?
11. Do you feel integrated into the South African lesbian community in South Africa?
12. Have you ever felt excluded from the lesbian community in South Africa due to your ethnicity, religion, class and nationality?
13. With regards to what you have just mentioned, what are your coping strategies, and who is helping you through out these difficult times.
14. What helps you with accepting who you are as an immigrant lesbian? What are some of the positive experiences you have had in South Africa?
15. In your opinion, what do you think needs to be done to assist black lesbian immigrant transition better in South Africa post migration?

Is there anything you would like to add that we did not discuss?

Thank you very much for your participation





Appendix B: Information sheet

Good day to you!

My name is Ngwenya Lindile Nontobeko, from University of Witwatersrand. I am conducting a research study aiming at exploring the post migration identities of the black lesbian immigrants. My research topic is **Negotiating post migration identities: The intersectional experiences of black lesbian immigrants in Johannesburg, South Africa**. This is an exploratory study that will contribute to a greater understanding of the experiences of lesbian immigrants in South Africa. The information collected for the research could increase understanding and appreciation of lesbian immigrants' experiences. It would also have the potential to highlight effective services that are provided by community service providers and identify gaps in support services for this group. It is anticipated that participants would benefit and feel empowered by having an opportunity to tell their stories in a supporting environment. I am inviting you to participate in this study.

Participation in this study involves being interviewed for a period of 1hr- 1hr 30 minutes. Interviews will be audio-recorded to ensure accuracy in transcription of data. Those willing to be audio-recorded, the researcher will remind the participant not to mention their real names at the beginning of the interview. However, if the participants are not comfortable recording audio, the researcher will take down notes. Participation is completely voluntary and there will be no financial benefits involved in participation. However, research may prove beneficial in the sense that it will empower participants to be heard and share their experiences as black lesbian immigrants. The findings from research may contribute to policy makers and other key stakeholders affecting policy making. If these interventions are considered, checked, and

matched with the policies, people would be educated and well informed. We may see a reduction in violence and attacks directed toward immigrants and the LGBTQ community.
Participants can withdraw from the study at any time with no negative consequences. Withdrawal from the participation will not have any impact on the participants life, academics, job. Confidentiality of all responses is ensured and only the researcher and research supervisor will have access to interview data. All electronic data will be stored in password protected files on a password protected computer. Participants will not be identified and pseudonyms will be used in reporting of findings.

If the participant has challenges with reading, writing or speaking in English, the participants will have the freedom to choose their own translators, someone they trust who will work with them throughout the research process. If not, the researcher will work closely with the translators offered by the organizations concerned.

If you feel that you are emotionally distressed due to participation in this study, the following organization can be contacted for support:

Centre for the study of violence & reconciliation (CSVR)
Floor 3, Braamfontein
33 Hoofd Street, Braampark
Johannesburg
Phone number: 011 403 5650

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me (details to follow).
Your participation for this study would be greatly appreciated.

Faithfully

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Appendix C: Informed consent

I hereby give my written, informed consent to voluntary participation in this study.

- I am aware that I may stop the interview at any point and that I may withdraw my participation at any stage with no negative consequences.
- I understand that only the researcher and the supervisor will have access to the interview transcripts and that a pseudonym will be used to ensure confidentiality of my identity.
- I understand that I may access the results of this study following final examination of the dissertation.

I consent to **voluntary participation** in this study:

Participant Name and Surname: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

I consent to **audio-recording of the interviews**:

Participant Name and Surname: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Interviewer:

Interviewer Name and Surname: _____

Interviewer Signature: _____

Date





Appendix D: Permission letter for counselling services at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR)

Dear Mrs Nomfundo Mogapi

Subject: Requesting for a permission to refer lesbian immigrants for counselling

My name is Ngwenya Lindile Nontobeko, from University of Witwatersrand. I am currently doing my Masters in Critical Diversity Studies. I am conducting a research study aiming at exploring the post migration identities of the black lesbian immigrants. My research topic is **Negotiating post migration identities: The intersectional experiences of black lesbian immigrants in Johannesburg, South Africa.** This is an exploratory study that will contribute to a greater understanding of the experiences of lesbian immigrants in South Africa. The information collected for the research could increase understanding and appreciation of lesbian immigrants' experiences. It would also have the potential to highlight effective services that are provided by community service providers and identify gaps in support services for this group. It is anticipated that participants would benefit and feel empowered by having an opportunity to tell their stories in a supporting environment.

I am requesting for a permission to use your CSVR organization services to refer the lesbian immigrants for counseling should a need arise. Your assistance in granting me the permission to use the organization services during the duration of my research would be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithful

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