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(In)visible Lives: Exploring Lesbian Migrant Spaces of Belonging in South Africa

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Abstract

This dissertation explores how and where lesbian migrant women living in South Africa feel a sense of belonging. Despite South Africa having legal and constitutional protections for sexual minorities and refugees, both groups of individuals face high amounts of homophobic and xenophobically-motivated persecution. Little work has explored the unique challenges that migrants who are also sexual minorities can face as a result of their intersecting identities, and this is particularly true for work that looks at the lives of lesbian migrants.

With principles of narrative inquiry serving as methodological guidelines, this study uses interviews and solicited sketch maps from fourteen self-identified lesbian and bisexual migrants to examine where in the cities of Cape Town and Johannesburg these women live, work, relax, and form relationships. It explores how structural barriers rooted in homophobia and xenophobia intersect to exclude them from establishing livelihoods and everyday routines, and from finding spaces of belonging. It also looks at where they feel safe (or not) and what their levels of comfort in different places can tell us about the emotional aspects of belonging. Lesbian migrants' levels of comfort in different spaces are rooted in the comfort of others, and so this thesis lastly analyzes how they manage other people's perceptions of their identity to create spaces of inclusion. Findings show that lesbian migrants experience oppression and discrimination at intersecting, multiscalar levels, thus rendering microscopic the sites and spaces in which they feel they belong. The difficulties they face in accessing and sustaining economic livelihoods, finding places where they can feel wholly safe, and the constant need to be

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mindful of the emotions of others produces a landscape of exclusion and unsafety, and renders lesbian migrant women as perennial outsiders.

The findings contribute to existing work on queer migration studies. A focus on the (South) African context demonstrates the plurality of sexualities and how different identities can lead to different levels of social acceptance. They also add to literatures on migration studies in South Africa by highlighting how sexuality itself can impact migrants' senses of belonging, as well as their identity formation, levels of safety, and means of emotional management and expression.

Key words: South Africa; migration; sexuality; lesbians; belonging; intersectionality; emotional geographies

Summary for a Lay Audience

This dissertation explores how and where lesbian international migrant women who live in South Africa feel a sense of belonging. Despite South Africa having protections in place for both refugees and gays and lesbians, these individuals still face a high threat of violence because of their identities. To date, research has looked at how migrants in the country fare and how lesbians in the country fare, but little has been done with migrants who also identify as lesbians.

The study's fourteen participants self-identified as lesbian or bisexual migrants and lived in the cities of Cape Town and Johannesburg. I conducted multiple interviews with them and had them draw sketch maps of their day-to-day lives. This served as a way to explore how forces like homophobia and xenophobia work in tandem to exclude them from establishing livelihoods and everyday routines, and from finding spaces of belonging. It also offered a means to look at where these women feel safe (or not) and what their levels of comfort in different places can tell us about the emotional aspects of belonging, along with how they manage other people's perceptions of their identity to create spaces where they feel they belong. Findings show that lesbian migrants experience oppression and discrimination across different levels and at scales large and small, thus severely limiting the sites and spaces in which they feel they belong. The difficulties they face in accessing and maintaining livelihoods, finding places where they can feel wholly safe, and the constant need to be mindful of the emotions of others leads to frequent exclusion and puts their lives in danger, and also makes them feel like they are always outsiders.

A focus on the (South) African setting demonstrates how there are many different ways that sexuality can be expressed as well as how different identities can lead to different levels of social acceptance. It also adds to work on South African migration by highlighting how sexuality itself can impact migrants' senses of belonging, as well as their identity formation, levels of safety, and means of emotional management and expression.

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1.1 Introduction

This thesis explores the spaces of belonging for lesbian migrant women living in Cape Town and Johannesburg. Though South Africa was the first country in the world to enshrine rights for sexual minorities in its constitution (Cock, 2003), and individuals are legally authorized to apply for asylum on the basis of sexuality-related persecution, numerous reports have shown that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) migrants in the country face countless hardships in terms of safety and integration (Koko et al., 2018; ORAM, 2013; PASSOP, 2012). Because of their gender, race, and the threat of sexual violence, black lesbian women in particular are thought to face even greater challenges, though little research has documented their lives (Koko et al., 2018). This study adds to the limited body of research on lesbian migrants in South Africa by presenting an account of who some of these women are and how their lives have been shaped by their sexuality and migrant status. It also adds to work on queer migration and the social production of space by showing how socio-spatial dynamics impact lesbian migrants' identities and senses of belonging.

1.2 Social Context

One of the reasons many gays and lesbians come to South Africa from other parts of Africa is because of the country's reputation with respect to gay rights (Koko et al., 2018). On paper, at least, South Africa is very progressive in this regard. It was the first country in the world to constitutionally recognize sexual orientation as a protected class, for instance, and the fifth country to legalize same-sex marriage (Cock, 2003; van Zyl, 2011). Given the many countries in Africa where LGBT individuals face a high risk of

death at the hands of both state and non-state agents, South Africa is frequently viewed as the best option for those wishing to seek safety in this regard (Koko et al., 2018). Yet despite the legal protections in place, homophobic violence remains a pervasive threat, especially for black and coloured individuals (Bhagat, 2018). Lesbians in particular face the additional threat of gender-based violence, most notably rape and sexual assault (Mwambene & Wheal, 2015). And even when not contending with the threat of physical violence, gays and lesbians in South Africa are still subject to more subtle forms of homophobia. From uncomfortable stares to hostile comments, day-to-day interactions with others produce an environment where non-heterosexuals are made to feel 'othered' (Browne, 2007; Kheswa & Wieringa, 2005).

The hostility LGBT migrants face as a result of their sexual orientation is further compounded by their status as migrants. Like the country's policies with respect to sexual orientation, South Africa's migration policies, particularly those pertaining to refugees, are some of the world's most progressive, but these laws have little bearing on actual levels of migrant protection (Landau & Amit, 2016). Though refugees have no legal restrictions on their ability to live and work in the country, and all migrants are entitled to social benefits like health care and primary education (Fassin et al., 2017), refugees and migrants alike face the threat of xenophobically-motivated violence (Crush et al., 2017). One of the most infamous instances of this happened in 2008, when a nationwide set of anti-migrant riots left 62 dead and countless others injured (Monson et al., 2010). Though nothing has reached this scale since, there have still been numerous other violent outbreaks. But much like with homophobia, here again, absent the threat of physical violence, migrants still face more discreet forms of discrimination, from difficulties in

finding jobs and housing, to the inability to open bank accounts, to the destruction of migrant-owned businesses (Crush et al., 2017; Fassin et al., 2017; Misago, 2019). Researchers are careful to point out, however, that not every migrant faces these threats and difficulties. Racism across a wide variety of sociopolitical scales continues to fuel a disdain toward black foreigners (Neocosmos, 2010; Landau, 2008). As a result, it is black African migrants in particular who are often the main targets of xenophobic violence (Bekker, 2015).

1.3 Spatial Context

Migrants most frequently congregate in the country's two largest cities, Cape Town and Johannesburg (Statistics South Africa, 2012), which makes the choice to study the lives of migrants in these two cities a fairly obvious one. Studying the two cities also offers the opportunity for a variety of comparisons in terms of cultural, economic, demographic, and sociological differences. As an example, Cape Town is colloquially known as Africa's "gay capital" (Visser, 2003, p. 168). It boasts a plethora of gay and gay-friendly bars, and hosts the continent's largest gay pride parade. Johannesburg, meanwhile, arguably lacks what Canham (2017) calls a "queer map" (p. 87). There is no proverbial 'gay neighbourhood,' à la Cape Town's De Waterkant, and gay/gay-friendly bars are few and far between (Canham, 2017).

Spatially, a large number of restaurants, shopping centres, and other commercial businesses (including but not limited to the Central Business District) in Cape Town are concentrated in the area known as the 'City Bowl.' This is the area nestled inside the confines of Table Mountain, Signal Hill, and Devil's Peak that overlooks Table Bay. Because of its small size (roughly six km^2), transportation within and through the area is

relatively easy and inexpensive (Wilkinson, 2000). Johannesburg, in contrast, is much

more sprawling. With the possible exception of its Central Business District, there is no

centrally-located place of social activity, and, in my personal experience, transportation

in and through the city can be quite time consuming and expensive. The differences

between the two cities point to the possibility for different outcomes in terms of what

spaces lesbian migrant women are able to access and how they may act in these spaces. A

comparison of Cape Town and Johannesburg, particularly with respect to the former's

proliferation of 'gay spaces' can allow for an analysis of the effect that so-called gay

spaces can have on behaviours and identity development (Canham, 2017).

1.4 Research Questions and Methods

To date, very few studies have looked at the outcomes of queer African migrants

in the country, but the few that have paint a bleak picture. These migrants face

intersecting axes of subjugation because of their sexuality, race, and migrant status

operating in conjunction (Koko et al., 2018). Refugee claimants, for instance, risk having

their claims of sexuality-based persecution denied because of homophobia on the part of

immigration officials, or because said officials lack an understanding of the dangers gays

and lesbians face in their respective home countries (ORAM, 2013; Palmary, 2016).

Other studies have similarly shown that queer African migrants in the country are more

likely to be undocumented, posing further problems in terms of accessing housing, jobs,

and health services (PASSOP, 2012). Taken together, the limited research that has looked

at the lives of queer migrants points to a landscape of hostility and exclusion.

One thing that remains unexplored in these studies is the outcomes for queer

migrant women in particular. Studies on the outcomes of queer migrants in South Africa

have looked at men and women in conjunction and/or heavily focus on the experiences of men (e.g., Beetar, 2016; Koko et al., 2018; or PASSOP, 2017). Also frequently missing from these studies is a more theoretical understanding of how and where lesbian migrants fit into South African society. In particular, there is little to no literature on the spaces that lesbian migrant women (LMW) feel that they do and do not belong and the scale(s) at which these inclusions and exclusions occur. I argue that black lesbian migrant women experience oppression and discrimination at intersecting, multiscalar levels, thereby rendering microscopic the sites to which they feel they belong. In doing so, I explore the ways that LMW experience and contend with multiple, often conflicting senses of attachment, all of which may happen at an array of spatial scales (Wood & Waite, 2011). Belonging, as I and others contend, should be analyzed and understood intersectionally by exploring the connections between identity categories and space (Valentine, 2007; Wood & Waite, 2011). Different practices in different locations can reinforce both belonging and the construction of identities, and because of this, authors like Hopkins (2019) and Yuval-Davis (2006) argue that geographers in particular are well-positioned to study these intersectional connections.

The experience of belonging is also an "emotional binding" between individuals and the spaces they occupy (Gorman-Murray, 2011, p. 211), and so this thesis correspondingly examines the role that emotions play in forming attachment to space. Understanding emotions can help us locate LMW's position(s) in South African society, and this includes looking at where and when they *feel* that they belong to a place (Yuval-Davis, 2011). My research shows how experiences of belonging are shaped intersectionally, and the role that emotions can play in how individuals form attachment

to place (or not). The thesis is therefore guided by the following three sets of questions:

i. Are LMW excluded from establishing gainful livelihoods and day-to-day routines? If so, how might xenophobia and homophobia intersect to contribute to this exclusion?

ii. How safe or comfortable do lesbian migrant women feel in different spaces? What can their levels of comfort tell us about their attachment to these places?

iii. How do LMW manage other people's perceptions of their identity to create spaces of inclusion and belonging?

These research questions foreground the self-described experiences of lesbian migrant women and enable an exploratory approach to their geographies. As so little is known about their lives and contexts, I use a qualitative, mixed-methods approach along with narrative inquiry and analysis to gain an understanding of some of the constraints on their everyday lives and obtain some insight into their emotional experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2012). This approach allows for greater reflexivity throughout the research process, and I detail throughout the dissertation how the nature of our interactions generated new ways of thinking about these experiences (Falconer Al-Hindi & Kawabata, 2002). It also allowed me to reflect on the nature of my relationship with the women themselves, and I discuss this further in Chapter Three. I engaged with 14 women using unstructured and semi-structured conversations over the course of six months. These women were recruited for the study via reverse snowball sampling; six lived in Cape Town and eight lived in Johannesburg. Because I am interested in the geographies of their day-to-day lives, including spaces of inclusion and exclusion, I also solicited sketch maps that depict both where these women go *and* where they intentionally avoid. These maps make visual the spatiality of lesbian migrants' lives, and allow for a more thorough

analysis of the relationship between lived experiences, emotions, identities, and space (Rodó-de-Zárate, 2014). These maps were shared with me by 11 of the 14 total participants, and only after we had already met and chatted at least once. To analyze the maps and interviews, I used narrative analysis, which makes use of storytelling by emphasizing events and actions (Polkinghorne, 1988). These narratives tell of geographies and belongings and exclusions rendered immensely convoluted because of intersections of their identities and their environment, and so I use theories of intersectionality to help frame my interpretations of how belonging, space, and identity all interact with and shape each other.

1.5 Conceptual Framing

The results of this study demonstrate that lesbian migrants' identities intersect in myriad ways to create a precarious landscape. In this environment, finding spaces where they feel they truly 'belong' in every regard is an extremely difficult endeavour. Spaces that do offer a sense of belonging for these women often do so only partially. Certain spaces may be accommodating with respect to LMW's migrant identities, for example, because other migrants are present, but because of said migrants' homophobia, these spaces could also be dangerous with respect to the expression of LMW's non-normative sexualities. To remain safe in these spaces, then, lesbian migrants must constantly monitor their surroundings and conceal, to varying degrees, how open they are with respect to their sexuality. Lesbian migrants' sexuality clearly imposes constraints on where and to what degree they can belong, but this is made much more confounding because of their additional traits of being black migrant women. In order to more thoroughly explain how intersections of sexuality, gender, migrant status, and race can

combine to limit both the spaces of belonging for lesbian migrant women in urban South African and the ways they can safely 'be themselves,' this thesis draws on works from geographies of belonging, emotional geographies, intersectionality, and queer migration.

1.5.1 Geographies of Belonging

Nira Yuval-Davis (2006) offers researchers an analytical framework for studying belonging and the politics of belonging, and I use her work to frame my own analysis. According to Yuval-Davis, belonging can be studied at the levels of social locations, identifications and emotional attachments, and ethical and political values. People firstly belong to different social locations (e.g. black, woman, middle-class, etc.), and these are often fluid and contested. These locations are "virtually never constructed along one power axis of difference" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 200) and so must be studied intersectionally to understand how they constitute one another. Hence, my own analysis of where LMW feel they belong uses an intersectional approach, discussed further in Section 1.5.3.

Yuval-Davis (2006) secondly stresses that there is a narrative component to people's identities and the ways in which they belong—people tell stories about themselves and others that indicate what being a member of a group might mean. These narratives of identity are inherently emotional and reflect the desire for attachment. Researchers must pay attention to how these emotions shift across time and place and contribute to the construction of identity. She also notes that constructions of belonging have a performative dimension. Different repetitive practices that relate to specific social and cultural spaces are crucial for linking identity narratives and constructions of attachment. With this in mind, this dissertation underscores the importance of LMW's

emotions in the construction of belonging by exploring where and when participants feel

safe (Chapter Five) and how their and others' emotions lead to different performances of

their identity (Chapter Six).

Lastly, belonging can be thought of in terms of the ways in which different people

or identities are valued and judged. This, Yuval-Davis (2006) argues, is central to what is

known as "the politics of belonging" or the practice of boundary maintenance based on

concepts of 'us versus them' (p. 197). Throughout my analysis chapters, I draw

connections explaining how, in countless contexts, LMW are viewed by South African

citizens *and* other (heterosexual) migrants as the 'them' rather than 'us.'

1.5.2 Emotional Geographies

A sense of belonging is, at its core, an emotional attachment to our material and

social worlds (Wood & Waite, 2011), and so this thesis uses lesbian migrant women's

emotions and emotional geographies to understand the development of their attachment

to places with respect to their senses of belonging. By focusing on how emotions such as

fear, comfort, or belonging are felt and experienced through the body, I show how

LMW's emotions in and of themselves are spatial, temporal, and can "coalesce around or

within certain places" (Bondi et al., 2005, p. 3; Gorman-Murray, 2009).

Emotions are also spatial in the sense that cultural norms prescribe which feelings

can be appropriate *where* (Ahmed, 2004; Davidson & Milligan, 2004; Held, 2015;

Kawale, 2004). This is especially noteworthy or useful when it comes to the study of

sexuality, since sexuality itself is inherently related to emotions *and* since these norms

also dictate what types of sexual behaviour are acceptable where, and what types of

behaviour get constructed as deviant in which spaces (Davidson & Milligan, 2004).

Valentine (1996), for instance, charges that heteronormativity is ultimately sustained

through homophobic, *emotional* responses to things like same-sex handholding or other

public displays of affection. The act of disclosing one's sexuality or sexual orientation,

for instance, can lead to different emotional responses for both the discloser and the

person on the receiving end (Maliepaard, 2018). In this dissertation I therefore ask when

and *where* LMW engage in this act of disclosure and to what degree, a practice known as

'strategic outness' (Orne, 2011).

Different social contexts necessitate different strategies, and the mental energy

LMW spend monitoring their surroundings and adjusting their behaviours accordingly I

argue is tantamount to what is known as emotional labour. This is a term coined by

sociologist Arlie Hochschild (1983) as a way to describe how individuals must conceal

their own feelings and identities in the workplace in order to manage the feelings of

others and meet socially acceptable codes of conduct. Others, like Kawale (2004) and

Sólveigar-Guðmundsdóttir (2018) have expanded the definition and used it to describe

the psychological work that lesbians engage in in managing others' emotions at home and

in other social spheres. This dissertation shows how lesbian migrants' expenditure of

emotional labour is necessitated in nearly all spaces across all scales. This adds to

literature showing the connections between space and emotions, and also highlights the

importance of safe spaces where such expenditure is not necessary.

Migrants and their trajectories can also be conceptualized or understood through a

mapping of their emotional geographies. Authors like Gorman-Murray (2007; 2009) and

Knopp (2004) claim that migration itself is an inherently emotional experience, while

queer migration in particular has been framed as a quest for "emotional and ontological

security" (Knopp, 2004, p. 123). In this way, queer migrants are an especially fitting

choice for exploring and expanding our understandings of what it means to belong

(Rouhani, 2019). Queer migrants' intersecting statuses as queers and migrants (amongst

other identity categories) can also serve as a reminder of how emotional attachments,

including a sense of belonging, are intersectional (Valentine, 2007). This dissertation

illustrates how LMW belong and do not belong in different places and at different scales

through and because of their multiple, intersecting identity categories.

1.5.3 Intersectionality Theory

This thesis draws on theories of intersectionality in order to frame its analysis.

These theories, which originated from black feminism in both activist and academic

circles, highlight the infinite permutations of sexual and gendered identities, and they do

so by explaining how individual identities like gender or race (or sexuality) cannot be

seen as independent from one another (Crenshaw, 1989; Hopkins, 2019). These identity

categories instead intersect, and better insight into how this happens contributes to more

complex and dynamic understandings of identities and social relations (Rodó-de-Zárate

& Baylina, 2018).

Though debates are still ongoing with respect to intersectionality's specifics and

how and where it should be used (Hopkins, 2018), its application in geography highlights

the integrality of space in understanding how things like gender, race, class, and power

are mutually constituted (Hopkins, 2018; Johnston, 2018a; Mollett & Faria, 2018;

Valentine, 2007). Authors like Hopkins (2018; 2019) charge that geographers *must*

consider the significance of locality and the role of social positioning when developing

intersectional analyses. More specifically, geographers can contribute to the development

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of intersectionality studies by looking at how place and space help shape intersectional relations and by focusing on the relevance of spatial context (Mollett & Faria, 2018; Rodó-de-Zárate & Baylina, 2018). As a means of analysis, intersectionality, along with other theories such as queer and feminist theory, helps us understand the wide range of identity expressions and how there exists "an array of vectors of relationality" (Hopkins & Noble, 2009, p. 518). In other words, it argues for a relational way of thinking about entities like race, gender, and sexuality (Collins & Bilge, 2016). This is highly relevant in the study of spaces of belonging. Hopkins (2019), for instance, argues that in analyzing who belongs and where, geographers in particular are well-positioned to show how intersectionality is not only about multiple identity categories, but also about different social locations.

By foregrounding multiple positionalities, intersectionality also helps explain and account for lived experiences of marginalized individuals (Rodó-de-Zárate, 2015). Maria Rodó-de-Zárate's work on the lives of young lesbians in Brazil and Spain offers an example of how an intersectional lens can be applied to the lives of queer women (Rodó-de-Zárate, 2014; 2015; 2017). Her research uses solicited relief maps and semi-structured interviews to show how different facets of young lesbians' identities intersect to shape these women's experiences and how they negotiate public space. She offers specific examples of how intersecting axes of oppression can manifest and how her participants navigate this. In looking at similar processes for lesbian migrants in South Africa, this dissertation contributes to queer, feminist, and intersectional geographies by exploring a group that has been widely neglected. By looking at the way that something like sexuality intersects with both other identity categories and social environments, it shows both how

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spaces transform and are transformed by the intersecting identities of their occupants and how identity categories themselves are mutually constitutive (Hopkins, 2019). In my analysis chapters, for instance, I illustrate the ways that identities like black, migrant, lesbian, and woman cannot be disentangled from one another; nor can they be disentangled from the South African context. Finally, this dissertation contributes to work on queer migration, which, as I discuss below, borrows from intersectional theories along with queer and feminist ones to explore the connections between migration and sexuality.

1.5.4 Queer Migration

Intersectional theories, alongside queer and feminist theories, have been widely applied in the sub-field of queer migration studies (Chávez, 2013, Rouhani, 2019). Here, 'queer migrant' scholars like Eithne Luibhéid (2004; 2008) and Andrew Gorman-Murray (2007; 2009) use 'queer' as a theoretical concept to disrupt normative dialogues of citizenship and sexuality (Yue, 2012). They charge that non-heterosexual migrants are frequently excluded from public and academic dialogues about migration because migrants are assumed to be heterosexual. Likewise, these individuals are excluded from dialogues about sexuality because non-heterosexual subjects are assumed to be citizens, albeit second-class ones (Luibhéid, 2004; 2008). In seeking to overturn this, queer migrants scholars analyze how sexuality, in conjunction with hierarchies of gender, race, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity, structures the process of migration. The use of queer, feminist, and intersectional theories shows how migration itself is implicated in the process of identity formation, including sexual and gender identities (Chávez, 2013; Luibhéid, 2008).

Frequently, however, the work of 'queering' migration gets left to queer scholars.

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Authors like Manalansan IV (2006) and Mai & King (2009) claim that a queer approach is needed to migration studies as a broader field to allow for more representative and inclusive depictions of how migration is globally gendered. Doing so can call into question longstanding, often taken-for-granted conceptions of things like reproductive choices or the supposed 'naturalness' or 'inevitability' of migrant communities (Bürkner, 2012; Manalansan IV, 2006). This thesis demonstrates, for instance, that lesbian migrant women in South Africa form their own networks because they are excluded from migrant communities, showing how complex ways of community building are at work (Bürkner, 2012).

Most queer migration scholarship has focused on migrants in the Global North (Bhagat, 2018). What has been much less explored is how sexuality structures the processes and outcomes of migrations in the Global South. Given the plurality of sexualities in the Global South (Epprecht, 2004), studying South-to-South queer migration offers the potential to both challenge and add to understandings of migration, sexuality, and identity formation (Baas, 2018; Manalansan IV, 2006). Similarly, queer migration scholarship skews toward the experiences of gay men; this also applies to the limited body of work looking at queer migrant outcomes in South Africa (discussed above). That which has been done on queer migrants here has been largely atheoretical, looking strictly at the 'on-the-ground' realities for gay men *and* lesbians (or just gay men). (See, for instance, Beetar, 2016 or Koko et al., 2018.) Focusing on women exclusively is important because not only are lesbian migrants at a heightened risk of experiencing violence compared to their male counterparts (PASSOP, 2019), but also because the ways in which lesbians use and inhabit space is different (Canham, 2017;

Matebeni, 2008). Lesbian spaces tend to be more fleeting, for instance, and less visible

(Gieseking, 2016a; Rodó-de-Zárate, 2015). Knowing how and where lesbian migrant

women are able to belong and to be safe in their identities, along with what they do to

maintain this safety and belonging, has implications for understanding how their

(in)visibilities distance them, both literally and metaphorically, from gay men. This thesis

therefore offers original insight into the intersectional challenges that lesbian migrants in

South Africa face in terms of belonging.

1.5.5 Space as a Conceptual Frame

Massey (2005) compellingly argues that space cannot be thought of as

"continuous and given" (p. 4). This line of thinking leads to both people and places being

taken for granted. She instead claims that space is never complete. It is multi-

dimensional, temporal, complex, and continually being (re)enacted. This poses a

challenge when it comes to mapping and actually writing about lesbian migrants' spaces

of belonging. As Steinberg (2009) points out,

> The coconstitution of space and time is incompatible with the concept
> of representation. So long as the world is conceived of as a set of stable
> points, on which and across which objects emerge and subsequently
> move, the distinction between a contextual, stable background of space
> and a dynamic, mobile foreground of time will persist, leading to
> incomplete depictions of mobility as a foundational social process (p.
> 475).

These "incomplete depictions" also go counter to some of the tenets of intersectional,

queer, and feminist geographies, which all advocate for relational ways of thinking about

space (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Valentine, 2002a; 2007). They additionally pose a

challenge for doing work on emotional geographies. If, as emotional geographers argue,

emotions are always spatial, and space is always changing, then emotions, too, cannot be

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'mapped out' (Hubbard, 2016).

Methodologically, I had asked the women to tell me about and to map out places of significance along with places that they consciously avoided. This way of asking about space might seem to presuppose its existence and take it as a given (Massey, 2005). And indeed, my own understandings of space have certainly changed from the start of the thesis to the end. (See a fuller, reflexive discussion of some of these changes in Chapter Seven.) I contend, however, that this more static way of speaking about space served only as a conceptual starting point. Many of the women, for instance, spoke of Johannesburg as being an 'unsafe place' (Chapter Five), implying a more fixed conceptualization of it. But in further discussions where they explained why it is unsafe, the women talked about the imagined *actions* and *identities* of others that often led it to feel this way. This implies a sense of temporality and enactment. In all of the results chapters' discussion sections, I also draw out this relational way of understanding space and its effects on belonging. I argue throughout that LMW must constantly be aware of their surroundings because their environment is always changing, and that as a result, belonging is an ongoing process.

1.6 Positional Considerations

Intersectional, queer, and feminist teachings all call for researchers to be critically reflexive in both research and writing, and to remain aware of one's own subject position and privilege (Bowleg, 2008; Gorman-Murray et al., 2010; Moss, 2002). Doing so provides a way to start examining how processes of communication intersect with matrices of power to affect research outcomes (Dowling, 2005; Gorman-Murray et al., 2010). In the section below I share more about my positionality and how the thesis came to take shape, while in the conclusion (Chapter Seven), I offer a reflexive consideration

of how my analyses changed over time. Throughout the entire manuscript I also weave in my own reflections alongside more critical analyses.

The choice to centre the dissertation on spaces of belonging in particular was borne out of a comment that one of the women gave to me as a parting piece of advice. She implored me to look deeply at what I had been struggling with, and to apply that to my research. Her words stuck with me for years, but it was not until I reflected back on my own 'queer migrant' journey that I was able to make sense of them. Having grown up as a (closeted) lesbian in a small, conservative, midwestern American town, my move to Canada for graduate school was prompted by both academic and cultural considerations, including a desire to find a place where I felt that I fit in better. Given the volatile and uneven landscape of gay rights in the United States at the time, Canada seemed a far safer place to be openly lesbian. In the nearly eleven years since, I have certainly witnessed acts of homophobic aggression, but they have been few and far between. The transition from life in the States to life in Canada was a relatively seamless one, and my sexuality is not something that I ever feel that I have to hide in my day-to-day interactions. My sense of belonging here is far greater than it ever was in the States. I am aware, however, that my status as a white, middle-class American woman no doubt made this transition easier. This prompted me to wonder how lesbian migrants elsewhere fared, particularly those who did not have the same sociodemographic advantages. From here I began to look to South Africa, where I knew of some of the contradictions between liberal human rights laws and high levels of homophobic and xenophobic violence.

My status as a white, North American researcher put me in a powerful position relative to the women I spoke with (Falconer Al-Hindi & Kawabata, 2002). Although

there are certain things I am more easily able to relate to, the contrasts between my positionality and those of the women I spoke with mean that I cannot speak to a 'similar experience' (Probyn 1996). While I tried to subvert these power dynamics in different ways, such as through being vulnerable about some of my own struggles, and getting their feedback about my interpretations of their situations, I am also aware that these dynamics can never be fully erased (Falconer Al-Hindi & Kawabata, 2002). I address more of these methodological challenges in Chapter Three, but in addressing them here I want to point to the fact that research is never without its biases, and researcher-participant interactions are always shaped by the different positions each person holds (Gorman-Murray et al., 2010).

These positions can change over time, too. Some of the women and I developed an earnest friendship, for instance, which then had an impact on when I felt was appropriate to disclose in the presentation of my findings (Chapter Three). My own relationship to the research itself also changed as I continued to think critically about both what I had found and *how* I had found it. The lack of research done on South African intersections of homophobia and xenophobia led to my initial exploratory approach (Section 1.4), but the use of narrative analysis and the decision focus on lesbian migrants' senses of belonging emerged only as I was writing the dissertation and trying to make sense of the events that had transpired and the dialogues that had emerged. The first complete draft of the manuscript also lacked any sort of cohesive thread to hold it together. I had described some of the challenges that LMW face and how these challenges can be exacerbated by their intersecting identities, but there was little that contextualized what this actually meant to the women themselves and how they saw

themselves fitting into their environments. Finally, as I describe more in Chapter Seven, I also initially struggled to 'think intersectionally' about lesbian migrants' spaces of belonging. The process of doing so meant that I had to rethink many of my initial impressions and expand my analytical scope beyond the narratives and the maps (Bowleg, 2008).

1.7 A Note on Terminology

In describing the lives of black lesbian migrant women living in urban South Africa, this thesis draws on understandings of sexuality and race that are particular to the South(ern) African context. With respect to sexuality, at the outset of this research project I stated to friends and other researchers that I would be looking at the lives of queer migrant women. I used the term 'queer' in this context (as opposed to something like lesbian or gay) because I was not sure how migrant women in South Africa with non-normative sexualities would come to define themselves (Salo et al., 2010). Though 'queer' is still somewhat paradoxically an identity category in and of itself (Browne & Nash, 2010) and one of Western origins at that (Oswin, 2005), no other option seemed better suited. At its broadest definition, 'queer' can encompass any and all forms of marginalized sexual and gender-based identities, and so in this regard it at least leaves open the possibility for flexibility. As it happened, all of the women I met specifically preferred the term 'lesbian,' or, in a few cases, 'bisexual;' none of them identified as queer or any other culture-specific term. Thus, in referring to 'lesbian migrant women,' as I do frequently throughout the text, I am referring to the self-identification of women who are sexually attracted to other women.

In terms of race, South Africans still use the categories of 'white,' 'black,'

'coloured,' and 'Indian' to describe members of the population. The terms themselves

stem from the apartheid-era classifications of European, Native, Coloured, and Asian,

respectively, and were historically regulated and employed as a means by which to

legally enforce segregation (Foster, 2012). Their use here though reflects their current use

as a descriptive factor rather than any more formal or sinister sort of definition. Even as

descriptions, however, they still carry ample social significance, and I explore some of

the many implications of this throughout this dissertation.

1.8 Thesis Structure

The theoretical and methodological frameworks of this research are laid out in the

next two chapters. In Chapter Two, *Contextualizing Lesbian Migrants in South Africa*, I

introduce the sociocultural context of lesbian migrant women's lives in South Africa and

show how the work and ideas of queer migration scholars have framed my own research.

This chapter first provides an overview of the South African immigration context,

including a discussion of both migrant and refugee policies, followed by a discussion of

how these policies shape and inform xenophobic violence in the country. I then discuss

the reasons for the inclusion of the Equality Clause in South Africa's 1996 Constitution,

which enshrined legal protection on the basis of sexual orientation, and how this and

other rulings have shaped the landscape of lesbian and gay rights in the country.

In Chapter Three, *Methodological Foundation and Research Design*, I discuss

how my research methods relate to principles of qualitative research. From there I discuss

the specifics of my research design and practice, which included unstructured and semi-

structured interviews with 14 lesbian migrant women and solicited sketch maps from 11.

To provide the reader with more context, and in keeping with queer and feminist

principles of reflexivity, I then offer details about who my participants are and how my interactions with them unfolded (Taylor, 2010). The chapter concludes by discussing how I analyzed my findings and how I used theories of intersectionality to help me interpret them.

Chapters Four through Six describe my findings, addressing three overlapping research objectives. Chapter Four, *Intersections*, seeks to identify how xenophobia and homophobia intersect to exclude LMW from establishing gainful livelihoods and day-to-day activities. I consider the ways in which the spatial encounters of lesbian migrant women are shaped and defined by their sexuality, migrant status, gender, and race. These "daily negotiations of different places" (Morrison et al., 2019, p. 5) show how their sense of belonging is located within broader social structures, and I argue that an understanding of this belonging is incomplete without first considering the myriad ways in which their respective identities intersect with and compound each other. I show how public attitudes like homophobia and xenophobia intersect to make difficult the establishment of livelihoods and day-to-day routines. Chapter Five, *Places of (Un)Safety*, examines how safe or comfortable LMW feel in different spaces, and how their levels of comfort speak to their (lack of) attachment. I use safety and comfort as lenses to explore how emotions contribute to the binding between identity, space, and belonging. In doing so, I show how places that feel unequivocally safe are nearly non-existent, and I argue that this contributes to LMW's sense of non-belonging. To maintain their safety, LMW must continually monitor their surroundings and, as I claim, account for others' emotions as well as their own. Chapter Six, *Identity Management*, shows how LMW use a variety of spatial strategies to accomplish this. Specifically, the objective is to identify what some

of the strategies are that LMW use to manage perceptions of their identity and to create

spaces of inclusion and belonging. I show how some of the strategies they use to stay

safe, for instance, can sometimes compromise their sense of belonging. Lastly, in Chapter

Seven, *Conclusions,* I draw together the conceptual threads of the discussion sections,

and offer suggestions for organizations, policymakers, and state officials working with

lesbian migrants. I also point to some of the obstacles in creating spaces of inclusion for

these women, and I conclude with thoughts on the thesis's broader theoretical

applications and implications.

Chapter Two: Contextualizing Lesbian Migrants in South Africa

2.1 Introduction

The purposes of this chapter are twofold. First, it introduces the geopolitical context of lesbian migrant women's lives in South Africa. Second, it introduces work and ideas put forth by queer migration scholars. In doing so, it sets the conceptual and epistemological framework for the research methods that I employ in my dissertation research, which are based in intersectional theory. The geopolitical context of lesbian migrant women's lives in South Africa lies at the intersection of two major sets of policies and politics: those pertaining to South African migration and those pertaining to (South) African sexuality. Most influential in this research process have been scholars who recognize the complex ways in which queers *and* migrants can disrupt binaries and hierarchies, thereby subverting understandings of power, mobility, identity, and belonging.

Section 2.2 introduces some of the policies regulating migration in and to South Africa. These national policies work in conjunction with individuals' xenophobic attitudes to contribute to an exclusionary and often hostile environment for other African migrants in the country. Section 2.3 delves into the legal framework under which same-sex rights came about, as well as cultural attitudes governing the relation of female and same-sex sexuality, while Section 2.4 offers examples of how for black lesbians in particular, their race and gender leaves them vulnerable to homophobic violence that is ignored by police and by their communities. Section 2.5 considers some of the broad ways that policies and practices relating to migration and sexuality can intersect to impact the lives of queer migrants in South Africa. Through a discussion of their paradoxical

state of (in)visibility, I introduce some of the areas of interest for queer migration

scholars more broadly. In Section 2.6 I highlight some of the 'unruliness' of queer

migration itself, and the challenge of doing work with a group of people who often defy

categorization. This challenge is exemplified in some of the ontological debates over who

is and is not considered to be a queer migrant in the first place. The ambiguity over

definition also speaks to the messiness of the migration process itself. Migration has

historically been framed as a singular event that unfolds in a linear sequence, but many

queer migration scholars question these understandings, drawing parallels between the

migration process and the 'coming out' process. The theoretical and practical problems

that some of these authors point to can also serve as a guideline for where future scholars

of (queer) migration and sexuality can turn their research. I thus conclude this chapter

with Section 2.7, where I connect these threads by discussing implications for researching

queer migrants' senses of belonging, and offer an introduction to how this informed my

research methods and means of analysis.

2.2 South African Immigration

After apartheid, South Africa saw a sharp rise in migrant numbers (Kihato, 2007;

Misago, 2017; Okem et al., 2015; Palmary, 2016), with more recent estimates suggesting

totals between 2.2 and 3.1 million (Statistics South Africa, 2011; World Bank, 2015).

Though South Africa has two separate sets of policies governing immigration and

refugees (the Immigration Act and the Refugees Act, respectively), the restrictions of the

former and the relative progressiveness of the latter has led many migrants to claim

asylum-seeker status (Fassin et al., 2017; Johnson, 2015; Wellman & Landau, 2015). The

Department of Home Affairs (DHA) has thus far been unable to adequately and promptly

process the resulting volume of asylum-seeking claims, leaving applicants in a permanent state of limbo (Fassin et al., 2017).

In this section, I detail four of the different types of work permits that all migrants can apply for, and then also discuss the Zimbabwean Exemption Permit (ZEP) and its previous iterations, which, as the name implies, is available only to Zimbabweans. I then briefly discuss South Africa's refugee policy and some of the issues asylum-seekers can face when making a claim. Next, I explain how the stringent conditions or qualifications of these pathways combine with ignorance or ineptitude on the part of DHA and Refugee Status Determination Officers (RSDOs) to make the prospect of both obtaining and retaining legal status extremely difficult, which I argue contributes to a sense of impermanence and non-belonging. Migrants hoping to live and work in South Africa have the option to apply for a general work permit, a critical skills permit, a business permit, or they can be granted a corporate work permit.[1] Collectively, the three former permits favour those with a disposable income and/or who have certain educational qualifications, while the corporate work permit and the ZEP do not offer pathways that allow recipients to stay long-term. The difficulty of acquisition and/or the impermanence of these permits contribute to migrants' continued exclusion from South African society.

Briefly, intra-company permits and business permits operate in very different ways, but neither is particularly advantageous for everyday, long-term migrants. Intra-company permit holders can only stay a maximum of three years, and they cannot use their work experience gained during this time toward an application for permanent residence. Business permits, meanwhile, come with financial requirements far too steep

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[1] Relatives' visas, while fairly popular, do not allow the recipient to work. (See Statistics South Africa, 2017, for a distribution of permits issued).

for most migrants (Crush, Chikanda, & Skinner, 2015). For 'everyday' migrants hoping to come to the country to make a living for themselves and stay long-term, general and critical skills visas are the most viable options (Carciotto, 2018). Both require, among other things, proof of financial means (along with application fees ranging in the hundreds of dollars), and a certificate from the South African Qualifications Authority that the applicant has 'proven skills' in the field in which they wish to find a job.

Because they heavily favour applicants with education and special skills (and can be quite costly), these visas, as authors like Carciotto (2018) charge, unfairly disadvantage African workers. And indeed, while statistics show the dispensation of these permits to be on the rise, they are not necessarily being proportionally distributed to other Africans. A breakdown of their distribution shows that African nationals receive 51% of all temporary residence permits, yet they account for 75.3% of all the country's foreign migrants (Statistics South Africa, 2015; 2017). Similarly, the education and special skills requirements disproportionately render women ineligible. The DHA does not include a gender breakdown of the permits it issues, but authors like Crush, Tawodzera, et al. (2017) and Mbiyozo (2018) argue that women are very likely to be underrepresented.

Many of those unable to secure legal status through these channels (and indeed, many migrants to South Africa in general) are from neighbouring Zimbabwe. Zimbabweans make up an estimated 29% of all asylum-seekers in South Africa, and more are undocumented migrants (UNHCR, 2016). One thing the South African government has done to help manage and monitor the Zimbabwean population in the country was to create a special permit specifically for these individuals. Faced with an

overwhelming volume of Zimbabweans in the asylum system, the South African government created the Zimbabwean Dispensation Permit (DZP) in 2009 to try to better regulate the migrants and reduce pressure on the asylum system (de Jager & Musuva, 2016). This permit was made available to any Zimbabwean in the country who had a job and a clean criminal record, and allowed them to work, study, and conduct business (Alfaro-Velcamp & Shaw, 2016). Originally designed to be a temporary, five-year solution, it has been twice renewed since its inception (Moyo, 2018). The second iteration, the Zimbabwean Special Dispensation Permit (ZSP), was available only to previous DZP holders, and began in 2014 and was set to end in December 2017. In August 2017, however, the South African government began issuing a new four-year permit called the Zimbabwean Exemption Permit (ZEP). This is available to the estimated 245,000 Zimbabweans who have held both a DZP *and* a ZSP (Carciatto, 2018). Zimbabweans who have arrived in South Africa after 2010 are therefore not eligible for the ZEP, and are instead left to immigrate via other channels.

The new ZEPs, like their two predecessors, are non-renewable and non-extendable. They also prohibit their holders from applying for permanent residence, despite said holders' 12-year tenure in South Africa by the time the permits will expire in 2021. Holders hoping to remain living and working in the country after the permits expire will have to return to Zimbabwe and apply for regular work permits. The stringent and temporary conditions of the ZEP program leave their holders in a constant state of limbo, and suggest that they were designed to both control and exclude Zimbabweans in South Africa (Moyo, 2018).

With little chance of finding a legal means by which to live in South Africa as a regular, work-seeking migrant, many African migrants, Zimbabweans or otherwise, instead opt to enter the country as an asylum-seeker, joining the thousands of others who have fled their home countries in search of safer living conditions (Fassin et al., 2017; Landau, 2006). South Africa's refugee policy, outlined in its Refugees Act (1998, and amended in 2015) is one of the most progressive in the world (Wellman & Landau, 2015). Unlike in many other countries, asylum-seekers and refugees in South Africa are permitted to work and study, and are granted access to many social services like health care and public education. The benefits the policy offers, combined with the difficulties in obtaining legal status by other means, helps contribute to an overwhelming volume of asylum-seeker applications (Fassin et al., 2017; Wellman & Landau, 2015). A 2016 report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees found that South Africa continues to receive some of the highest numbers of asylum applications, totalling 62,200 in 2015. Because of the high volume of applications and an extreme lag in processing times, asylum-seekers face an unpredictable wait time in terms of when they will be granted a trial date, with some claimants having been in limbo for years (Crush, Skinner, et al., 2017). The wait times can be inadvertently advantageous in that in the meantime, migrants have a chance to gain significant employment, form social connections, and accrue some savings (Crush, Skinner, et al., 2017).

But while the delays in processing may offer some unintentional benefits for migrants hoping to establish ties in South Africa, they also highlight a broad set of problems with the way South Africa currently manages refugees. Their 'permanently temporary' status makes it extremely difficult to secure formal employment or to fully

integrate into South African society (Amit & Kriger, 2014; Carciatto, 2018). Adding to this difficulty is the fact that these permits must be renewed every three to six months in-person at a Refugee Reception Office. With the closure of the Cape Town office in 2012, up until its court-mandated re-opening in 2019, asylum-seekers in the western part of the country were required to travel to Durban or Pretoria in order to do so (a distance of well over 1,000km for those living in Cape Town). The burden of finding the money to afford transportation while also taking time off work (if their superiors even allow this to happen) is left to the asylum-seekers, and countless lose their legal status each year by letting their permits expire, rendering them subject to deportation (Amit & Kriger, 2014; Carciatto, 2018).

The Refugees Act also sets up immigration courts run by RSDOs. These officers, as scholars have claimed, frequently have inadequate training and a lack of clear guidelines in how to deal with asylum claims on grounds of gender and/or sexuality-based persecution (Palmary, 2016). The inadequacy of their training comes to light when looking at some of the reasons why 90% of applicants are rejected (Fassin et al., 2017). As one example, countries tend to distinguish between economic and political migrants, dismissing the former and accepting the latter. Economic migrants arrive in pursuit of better economic opportunities, whereas political refugees come fleeing from political persecution. The problem, as Wellman and Landau (2015) argue, is that motivations for migrating are multi-layered; economic factors often combine with political ones in influencing migrants' decisions. In Zimbabwe, for instance, the 2007 economic crisis intertwined with political changes in the country that led to a massive out-migration in

the late-2000s (Crush, Chikanda, & Tawodzera, 2015), as have more recent economic and political crises (de Jager & Musuva, 2016).

Other problems come to light when looking at how RSDOs respond to claims of discrimination on the bases of gender, gender identity, and/or sexual orientation, all of which are acceptable grounds for becoming a refugee under the Refugees Act (South African Refugees Act, 1998). Here, normative understandings of gender and gendered behaviour contribute to the frequent denial of these claims. For women experiencing sexual trauma, for instance, RSDOs often have limited understandings as to how women fare in other parts of Africa and how comfortable they may (or may not) be in expressing the details of their trauma, leading officers to make ill-informed decisions based on a very narrow set of criteria (Palmary, 2016). Palmary (2016) cites a case where, after appeal, a woman's claim was found to be legitimate because she was "crying throughout the interview" and therefore "clearly telling the truth" (p. 46). Transgender-identified refugees seeking safety of the basis of their gender identity also face steep cultural barriers in gaining protection. Camminga (2018) argues that they are "paradoxically within rights, but unable to access them" due to their perceived violation of gender norms (p. 89). The denial of claims on the basis of stereotypes extends to gay and lesbian refugees as well. When gays and lesbians do seek refugee status on the basis of their orientation,[2] they face RSDOs who again may have very narrow understandings of what gays and lesbians 'should' look like, in combination with an ignorance of social mores in other countries (Palmary, 2016). Here, RSDOs may deny claims on the basis of the fact that homosexuality is not legally prohibited in the applicant's country of origin. This

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[2] And they often do not, for both lack of awareness and a not-unfounded fear of discrimination on the part of the RSDOs. See, for instance, Black & McGleughlin, 2016.

ignores the fact that homosexuality in said country may still carry severe social repercussions including death (Moodley, 2012).

Refugees and asylum-seekers also face the same sort of permanent impermanence that work permit holders do. Both groups must periodically renew their permits in-person at a Refugee Reception Office, but these renewals are never guaranteed. Collectively, the legal hurdles that migrants and refugees can face point to state mechanisms that are by design meant to preclude certain (African) individuals from fully integrating into South African society (Crush, Skinner, et al., 2017). Further contributing to the exclusions that migrants and refugees can face in terms of integration are attitudes and actions on the part of South African nationals that demonstrate that African migrants are very clearly unwelcome in the country. In the next section, I detail how this xenophobia can manifest and explore some of its more recent origins.

2.3 Xenophobia

The exclusionary nature of South Africa's migration permits and policies with respect to other African migrants point to more concerning trends toward how these immigrants are actually treated in the country. Acts of xenophobic aggression from both the South African police force and everyday citizens are far from rare, and can often turn deadly (Alfaro-Velcamp & Shaw, 2016). Perhaps the most famous of such attacks are the 2008 anti-migrant riots that left 62 dead and countless other injured across multiple cities and provinces (Monson et al., 2010). Though many politicians denied that the attacks were even motivated by xenophobia at all, instead charging that they were instigated by a few rogue, mentally unhinged individuals (Misago, 2016), other authors having convincingly argued that the attacks were most decidedly xenophobic, and were neither a

fluke nor unprecedented; they were instead an inevitable happening in a country plagued by xenophobia and struggling to come to terms with a new identity (Dodson, 2010; Klotz, 2013; Wellman & Landau, 2015).

Though nothing has reached the scale of these attacks in the decade since, there have still been other outbreaks of xenophobic violence, such as the attacks in Cape Town in 2012, ones in in Durban, Johannesburg, and Grahamstown in 2015, Pretoria-based anti-immigrant protests in 2017, and attacks in Durban in 2019. These are underscored by the fact that many citizens still harbour xenophobic beliefs (Gonzalez-Barrera & Connor, 2019). In a province-wide survey conducted in Gauteng (home to both Johannesburg and Pretoria), for instance, 24% of respondents felt all foreigners should go home, while 43% felt that too many people were arriving in the province and that influx control should thus be brought back (Ballard et al., 2019).

In summarizing the different arguments or theories that attempt to explain why xenophobia and xenophobic violence are so widespread in South Africa, Misago (2019) says models tend to fall into one of four categories. Economic explanations focus on the scarcity of resources, and the fact that xenophobic violence most often occurs in poor, marginalized, informal settlements. Here, the argument goes, immigrants and citizens (often internal migrants themselves) must compete for already-limited access to jobs and housing, and this competition fuels the scapegoating of African migrants (Misago, 2016, 2019; Monson, 2015; Tella, 2016). Other explanations point to politics and the failure of post-apartheid nation-building (Misago, 2019). Under apartheid, one's identity was almost entirely determined along ethnic lines—Zulu, Xhosa, Tsonga, etc. But in the absence of any clear national identity post-apartheid, politicians and the media began

speaking in nationalist terms (Dodson, 2010; Klotz, 2013; Landau, 2010). This creation of a new national identity necessarily meant that there now had to be a new 'other.' In this case, it became other Africans. This 'othering' and the desire to protect their new constitutional rights meant that South Africans, particularly disenfranchised black South Africans, began to worry about the influx of migrants (Neocosmos, 2010).

A third category of explanations emphasize the psycho-social, that is, a repetition of a culture of violence formed under apartheid combined with newly-formed stereotypes as a result of the increasing amount of contact South Africans were beginning to have with migrants (Misago, 2019). This is especially pertinent in light of the differences in treatment between white migrants from the Global North and black migrants from other parts of Africa. Black African migrants get branded with label of 'foreigner;' white migrants are seen as expats or tourists. Whites bring in money, the thinking goes, and give credence to the idea that South Africa is a cosmopolitan place worthy of international admiration (Matsinhe, 2011). Black migrants, meanwhile, are thought to commit more crimes, have much darker skin than black South Africans, talk differently, and even have their own distinct smell (Crush et al., 2013; Klotz, 2013; Neocosmos, 2008; Matsinhe, 2011).

Lastly, in addition to the broad socio-structural factors, other analyses have focused on more micro-level socioeconomic and political dynamics. These contend that more proximate causes of the violence are found within the localized economies and small-scale politics of different townships and informal settlements (Misago, 2019; Monson, 2015). Misago (2019) charges that while all of these explanations may hold merit, they fail to explain what actually connects the xenophobia and feelings of

discontent to actual acts of violence. People all over the world live in poverty, and many also harbour xenophobic beliefs, yet these conditions do not always lead to violent outbreaks (Misago, 2017). Misago (2019) believes that a lot of the impetus is on local politicians, or "local violence entrepreneurs," who encourage xenophobically-motivated riots as a means to gain attention, funds, and broader support (p. 1). The looting of foreign-owned businesses is a particularly profitable endeavour. While political protests may spur eventual change, looting produces immediate results, supplying the instigators with food and money (Landau & Misago, 2016).

Taken together, explanations for why xenophobia and xenophobic violence are so prevalent in South Africa convey the idea that migrants fundamentally do not belong. They are frequently viewed as intruders whose presence causes a financial burden and leads to escalating crime rates and social unrest. South Africa's migration policies also feed into and play off of these beliefs. The difficulty many migrants experience in obtaining any sort of permanent status is by design, intended to exclude those with lower levels of income and education. For now, things are unlikely to improve any time soon. The latest White Paper on International Migration (whose suggestions have yet to be enacted) recommends a further de-linking of residence and permanent status in South Africa. This means that time spent in the country under certain work visas would no longer 'count' toward permanent residency. Similarly, time spent as a permanent resident would not count toward citizenship. Enacting these suggestions would make it even harder for those who do reside in the country in various ways to stay there permanently (Carciotto, 2018). The Paper also recommends an increased emphasis on obtaining and retaining "skilled" migrants (Republic of South Africa, 2017, p. 34). With little impetus

for South Africans to change their behaviours and beliefs, the threat of xenophobia, too, remains an ongoing one. The entrenched effects of prejudices resonate in other ways as well. Queer migrants hoping to find a better life in South Africa face not only rampant xenophobia, but also attitudes that are openly hostile to those with non-normative sexualities. It is these attitudes, and the policies that accompany them, to which I next turn my attention.

2.4 Sexual Orientation and Sexuality

With the ratification of its Constitution in 1996, South Africa became the first country in the world to constitutionally prohibit discrimination against gays and lesbians. The Bill of Rights states: "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, colour, **sexual orientation**, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth" (SA Const. Section 9[3], 1996, emphasis added). The inclusion of sexual orientation in this clause came as the result of a number of convening forces (Cock, 2003). Gay rights groups like the Gay Association of South Africa (GASA) joined forces with groups like the United Democratic Front, one of the country's leading anti-apartheid groups in the 1980s (Cock, 2003). According to Graeme Reid, a member of GASA, "...we managed to make gay rights part of a much broader political project" (as cited in Cock, 2003, p. 36). Part of this included reframing gay rights as being part of the broader spectrum of human rights (Booysen & Wishik, 2016). As Edwin Cameron, then a human rights lawyer (and now a recently retired Constitutional Court Justice) said to a crowd at a gay rights march, "We have a message to all the law-makers of South Africa and the constitution-makers of South Africa. The

message is: criminal law is for criminals. Gays and lesbians are not criminals." (as cited in Johnston & Waitt, 2015, p. 117). Cameron also argued that the inclusion of sexual orientation as a protected condition was a crucial test of South Africa's commitment to good faith and integrity (Cameron, 1993). The clause was not without opposition—groups like the African Democratic Christian Party lobbied very hard for its exclusion, and public opinion polls at the time showed that 44% of the population was against giving gays and lesbians equal rights and even more, 68%, were opposed to letting same-sex couples adopt (Charney, 1995). But those voices were largely excluded from the constitution-writing process, and the resulting clause was adopted by Parliament in 1996 (Cock, 2003).

A decade later, following a 2005 Supreme Court Ruling, South Africa reached the "inevitable outcome" of legalizing same-sex marriage (Awondo et al., 2012, p. 157). Other hard-fought rulings before and after the legalization of same-sex marriage have affirmed the State's commitment to upholding gay and lesbian rights, such as the equalization of the age of consent in 2007, and the affirmation of paid parental leave for same-sex couples in 2017. The positive ramifications of this are widespread—Cape Town has long been dubbed Africa's 'gay capital,' for instance, and there are a plethora of gay and gay-friendly bars and clubs throughout the country, as well as numerous annual Pride parades and other events (Visser, 2003). In addition, gay neighbourhoods such as Cape Town's De Waterkant district provide a safe space for some gay and lesbian individuals to express their sexuality and explore their identity (Tucker, 2009a), and the ability for gays and lesbians to marry can contribute to a sense of agency and belonging (van Zyl, 2011).

Yet despite the numerous achievements of LGBT activists since the end of apartheid, same-sex sexuality in South Africa remains a contentious issue, and black lesbian women in particular find themselves at a dangerous nexus. Instrumental to explaining the discrimination that gays and lesbians in South Africa still face is the fact that, as indicated previously, the inclusion of sexual orientation in the Equality Clause in South Africa's Constitution was partially motivated by a desire on the part of activists and politicians to strengthen political alliances, and not necessarily a reflection of broader cultural shifts in attitude with respect to non-heterosexual sexualities (Cock, 2003; Oswin, 2007).

Taking a critical look at the clause's inclusion, Oswin (2007) notes that many authors have proffered various reasons for it, and distils the arguments down to four broad points. First, she says, is the argument that the timing was right. Tolerance was the mantra of the day, and the inclusion of sexual orientation as one of the protected classes of individuals was yet another nail in apartheid's proverbial coffin. Second, faced with a sweeping change in political structure, formerly-robust political alliances of the apartheid era were badly shaken. Were the new, emerging alliances that catered primarily to non-blacks to promote equal rights for only *some* minority groups, their campaigns may have been overshadowed by parties promoting equal rights for *all* groups. Third, gays and lesbians had a number of politically-influential allies who could ensure that their voices reached the upper echelons of South African politics. Finally, a targeted campaign launched by the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality was highly effective. From this list of reasons, Oswin (2007) notes that there is "nothing remotely queer" about the inclusion of sexual orientation in the 1996 constitution (p. 97).

To 'queer' something, Oswin (2007) says, is a destabilizing act, and the Equality Clause merely served to reinforce existing power geometries, not undermine them. Those in power in South Africa have demonstrably shown little interest in ensuring the Equality Clause is enforced, and enforced fairly, at that. Lesbians in South Africa, particularly racialized ones, still face widespread discrimination and acts of physical violence with respect to their sexuality, and this is exacerbated by homophobic remarks from top politicians and a police force that ignores gays and lesbians' testaments of mistreatment (Lewin et al., 2013; Mwambene & Wheal, 2015).

Unpacking this violence and the relative indifference to it by those in positions of power requires a look at the discourse surrounding it. In (South) Africa, the notion that "homosexuality is un-African" has been a pervasive refrain by which to denigrate LGBT individuals (Epprecht, 2004, p. 10; Gunkel, 2010; Msibi, 2011). To some extent, there is truth to this mantra. Epprecht (2008) argues that,

> The word *homosexuality*, notably, suggests a clarity arising from a specific history of scientific enquiry, social relations, and political struggle that did not historically exist in Africa and still does not very accurately describe the majority of men who have sex with men or women who have sex with women in Africa (p. 8, emphasis original).

This does not mean, however, that same-sex attraction and/or same-sex intimacy is also somehow 'un-African.' In their comprehensive works on the subject, Epprecht (2004) and Gunkel (2010) explore the varied ways that South(ern) Africans have explained or understood same-sex behaviours, and the complex origins of homophobia that now link these behaviours to issues of morality and colonialism. Epprecht (2004) and Gunkel (2010) claim that under apartheid, the policing of sexuality, particularly women's sexuality, became an essential component to ensuring the continuity of the white race.

Any form of sexual engagement that was *not* for this purpose became treated as an act of state-directed apostasy. This included not just same-sex relations (amongst whites, at least), but also relationships that transgressed racial categories (Gunkel, 2010). Black sexuality, meanwhile, was to be feared, contained, and controlled. Gunkel (2010) succinctly summarizes how the historic policing of women's and black sexuality translates into modern-day homophobic violence against lesbians. This violence, she says, is part of how "women function as commodities, as markers of sexuality and act as a signifier for heterosexuality within these structures," and "any resistance against this position, a position where the supposed availability and passivity of women highlights the political institution of compulsory heterosexuality, brings with it the possibility of punishment" (Gunkel, 2010, p. 90).

The idea that lesbian homosexuality in South Africa carries with it "the possibility of punishment" underscores the severity and near-inevitability of homophobic violence, especially for black women. Broadly speaking, LGBT individuals as a whole in South Africa are at a high risk of homophobic discrimination and homophobic violence. Lesbian women in particular face gender-specific threats of violence, including what is disturbingly termed 'corrective rape'—rape committed with the intent of punishing or "curing" women of their same-sex attraction (Morrissey, 2013, p. 5). Accurate statistics on its prevalence are difficult to come by, as it is not recognized as a hate crime and detailed records on the matter are not kept, while incidents that *are* reported are not always properly identified as being related to sexual orientation (Mwambene & Wheal, 2015). Nevertheless, the prevalence of corrective rape is considered to be widespread,

and racial minority women are particularly at risk (ORAM, 2013; Müller & Hughes, 2016; Mwambene & Wheal, 2015).

The legal assistance and social support for women who experience this trauma is also bleak. In a report on the subject by the Johannesburg-based non-governmental organization (NGO) ActionAid (2009), they offer a quote from a survivor, who says,

> The second time [I was raped] my soccer friend and I were kidnapped at gunpoint and they took us somewhere far away and did what they wanted with us for three days. We told the police but the case just disappeared. Nothing happened because they all thought I deserved it. These men are still walking free (p. 5).

This survivor's account of what transpired after she reported what happened to her is illustrative of broader national patterns in the lack of police action or interference in crimes committed against black and coloured gays and lesbians. I argue that at best, the South African police force is indifferent to these crimes. In a news report chronicling the rape of 20-year-old Zukiswa Gaca, and the lengths she had to go through to get police to investigate, Gaca says of her lesbian friends who have faced similar traumas, "They don't report their cases, they don't go to the police station because they know that it will just be a waste of time." (Mabuse, 2011, para. 41).

As noted, the threat of corrective rape is not distributed evenly across racial or socioeconomic lines. This discrepancy is called sharply into focus by activist groups that find themselves at odds with the organizers of different South African cities' Pride parades and other Pride events. The 'One in Nine'[3] activist group, for instance, disrupted the 2012 Johannesburg Pride parade by forming a human blockade, while others

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[3] The name 'One in Nine' itself refers to the fact that it estimated that only one out of every nine women who are sexually assaulted in South Africa will actually report their assault to the police (One in Nine, n.d.).

positioned themselves on the ground. The activists charged that the parade's mostly-white organizers were ignoring the violence committed against black and coloured women living in townships (Scott, 2017).[4] Other disruptions and counter-marches have made similar charges against the majority-white organizers who coordinate said parades. (See, for instance, Payi, 2018; Robertson, 2017; Schutte, 2012; Thembo, 2017; or Van Niekerk, 2017.) As Mkhize et al. (2010) argue, and as evidenced by scouring the newspaper headlines, it is black lesbians who live in the poorer townships who are most subject to extreme forms of homophobic violence like corrective rape. In particular, Mkhize et al. (2010) state that, "well-resourced women—the majority being white—are generally less exposed to hate speech and crime, gender-based violence, and homophobia" (p. 1).

The intersections of gender and sexuality with race and socioeconomic status all point to questions of who stands to benefit the most (or even at all) from the protections promised by the Equality Clause. As Cock (2003) notes, to access the protections the Clause offers gays and lesbians, an individual must disclose their sexuality publicly, and to various strangers. To even get married in the first place, for instance, requires at a minimum appearing in front of a judge. Similarly, to receive insurance benefits for their partner, a person must disclose their sexuality to an insurance agent and/or to a human resources officer. To report a homophobia-motivated assault requires 'outing' oneself to the police. In none of the aforementioned examples are black lesbians' safety and anonymity guaranteed. In light of the discussion above, the Equality Clause thus does little to ensure protection for many black lesbians.

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[4] Townships, as described here and throughout the text, refer to the historically-black and/or coloured neighbourhoods created under apartheid.

For black lesbian migrants, this lack of protection with respect to their sexuality intersects with the vulnerability they face as migrants to confound their search for safe, comfortable space. Work that has been done with black lesbian migrants in South Africa points to how the Equality Clause's relative lack of impact and the resulting homophobic violence combines with widespread xenophobia to put lesbian migrants (and indeed, queer migrants as a whole) in a tremendously precarious position. As I discuss in the next section, the bleak outlook they face and their competing senses of visibility point to some of the challenges that queer migrant scholars themselves can face when it comes to researching populations that are at once both completely hidden and hyper-visible.

2.5 Queer South African Migrants

The above sections explore some of the implications of being a migrant and being a lesbian in South Africa. At a policy level, as discussed in Section 2.2, few viable options exist for African migrants wishing to live and work in the country. The options that do exist, like the asylum-seeker permit, the ZEP, and residing in the country without legal documentation, all foster a sense of instability and prevent migrants from ever feeling truly 'at home' (Carciotto, 2018). For gays and lesbians, while the Equality Clause prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, its existence has not prevented or removed the very real risks of homophobically-motivated violence. Combined with frequent xenophobia and threats of xenophobic violence, the exclusions that gays and lesbians face can often manifest not just in terms of being denied access to certain spaces or to the country itself, but also as a more fundamental denial of human rights.

As mentioned, little work has been done to document the realities that queer migrants face in the country, but that which has been done predictably paints a very dire picture. A report from the Organization for Refuge, Asylum, and Migration (ORAM) in 2013 found queer migrants in the country to be resoundingly disadvantaged. Those hoping to become refugees on the basis of their sexuality-based persecution in their home countries frequently find their claims denied (Palmary, 2016), while those who remain in the country face abuse and mistreatment at the hands of authorities, other refugees, and other South Africans (ORAM, 2013). Other, smaller studies echo these claims. In 2012, a report from People Against Suffering, Oppression, and Poverty (PASSOP) looking at the particular difficulties that LGBT refugees in South Africa face bluntly concludes that these individuals "anticipated a better life in South Africa, free of homophobia and hate crimes, but that has not been the case" (PASSOP, 2012, p. 17). They face serious discrimination in terms of housing and employment, and are isolated both from migrant communities and gay communities. Similarly, in their work with nine gay, lesbian, and bisexual migrants in Johannesburg, Dill et al. (2016) found that their participants, too, had limited access to resources and job opportunities, and felt that even when they were in a safe place, this safety was never guaranteed. Finally, a newspaper article published by the *Mail & Guardian* in 2019 states in its headline that South Africa is "hell" for queer migrants because of the violence to which they are frequently subjected (Collison, 2019). As one person they interviewed stated,

> For me, sometimes I feel I want to kill myself. But sometimes I think
> why must I kill myself for these people? I say, that's me; I can't kill
> myself. I'm tired. I don't know where I can go … I don't have peace here
> in South Africa … I'm not safe (Collison, 2019, para. 19).

The "hell" that queer migrants in South Africa face begins with laws and statutes that seem (at least somewhat) socially progressive on paper, but do little ensure their targets any degree of safety or justice in practice (Sections 2.2 and 2.3). Instead, those in power routinely ignore said policies or offer their benefits to only a select few. Lesbian migrant women thus find themselves at a curious nexus where they are both completely hidden and also hyper-visible (Fisher, 2003). Their statuses as blacks, lesbians, migrants, and women all put them at heightened risks of experiencing violence, but the stigmatization of these categories also means that reports of this violence are routinely ignored. This paradox of (in)visibility, I argue, contributes to a sense of placelessness and a lack of belonging at a wide range of scales. Without being fully 'seen' by other members of the population, they cannot feel that they are a part of the social fabric (Anthias, 2006; Mas Giralt, 2015).

The paradox also speaks to some of the challenges faced by queer migrant scholars working in any social or geographic context when attempting to address different nexuses of sexuality and migration. Their subjects are by definition a fluid population who escape categorization. The 'messiness' of queer migrants' identities and the non-linearity of their trajectories call into question ideas of what it means to be queer *and* what it means to 'come out.' Defining who is and is not a queer migrant then becomes an issue not just of semantics, but of ontology. In the next section, I explore how researchers have defined and tried to grapple with the challenges of studying a population that frequently eludes definition and detection.

2.6 Queer Migration

As a body of scholarship, works on queer migration analyze how sexuality, in conjunction with hierarchies of gender, race, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity, structures processes of international migration (Cantú, 2009; Lewis & Naples, 2014; Luibhéid, 2005; 2008). One of the most influential articles to emerge has been Eithne Luibhéid's *Queer/Migration: An Unruly Body of Scholarship* (2008). Here, Luibhéid lays down some of the framework for how scholars can conceptualize queer migration and some of the biggest challenges that queer migrant scholars can face. Most notably, she claims, is that queer migration can be an "unruly" body of scholarship because queer migrants themselves can be "impossible subjects" (Luibhéid, 2008, p. 171). Migration policy is organized around the premise that migrants are heterosexual, while queer individuals are presumed to be citizens (albeit second-class ones) (Luibhéid, 2004, 2008). The voices and experiences of migrants who self-identify as lesbian or gay have been largely ignored in both bodies of scholarship (i.e. migration studies and sexuality/queer studies), and also in migration policies that again assume the uniform heterosexuality of migrants (Luibhéid, 2008). This erasure and exclusion of queer migrants thus contributes to normative constructions of sexuality itself (Luibhéid, 2005). Even when and where queer migrants are nominally permitted, they are expected to conform in stereotyped and gendered ways (Lewis & Naples, 2014). Rachel Lewis (2013), for instance, describes a case in the United Kingdom where a refugee was denied asylum because the judge presiding over her case found it suspicions that she showed no interest in lesbian magazines or other forms of lesbian cultural production. Refugee claimants, even in South Africa, are also judged according to Western models of identity development,

which presumes first a reconciling of queer identity and then later, a coming out narrative that can be reflected back upon at the hearing (Berg & Millbank, 2009; Palmary, 2016). These rigid notions of queer identity speak to one of the paradoxes that queer migrant scholars can face. While seeking to promote voices and stories from migrants who identify as gay or lesbian, sometimes queer migrants can challenge or exceed existing categories of sexuality (Chávez, 2013; Luibhéid, 2008; D. Murray, 2014). Queer migration scholarship must thus highlight these voices while also calling into question the regimes of power and knowledge that have rendered these subjects 'impossible' to begin with.

This challenge or 'exceeding' of existing categories also make it difficult for migration scholarship to define who, exactly, is a queer migrant. Since Luibhéid's (2008) seminal framing of issues facing scholars of queer migration, researchers have continued to debate this question, as well as the question of what actually makes migration 'queer.' These debates are not just a matter of semantics. By delimiting the scope of who is and is not a queer migrant, authors decide who is and is not worthy of attention.

Perhaps in part to ameliorate some of the unruliness, some authors have proffered very explicit definitions. Gorman-Murray (2009), for instance, argues that queer migration "does not necessarily refer to the simple displacement of non-heterosexuals" (p. 443). That is, central to his understanding of who is and is not a queer migrant is the idea that sexuality *has* to be a motivating factor in the decision to migrate. Queer individuals migrating in order to pursue a job or educational opportunities does not necessarily denote queer migration. It is only "when the needs or desires of non-heterosexual identities, practices and performances are implicated in the process of

displacement, influencing the decision to leave a certain place or choose a particular destination" that a queer individual's choice to migrate can get classified as queer migration (Gorman-Murray, 2009, p. 443). Others, like Baas (2018), disagree with this assessment. In his experience researching gay Indian migrants in Singapore, Baas (2018) found that while none of them indicated they had migrated to Singapore *because* of their sexuality, it still became an important factor in terms of their overall trajectories. In searching for other members of the queer community, for instance, some participants found the gay scene in Singapore to be "very empty" (Baas, 2018, p. 10). The lack of attachment to the community thus made it a much easier decision for the participants to return home.

Of course, as Baas (2018) warns, labelling all queer migrants as '*queer* migrants' comes with the risk of foregrounding their sexuality in a way that does not necessarily reflect their life course. However, I argue that the reverse is true as well—requiring non-normative sexuality to be one of the primary drivers of migration in order for it to be considered 'queer' risks delegitimizing the experiences of queer migrants who may not choose to indicate their sexuality as one of the motivating factors. Furthermore, I contend that sexuality, non-normative or otherwise, is *always* going to have an effect on the trajectory of individuals' lives, albeit in different ways for different individuals. Lastly, the suggestion that queer sexuality must "influenc[e] the decision to leave a certain place or choose a particular destination" (Gorman-Murray, 2009, p. 443) implies a fixedness to both sexuality and the migration process that I and others argue does not exist.

The idea that to be considered a queer migrant, one must self-identify as queer from 'the beginning' suggests a supposed linearity to the migration process that others

have emphatically argued does not actually exist. It also suggests a linear trajectory for 'coming out,' which others, too, have refuted. As Sheller & Urry (2006) argue, actors can undertake more than one action at a time, and events do not always transpire in a linear order. Migration does not always have a fixed beginning or end point—it can be circular, with migrants continually going back and forth between one country and another (Vertovec, 2007). Migrants can also find themselves in a "permanently transient" position, where the precariousness of their visa statuses (or lack thereof) ensure that they are never able to fully settle down in the country they have migrated to (Oswin, 2014, p. 415; Strauss & McGrath, 2017). Similarly, a migrant's country of arrival is not always the country they are hoping to settle down in. Many migrants to South Africa, for instance, treat the country as a stopover, planning to stay there only as long as they need to before they can move elsewhere, usually to somewhere in the Global North (Kihato, 2013). All of which is to say, migration is rarely ever a straightforward process; trajectories change frequently, and migrants often live fluid, constantly-mobile lives (Samers, 2010).

Queer migrants' journeys of 'coming out' (disclosing their non-normative sexualities) have historically been framed alongside what were presumed to be linear migration trajectories (N. Lewis, 2012; 2013). Under this framework, migrants are assumed to leave their homophobic, often rural hometowns in their countries of origin, and find acceptance and self-love once they reach their final, urban destination and reveal their 'true identities' (N. Lewis, 2012; 2013). This characterization is not incorrect in the sense that many queers *do* migrate for reasons of escaping homophobia and gaining acceptance (R. Lewis, 2013). But in much the same way that migration itself is a messy,

fluid process, queer migrant scholars have shown how 'coming out' migrations, and indeed coming out itself, is far from a binary, either/or phenomenon. To begin with, queer migrants do not always move from 'more homophobic' to 'less homophobic' countries, as Baas (2018) describes in his work with migrants who have moved from India to Singapore. Nor do they always go from rural to urban areas. As Di Feliciantonio & Gadelha (2017) explain, queer migration literature vastly overestimates the prevalence of rural to urban migration, to the detriment of rural queer subjects. Perhaps most crucially, however, is the notion that coming out is a *process* rather than a destination or endpoint. Because societies are heteronormative, wherein heterosexuality is assumed unless noted otherwise (Hubbard, 2008), queer individuals who wish their sexuality to be known must always 'out' themselves (Orne, 2011).

The complexity of 'coming-out migrations' has helped theorists (re)conceptualise how space itself is constructed through social relations (N. Lewis, 2013). Because both queers and migrants (and queer migrants) experience a sense of placelessness, there is a "natural alliance" between the two areas of study (Mai & King, 2009, p. 297; Knopp, 2004). As Nathaniel Lewis (2013) argues, these particular, complex sets of relations "produce a sense of being in or out of place" and are anchored in particular times and places (p. 309). In noting that there is a *sense* of being, N. Lewis's (2013) assertion also draws attention to the role that emotion can play in in the migration process. Queer theorists have thus drawn attention to the emotional toll that constantly outing oneself can take, noting that having to lie about one's sexuality and/or self-monitor can be emotionally damaging (Orne, 2011). These theorists are also especially adept at exploring the connection between migration and emotion because sexuality itself is also an

inherently emotional matter, and different geographies can evoke different emotional responses (Davidson & Milligan, 2004; N. Lewis, 2014; Manalansan IV, 2006). Queer migration scholarship can thus help us understand the interdependent relationship between space, emotions, and actions as these are related to other factors like sexuality, gender, race, and class (Manalansan IV, 2006).

2.7 Conclusion and Next Steps

At a policy level, African migrants are excluded from entry to South Africa by virtue of the stringent requirements for work and other temporary or permanent residence visas. They also face barriers in settling down permanently through other types of permits (namely the ZEP and asylum-seeker permit) that require frequent renewal. Their exclusion in South African society is further exacerbated by extreme levels of xenophobia caused by various intersecting factors acting across a range of scales. In a similar way, although policies like the Equality Clause ostensibly protect black lesbians in the country, they, too, are frequently excluded from mainstream society owing to widespread homophobia. In conjunction, the realities that migrants and lesbians face point to a world where black lesbian migrant women are likely to be unwelcome at a variety of levels. The little work that has looked at their lives seems to back this up. Queer migrants hoping to gain refugee status frequently have their claims denied by DHA officials who ignore or are unaware of the realities they face back home, while those who are living in the country (with or without the requisite permits) can have a difficult time securing a livelihood and staying safe. But beyond the fact that they seem to be ostracized, we do not know much about how, specifically, this ostracization is experienced, i.e., how it can manifest in day-to-interactions. Nor do we know where

lesbian migrants can find spaces of inclusion, and how they respond to their different environments to stay safe and find acceptance. In looking at queer migration research, we can see how the answers to all of these questions are likely to be messy, non-linear, and multiscalar. Articles from authors like Luibhéid (2004; 2008) and Baas (2018) show that even defining who is and is not a queer migrant is not a straightforward process. Through the works from researchers such as Kihato (2013) or N. Lewis (2012; 2013), we can also start to start to see parallels between the endlessness of both migration and 'coming out.' Neither is a linear, straightforward process, nor do they have a fixed end point. Queers and migrants are often 'placeless,' being everywhere but belonging nowhere. This matters for researchers in terms of understanding how spaces themselves are constructed and how belonging is a complex, multiscalar phenomenon. Through movement and through identity disclosure, queer migrants both shape and are shaped by the spaces around them. Their senses of belonging, too, can shift across space and time.

Understanding how and where lesbian migrants belong therefore requires a research methodology that can capture the complexity of belonging as it intersects with identity, space, and time. Qualitative research methods are well-suited in this regard as they are able to account for the diversity of different subjects and meanings that people give to their different situations (Binnie, 2009; Gilmartin, 2008; King & Cronin, 2010). Techniques like in-depth interviews and solicited maps, for instance, can help researchers understand and 'map out' the narratives of mobility that diverse populations can have (Gorman-Murray, 2009; Mendoza & Morén-Alegret, 2013; Powell, 2010). Making sense of these narratives, meanwhile, requires a theoretical framework that can take into consideration and make sense of complex subjectivities. In the next chapter, I discuss

how I engaged with my participants based on some of these qualitative techniques. I also

outline some of the characteristics and demographics of the study participants, and

explain in more depth how I use theories of intersectionality to frame my analyses.

Chapter Three: Methodological Foundations and Research Design

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced lesbian migrant women's social and political context and showed how, through a combination of exclusionary policies and intersecting, multifaceted identities, their senses of belongings are complex and multiscalar. To account for this complexity, my research design uses a qualitative, mixed-methods approach of narrative inquiry by analyzing and interpreting unstructured and semi-structured interviews combined with solicited sketch maps. The resulting narratives accordingly show a landscape of belonging that continually shifts across time, space and scale. I use theories of intersectionality in my interpretations to link lesbian migrant women's lives to the social structures that challenge and constrain (or enable) where and when LMW feel a sense of belonging in different spaces.

In this chapter I first describe my methodological foundation. From there, I discuss the research design, and the means by which I was able to access, recruit, and engage with my research participants. I then go over some of the more specific details about who my participants are and how my interactions with them unfolded. This is followed by a brief discussion on some of the study's limitations. The final sections of the chapter provide an overview of how I analyzed and interpreted my findings.

3.2 Qualitative Mixed-Methods and Narrative Inquiry

The research design follows general principles of qualitative research and narrative inquiry to look at migrants' sense of belonging and the ways in which they create spaces for themselves. Feminist researchers like Moss (2002) argue that it is important to choose methods appropriate to the research question(s), rather than

specifically seeking methods that are either qualitative or quantitative. In my case, since so little is known about lesbian migrant women, an exploratory, qualitative approach is an ideal means of investigating a hidden population (Flick, 2009). This echoes authors like Browne and Nash (2010), who claim that quantitative methods are uncommon in queer research because one cannot 'count' an uncountable, unknown subject. Qualitative methods may also be more suitable for studying queer subjects because they are better able to capture the diversity and fluidity of sexuality (Binnie, 2009; Misgav, 2016).

These methods may also be better suited to looking at the lives of migrants, and in particular their identities and subjectivities (Gilmartin, 2008). So, too, are they better for understanding migrants' 'senses of place,' including their sense of belonging (Mendoza & Morén-Alegret, 2013). As research has increasingly become concerned with the links between identity, migration, and belonging, authors have taken a qualitative turn in terms of looking at narratives of mobility (Gorman-Murray, 2009).

A mixed-methods approach further enhances understandings of migration and sexuality (Findlay & Li, 1999). As mentioned, this dissertation uses a combination of semi- and unstructured interviews along with sketch maps. Although I discuss the particular benefits of sketch maps further in Section 3.6, many other scholars have shown how sketch maps can complement interviews, and the two are frequently done in conjunction (Campos-Delgado, 2018; Gieseking, 2013). In her attempt to develop an approach to investigate and represent urban space in Panama City, Panama, Powell (2010), for instance, showcases the strengths of using a combination of sketch maps, field notes, and interviews.

Building on tenets of qualitative research, and lending themselves well to a mixed-methods approach, principles of narrative inquiry and analysis can help shape the structure of research conversations, including ones specifically about participants' sketch maps. This particular approach to research uses narrative "as a phenomenon to understand multidimensional meanings of society, culture, human actions, and life," and it "attempt[s] to access participants' life experiences and engage in a process of storytelling" (Kim, 2016, p. 6). By prioritizing active listening and encouraging researchers to use questions that aim to elicit further narratives, Polkinghorne (1988) argues that narrative inquiry is an ideal strategy for qualitative researchers because stories lend themselves well to human expression. 'Thinking narratively' also involves considerations of space and temporality. Researchers are encouraged to consider where (and when) participants are when they are telling their stories, as well as where the stories themselves are taking place (Canham, 2017). They are additionally urged to reflect upon how they themselves can influence the narratives that emerge. This can include both how the researcher's relationship with the participant can impact the stories that unfold, as well how the researcher's personal identity plays a role in the reconstruction and retelling of these narratives (Bishop & Shepherd, 2011).

Through the process of accessing life experiences in the form of storytelling, narrative inquiry and analysis, lastly, helps researchers engage intersectionally with participants' biographies and ultimately, their senses of belonging. In our conversations, for instance, the women I met with told stories of feeling frustrated and dismayed at the state of racial dynamics in the country, or with how (black) lesbians are treated by both the police and the general public. Intersectionality prompts researchers to pay attention to

the broader social structures alongside individuals' different identity categories,

interrogating how the two combine to create "unique social spaces" (Bowleg, 2008, p.

213). This, as I and others argue, includes analyzing the ways in which spatial production

itself is both reflective of *and* can contribute to lesbian migrants' feelings of belonging

(Smuts, 2011; Wood & Waite, 2011). First, though, to give the reader a better

understanding of the research context, the next section provides information about

participant recruitment and some of the important geographical specificities of where my

participants lived in Cape Town and Johannesburg.

3.3 Participant Recruitment

As discussed in Chapter Two, lesbian migrant women are marginalized because

of a host of factors including their race, gender, sexuality, and migrant status. The

challenge of recruiting participants from hidden and vulnerable populations has been

discussed at length by researchers (see, for instance, Esterberg, 2001; Kirby & McKenna,

2004; Salganik & Heckathorn, 2004; or Watters & Biernacki, 1989). During my time in

the field[5] I relied extensively on two gatekeepers, one in Cape Town and one in

Johannesburg, who put me in touch with other lesbian migrants they knew (Crowhurst,

2013; Esterberg, 2001). This was done as a matter of both convenience and practicality

(Salganik & Heckathorn, 2004; Watters & Biernacki, 1989).

About a year before I set foot in the country, I began searching online for both

migrant rights and women's rights organizations in Cape Town and Johannesburg, as

these two cities are both the most populous and receive the highest volume of migrants

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[5] Though the term 'the field' has historically had ethnocentric connotations (see, for instance, Faria &
Mollett, 2016) it can also simply refer to the location of research that is not done in a laboratory or through
mailed questionnaires (Rossman & Rallis, 2016). This is the definition I am employing here.

(Statistics South Africa, 2012). I came across a non-profit organization called PASSOP (People Against Suffering, Oppression, and Poverty), based in Cape Town. What made PASSOP stand out was that it was the only organization that explicitly had an ongoing project devoted to helping gay and lesbian migrants, called the LGBTI Refugee Advocacy Project. Using their 'Contact Us' page I was able to get in touch with Patrice, the organization's director.[6] I outlined my criteria—I was wanting to speak with women who were at least eighteen years old, who were from another country in Africa and had lived in South Africa for at least six months and planned on staying for at least another year, were comfortable speaking and writing in English, and self-identified as non-heterosexual. After a few exchanges of emails, and satisfied that this could indeed happen, my plan was to meet participants through Patrice and other individuals who worked at PASSOP, and then from there use reverse snowball sampling to locate more participants.

After arriving in Cape Town in January, 2017, I set up a meeting with Patrice at PASSOP's office in the heart of Cape Town's Central Business District. Upon talking to Patrice in person it became clear that the aforementioned LGBTI Refugee Advocacy Project was really just the endeavours of one staff worker, Henry. Henry was an openly gay Malawian man who was working tirelessly to help any and every queer migrant who sought his assistance. When I spoke to Henry the afternoon after I met Patrice, he showed me a needs assessment report he had just finished in conjunction with The Other Foundation. The report was a summary of a qualitative study he and others had done that showcased many of the problems queer migrants in South Africa faced (PASSOP, 2017).

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[6] All names in this dissertation are pseudonyms unless otherwise indicated.

I noted that the report mentioned that the researchers had spoken to 90 participants. "How many of those were lesbian or bisexual women?" I asked. Henry reluctantly told me that he had only managed to find three, and admitted that as a gay man, it was quite difficult for him to find any at all. But he nevertheless offered to put me in touch with the three he did know—an offer I gratefully accepted. It was by this means that I was able to meet Rumaitha, Joyce, and Saara. Rumaitha then was able to introduce me to her friend, Zoe. The Cape Town-based women had fewer connections than I had hoped, but about two weeks after our initial discussion, Henry then offered another potential contact.

Henry noted that he knew a recently-transitioned transgender man, AJ. AJ was starting up a queer migrant group of his own in Johannesburg, he said, and may be able to put me in touch with a number of lesbian migrant women who were living there. He offered AJ my number and we began chatting over WhatsApp, a free, phone-based messaging application. Once it became clear that AJ was happy to connect me with numerous other lesbian migrants in the area I opted to fly to Johannesburg to meet with them. Though I had initially planned to only work with migrants in Cape Town because of time and budgetary constraints, low-cost airlines and off-season hotel rentals made research in Johannesburg a manageable option. Going to Johannesburg ultimately proved advantageous not only in terms of finding participants, but also in offering a contrast in terms of geographical constraints and cultural dynamics. As I discuss in Chapter Four, the women in Johannesburg tended to live in lower-socioeconomic and/or high migrant neighbourhoods, while the women I met with in Cape Town lived in more working or middle-class neighbourhoods with far fewer migrants.

It was through AJ that I met participants Beatrice, Christine, Etta, Danni, Nyasha, Tawanda, and Veronica. AJ also gave me the contact information of Marcia, a woman living in Cape Town whom he had met online and only ever chatted with over text. Marcia was a friend of a friend, and was helping AJ develop his support group's website. She and I met up for dinner over the weekend, where she introduced me to her partner Precious, a PhD student studying at the University of Cape Town.[7]

In total, I spoke with fourteen migrant women, eleven of whom identified as lesbians, two as bisexual, and one as a "former lesbian" (AJ) who now identifies as a transgender man, but was willing to speak about his time living as a lesbian woman, and also to be referred to as 'she' in these contexts. I also kept in frequent touch with Henry, the PASSOP staff member. The smaller sample size allowed me to get to know my participants on a more personal level than may have been possible otherwise, as I was able to contact most of them on a weekly or fortnightly basis, and during our in-person meetings I was able to recall and draw on much of their personal history. Through this regular contact via smartphone apps such as WhatsApp (discussed later in this chapter) that sought their insight and input, I was also able to dismantle some of the researcher-participant hierarchies that frame the researcher as the more-informed 'expert' (Matebeni, 2008).

3.4 Geographical Context

As noted in Chapter One, migrants most frequently congregate in Cape Town and Johannesburg (Statistics South Africa, 2012), making the choice to study the lives of migrants in these two cities a fairly obvious (and convenient) one. Spatially, the two

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[7] For an account of all participants, see Table 3.1, Participant Demographics.

cities are laid out quite differently. Cape Town's commercial hub and Central Business

District (CBD) are largely located inside what is known as the City Bowl, a roughly six

km^2 area encircled by mountains and the Atlantic Ocean. To the east of the City Bowl lie

the city's townships and other suburbs. The geographically contained nature of the CBD

makes transport to this area relatively easy and, within its confines, relatively

inexpensive. Johannesburg, by contrast, feels much more sprawling. Though there is a

designated CBD, more commercial activity takes place in and around the north part of the

city. Some economically downtrodden (and predominantly black) neighbourhoods like

Yeoville and Hillbrow lie near the City Centre, while others like Alexandra and Orlando

lie to the northeast and southwest, respectively. The expansive layout of the city makes

transport to and from different areas much more difficult and expensive. The spatial

differences in the cities are also reflected in what I chose to show in the two city maps.

Cape Town's map (Figure 3.1) features participants' current and former[8] neighbourhoods

of residence, whereas the map of Johannesburg (Figure 3.2) shows participants' current

neighbourhoods of residence alongside a few choice others. In Cape Town, participants

tended to engage in activities either in their neighbourhood of residence or in the CBD;

there was much less activity happening for them in other areas. In Johannesburg,

however, while the CBD was home to a few choice shopping centres and restaurants,

participants also spoke of and engaged in activities in places like Braamfontein,

Maboneng, and Sandton.

My original plan had been to spend five and a half months, from mid-January,

2017 until the end of June 2017, in Cape Town exclusively. But as mentioned in the

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[8] Former neighbourhoods of residence were ones where participants had lived in the month prior to my
meeting them.

previous section, that changed after getting put in touch with a number of participants in

Johannesburg. Still mindful of budgetary constraints, my three trips to Johannesburg

were relatively short affairs, lasting between three and six days each time.

Figure 3.1 Map of Cape Town featuring participants' current and former neighbourhoods of residence (Base map source: South Africa Municipal Demarcation Board, modified by Karen Van Kerkoerle)

In both cities, the choice to stay near the CBD was a deliberate one. In Cape

Town, this is where PASSOP had its office, and it had the added benefit of being within

walking distance of a plethora of grocery stores, restaurants, and shopping centres. The

CBD is also home to popular tourist destinations like Long Street (known for its restaurants and nightclubs) and Greenmarket Square (known for its African crafts and curios), and is also close to the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront, a large retail and commercial complex. Having spent many hours roaming the City Bowl, I was able to get a good feel of its layout, taking in not just the aforementioned commercial areas, but also some of the scenic residential neighbourhoods like Bo-Kaap, Gardens, and Zonnebloem/District Six. By contrast, my sense of Johannesburg was limited to the few places I purposely ventured to over the course of those three short trips. The centrality of my hotels to the CBD meant that I was a quick rideshare away from the city's largest bus and train station, thus making it fairly easy for participants to meet up with me, but my actual mobility was far more restricted because of safety concerns.[9] Unlike Cape Town, Johannesburg's CBD does not attract many tourists; an analysis of hotel distribution between 1990 and 2010 shows a marked drop in volume in this region (Rogerson, 2014). Major shopping and/or tourist areas are located in suburbs like Sandton and Rosebank, roughly ten to fifteen kilometres north of the City Centre (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2016). Because my mobility in Johannesburg was much more limited, I do not have the same knowledge of things like landmarks or popular entertainment hotspots, and in my analysis I rely much more heavily on participants' descriptions of places.

Differences between Cape Town and Johannesburg's CBDs are also seen in their racial makeup, and this, too, affected my own levels of comfort. Official census statistics show that Cape Town's CBD is 49.5% black and 28% white, but in the southwest City Bowl neighbourhood of Tamboerskloof, where I spent a good portion of my leisure time,

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[9] And in fact, during my last visit to Johannesburg, I decided to chance the 15-minute walk between the Carlton Centre in the CBD and my hotel in Maboneng on a sunny Saturday afternoon, and was mugged at knifepoint on a busy street.

those numbers shift to 14.7% and 75.8%, respectively (Statistics South Africa, 2011). In

Johannesburg, meanwhile, the CBD, where I first met with most of my participants, is

96.6% black and less than one percent white, while the neighbouring Maboneng district,

where I stayed my last two trips, is more than 99% black (Statistics South Africa, 2011).

The demographic differences (in combination with the differing crime rates) in where I

stayed in the two cities, meant that I felt much more at ease when I was Cape Town

versus when I was in Johannesburg.[10]

Figure 3.2 Map of Johannesburg featuring participants' neighbourhoods of residence and other frequently mentioned neighbourhoods (Base map source: South Africa Municipal Demarcation Board, modified by Karen Van Kerkoerle.)
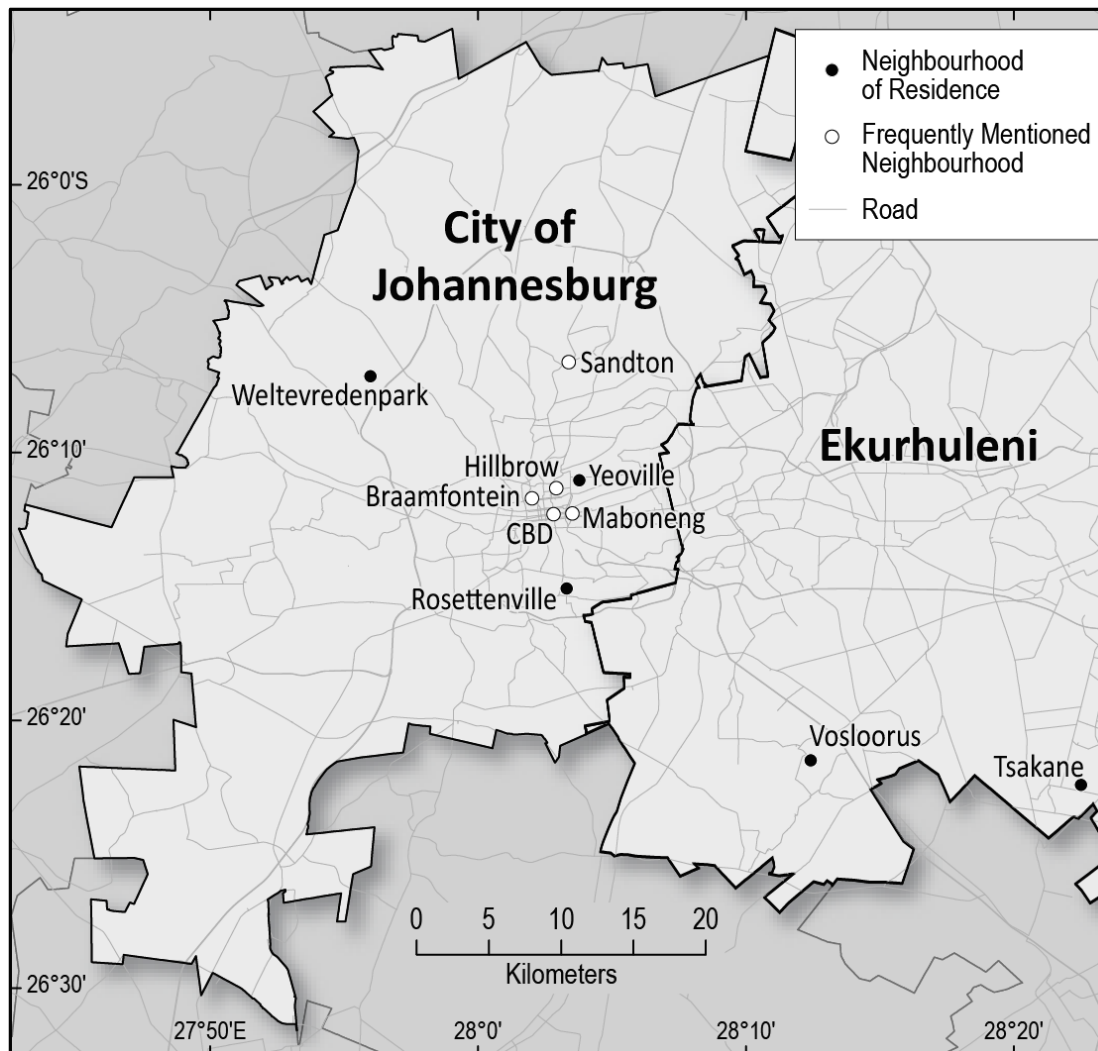
[10] The women, too, seemed to feel this way. See Chapter Four for further discussion.

3.5 Interviews

My initial means of data collection were through both semi-structured interviews and, as a supplement, unstructured 'hang-outs.' I used semi-structured interviews when first meeting participants and again during the meet-ups I recorded. Here, I had a fixed set of questions to be asked at some point, but in keeping with qualitative principles that ask researchers to challenge researcher-participant hierarchies, the interviews were formulated as conversations rather than formal, question-and-answer-type dialogues, and this is how I refer to them (as conversations) throughout the rest of this dissertation (Dunn, 2016; Matebeni, 2008). Rarely did I attempt to curtail any spontaneous threads of discussion (Falconer Al-Hindi & Kawabata, 2002); instead, following guidelines of narrative inquiry, I engaged in active listening and asked follow-up questions that aimed to elicit further stories and descriptions (Kim, 2016). I came back to the pre-set questions only when the timing felt right, and continuously paid close attention to what participants brought up and when, how they responded to my questions, and how their body language changed (or did not change) when they did so. The questions I asked each time pertained to where the participants had been since we last met up, how they were feeling, and their plans for the immediate future, in terms of both work and leisure. In having the conversations structured in this way, with a guided set of questions interspersed with topics that they themselves wished to discuss, our exchanges were very free-flowing, and participants were more able to set the terms of what we would be talking about on any given day (Dunn, 2016; Elwood & Martin, 2000).

In Johannesburg, the expansiveness of the city plus my unfamiliarity with it meant that in most cases my participants and I opted to meet somewhere central, and I

reimbursed them for the cost of public transport. At AJ's suggestion, most of us initially

met at the Carlton Centre, a shopping mall in the Central Business District. Subsequent

visits took me back to the Carlton Centre, to a restaurant in Maboneng, just east of the

CBD, and to participants' houses in Rosettenville and Weltevredenpark (south and

northwest of the CBD, respectively) in order to better accommodate some of their

schedules.

In Cape Town, meanwhile, I let the participants decide where to meet with me,

both in order to push back against researcher-participant hierarchies (Matebeni, 2008)

and because there were more safe options in a closer range. Saara and Joyce both opted to

meet me at various restaurants close to where they lived in Observatory, a district just

outside the central City Bowl. Zoe and I met up at an NGO in downtown Cape Town

called The Triangle Project, where she spent much of her time volunteering. Rumaitha

was homeless and had just moved to a temporary shelter when we first met, and so our

meeting places tended to fluctuate throughout the City Bowl, though in all cases we met

somewhere public. Following an over-text introduction from AJ, Marcia and I met up at a

house in Claremont for dinner on Easter Sunday. Here, she introduced me to her partner

Precious, a PhD student studying at the University of Cape Town. Precious was

housesitting for her PhD advisor, and had given her permission to host.

Because of time constraints, my engagement with LMW in Johannesburg was

limited to semi-structured conversations only (as well as checking in with them via

WhatsApp, discussed below). I was able to meet up with three of the Johannesburg

participants during all three visits (AJ, Etta, and Tawanda), two of them twice (Christine

and Danni) and three of them just once (Beatrice, Nyasha and Veronica, although I met

up with Beatrice twice during a single trip, and Nyasha and I had a recorded phone conversation after I got back to Canada). In Cape Town, I met up with Rumaitha five times, Joyce and Marcia four times, Zoe three, Precious twice, and Saara once. Conversations in both cities lasted anywhere from thirty minutes to an hour and a half, depending on both flow and participants' own time constraints.

I also kept in frequent contact with Henry, the PASSOP staff member who introduced me to a number of other LMW. I visited the PASSOP office at least once a week, and messaged Henry (or he would message me) around once or twice per week more. During this time, we kept each other up-to-date about both our lives in general, and also how our respective jobs were going. Henry gave me a lot of insight during this time on what life was like for queer migrants in the country, and in June we finally sat down for a recorded conversation where he reiterated many of these points on-the-record.

For some of the Cape Town participants (Marcia, Precious, and Rumaitha), their spatial proximity and flexible schedules meant that I was additionally able to 'hang out' with them in an unstructured fashion a couple of times (three times with Rumaitha, once with Marcia and Precious together), ranging in time from an hour to three hours. But even under circumstances where these hang outs were not possible, I formed close, on-going friendships with some of the women. This made for a more enlivening experience, both in South Africa and once at home again in Canada, but it also meant that I had to be very careful in discerning what was 'fair game' for research (Taylor, 2011). Or, as Burke (1989) puts it, the 'privileged eavesdropping' presents an ethical dilemma that researchers must contend with. Working out what things are said in confidence versus what can constitute data takes a fair amount of work and a healthy dose of intuition. In

Taylor's (2011) case, for instance, she opted to either strike the ambiguous statements from the record, or she went back to her participants to seek clarification and/or permission. In my own case, I used information gleaned from more unstructured interactions if I felt it to be non-confidential and relevant to helping make sense of their story. Like Taylor (2011), I also sought my participants' approval before detailing what was said. The combination of unstructured (and unrecorded) hangouts coupled with the initial, unrecorded conversations and the notes that I took after all of my interactions with participants meant that I had a plethora of unrecorded data to draw on, along with the recorded conversations themselves.

Overall the initial conversations all elicited stories that gave me a sense of where participants were at, both in a more literal, geographic sense, and also in terms of their financial status and overall levels of security. These served as springboards for future conversations. Their levels of openness were also expectedly varied (Falconer Al-Hindi & Kawabata, 2002). While some participants like Etta were rather immediately forthcoming about their lives, others, like Tawanda, were a bit more reserved, especially at our first meeting. By the third time we met up, however, she had started to open up more, and I think having more time to connect would have led to a deeper understanding of some of the struggles she was facing. What I found helped greatly in terms of quickly getting the women to feel comfortable was being forthcoming about my own life, in parallel ways to what they themselves were disclosing. This is a well-established practice in qualitative research methods, and while it runs the risk of participants getting *too* comfortable, it also can put them at ease and draw out narratives that are more in-depth (Kim, 2016; LaSala, 2003).

The conversations were lastly recorded using the recording app on my password-protected iPod Touch, and then immediately transferred to a locked USB drive (and deleted from my iPod) once back at my homestay or hotel. After arriving home to Canada I transcribed the recorded conversations on my laptop and saved these files to the same USB drive as the interviews. To code the conversations (Section 3.10), I uploaded them to the NVIVO computer software package on a select, secure computer at Western University's Social Science Centre. The NVIVO data will be deleted once the dissertation has been submitted for publication, and the remaining transcripts and recorded conversations will be deleted after the seven-year retention period.

3.6 Sketch Mapping

In my original research proposal, I indicated that I would be asking LMW to keep daily or weekly journals. After arriving in the country and meeting up with women in both cities, it gradually became clear that this was not something they were interested in. This was somewhat surprising, as qualitative geographers like Meth (2003) and Thomas (2007) have used this method to a great degree of success. Perhaps, as Zoe explained to me at a meeting in April, many of the women were not at a place where they felt ready to explore their lives in such an in-depth way. Regardless of the reason, this trend continued throughout the months, and so in May I switched methods and instead asked them to create sketch maps. I proposed the idea to them over text, saying, "I'm thinking about asking you to draw a map of your surroundings instead. Does that sound like something you'd be interested in?" Eleven of the initial fourteen women agreed to create one.[11] For the women in Cape Town, I gave in-person instructions at our next meeting, offering

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[11] Saara ultimately declined to participate, while Danni and Veronica stopped responding to my texts.

them an assortment of coloured markers and telling them to draw it at home and that we could discuss it the next time we met up. Due to time constraints I had to text and call the Johannesburg women with instructions, rather than seeing them in-person, and asked to go over said maps at our final in-person meeting in June. In both cases, I offered the following instructions:

> Draw a map of your surroundings and your day-to-day life. Try to include both places you go to most every day, and also places that are special or important to you, but that you might not necessarily go to on a regular basis. It doesn't have to be geographically accurate; I just want to get a sense of what spaces matter to you and what spaces you feel safe in. If you can, try also to include some of the places you deliberately try to avoid because they are unsafe, since these are also relevant in their own way.

Sketch maps offer researchers another way of seeing participants' worlds, and are often used in conjunction with interviews or focus groups (Gieseking, 2013). They can help evoke participants' narratives and lived experiences, and are a more tangible way of helping researchers understand some of the processes and relationships that help form participants' social worlds (Campos-Delgado, 2017; Powell, 2010). By ceding the power of the narrative to the informants themselves, sketch mapping works as a way of pushing back against traditional, 'expert-centred' research methods and research dynamics (Campos-Delgado, 2017; Dahl, 2010; Packard, 2008). By having a tangible illustration of lesbian migrants' geographies, researchers are able to get not just an oral telling of events that happen and the feelings they evoke, but also, as Gieseking (2013) claims, "a lens into the way [they] produce and experience space, forms of spatial intelligence, and dynamics of human–environment relations ranging from the minute experiences of everyday life to larger structural oppressions" (p. 712).

The freedom that these maps offer participants in terms of creative control also led to a bit of confusion as to how, exactly, they should be done. Based on some of the ongoing feedback (many were concerned about "doing it right"), I was careful to reiterate that the maps were not a means by which to assess their geographical knowledge (Gieseking, 2013); they were merely a way to offer a visual representation of their surroundings, and to serve as a springboard for further narratives and discussions (Kim, 2016). With this in mind, and in order to better elicit their own personal perceptions of their surroundings, I asked them to draw the maps free-hand, rather than giving them a pre-printed map and asking them to label spaces important to them (Boschmann & Cubbon, 2014; Campos-Delgado, 2018; Curtis, 2016). Perhaps because I was better able to clarify any misconceptions or hesitations they may have still had in our face-to-face hang outs, four of the five Cape Town participants did indeed draw their maps ahead of time (Joyce waited until we met again in-person to draw it), while only one Johannesburg participant (Etta) did.[12] For those who did choose to wait until we were face-to-face again to draw their maps, some talked me through things as they were drawing them, while others opted to work on it in silence, and then told me about it afterward.

Their drawing it in person may have an impact on the quality of the maps themselves, as I found that the maps of those who drew them at home tended to be much more detailed than those drawn in front of me. The resulting depictions varied from minimalist, black-and-white drawings to detailed, colour-coded maps. They also varied in terms of layout. Some women, like Joyce (Figure 3.3), had a very literal interpretation of

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[12] In one case, with Nyasha, we were unable to meet up again in-person to discuss her sketch map. Instead, we opted to speak over the phone once I had returned to Canada. Nyasha messaged me a picture of the map she drew, and we chatted about it that way. I was able to record that conversation on my iPod Touch, and while the audio quality was less than perfect, it was still good enough that I could understand most of it.

the word map, and so drew roads and landmarks. Others, like Rumaitha (Figure 3.4), eschewed roads and landmarks in favour of simply listing the locations where she had been and drawing arrows to signify her movement to and through them. The variation in detail corresponds to what other authors have found when they have used maps. In Gieseking's (2013) study with women's experiences on college campuses, for instance, he, too, noted that the level of detail varied, and that some participants' drawings centred on emotions and experiences relating to space, while others replicated terrains and then described their emotions.

Figure 3.3 Joyce's Map
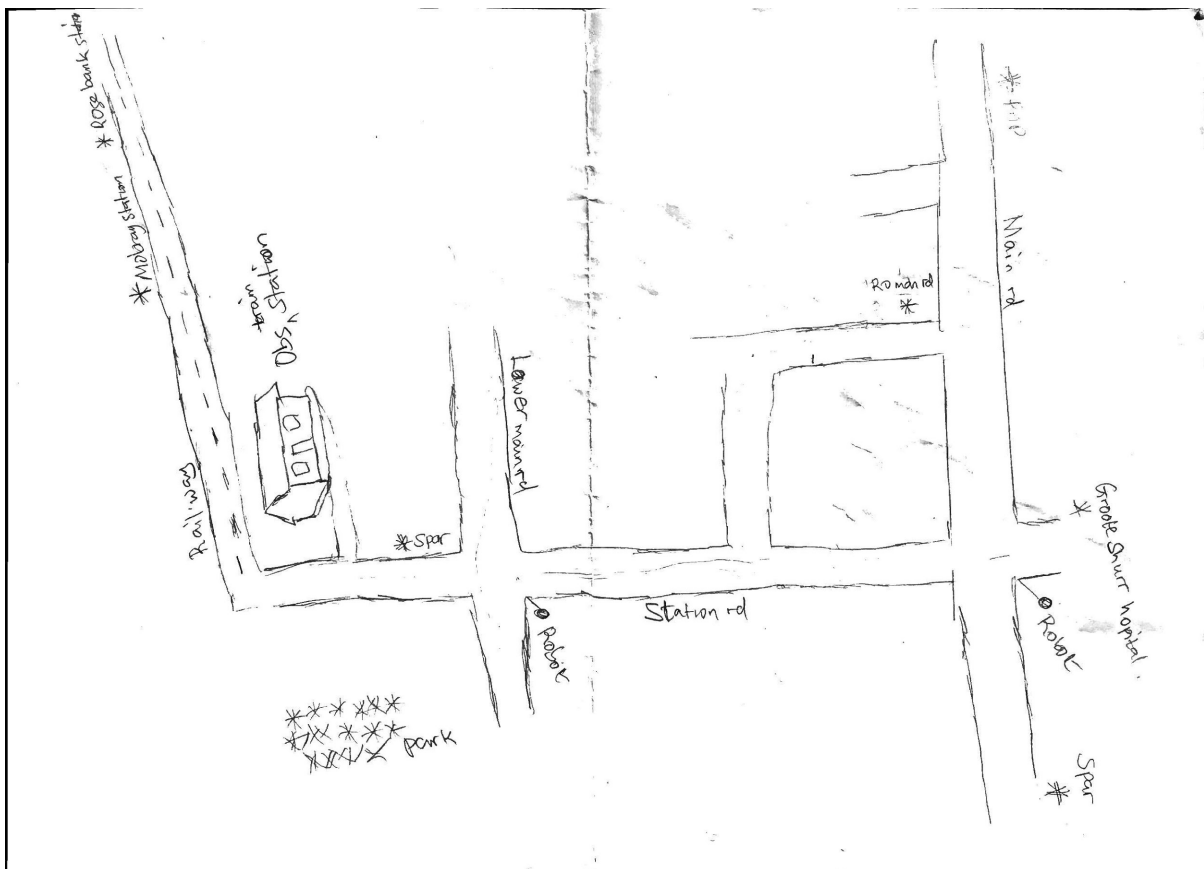
Figure 3.4 Rumaitha's Map
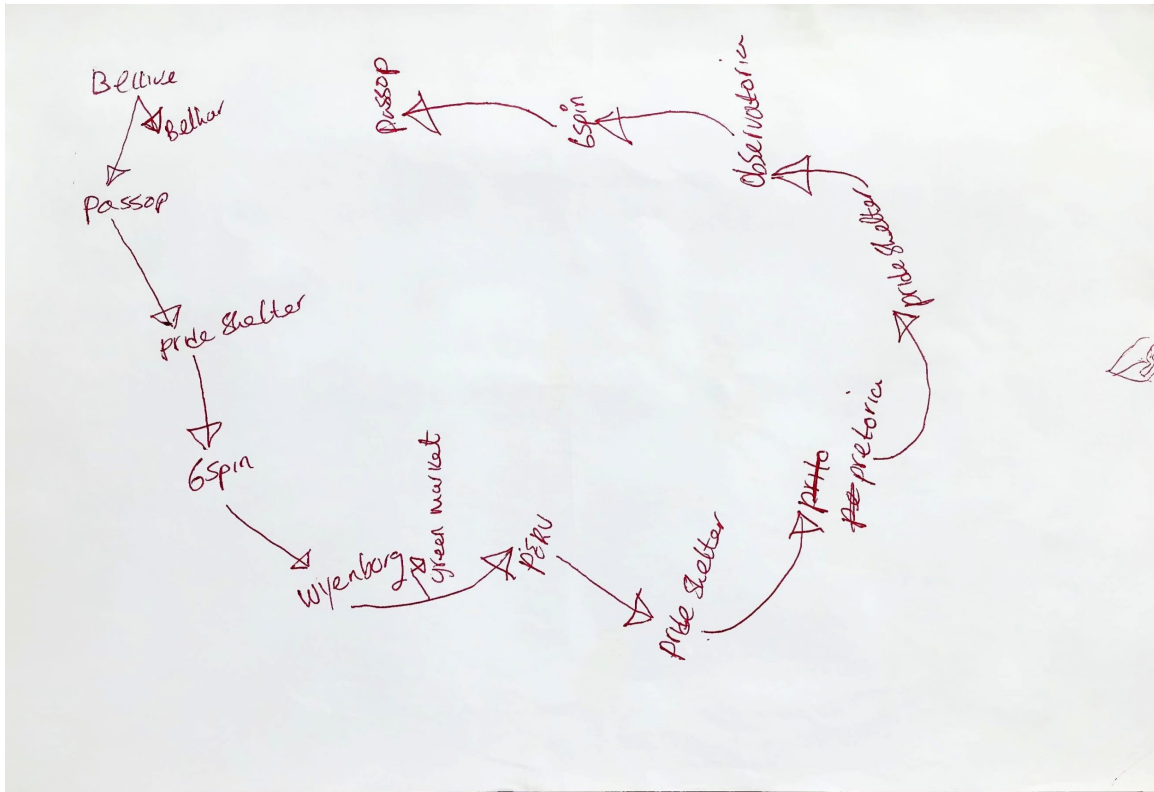
There is also something to be said for the maps' levels of detail and the emotional connection I felt with each of the women. A detailing of the nature of the relationship I had with my participants is in line with widespread calls for reflexivity in qualitative research (Finlay, 2002a, 2002b; Ganga & Scott, 2006). Beatrice, whose map was by far the least detailed, had met me only a few days prior. Because of Nyasha's unpredictable mobility, we too were able to meet face-to-face only once, in February, and her map, while not as sparse as Beatrice's, still lacked geographic detail when compared with others' maps. Our over-the-phone discussion of it was also stilted, and some things seemed to be lost in translation. Marcia and Precious, meanwhile, had full, colourful maps and lengthy discussions about how they felt about a whole host of different spaces and the people in them. The two of them were the most similar to me demographically

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(Precious was a PhD student, while Marcia's job also required a university degree), and our relationship felt relaxed and informal. Similarly, though Etta and I never casually hung out in the way that Marcia, Precious, and I did, her interest in academic and political affairs meant that our conversations were always quite lengthy, lasting about an hour and a half each time, where we talked about topics ranging from LGBT rights, to international politics, to photography, to health issues. Her map, accordingly, is filled with lots of different sites, and she explained her rationale for including nearly all of them. Etta's daughter Christine and I spent an April evening venturing out to a couple of different clubs in downtown Johannesburg. What her map lacked in detail was more than made up for in our conversations. She spoke at length about different parts of the city— the good neighbourhoods, the bad neighbourhoods, and why she felt comfortable in certain places but not others.

3.7 Using and Understanding the Maps

There are many different ways to interpret the maps, just as there are many different ways of understanding why they took the forms they did. In acknowledging numerous potential iterations and interpretations, I offer a description of how I used the maps in conjunction with narrative analysis to inform my interpretations in the results chapters (Chapters Four through Six), along with an explanation of some of the other possible reasons for the maps' varying levels of detail.

The maps first and foremost offer a depiction of the spaces participants deem relevant to their lives. In addition to this, however, they also help 'map' and explain participants' emotional geographies, through both what they include and, as I argue, through what they do *not* include. In some cases, the mapping of emotional geographies

was a very literal endeavour—five of the eleven mapmakers, without prompting, wrote descriptions of how they felt in certain places, and this helped in guiding both my analyses and in the follow-up questions that I asked them. In this way they served as a starting point in asking participants to describe and explain in more depth what spaces are significant to them. Gieseking (2013) writes that unilaterally asking people to talk about different places that matter to them can be rather daunting and uncomfortable; sketch maps help "overcome that awkwardness" by inspiring conversation (p. 715). In Tawanda's, map, for instance, she explicitly states that when it comes to church she wants to go but sometimes feels bad and judges herself. In going over her map, then, she explained more about her church, which led to an in-depth conversation about her religious background. In other cases, simply asking participants to explain a label led to deeper discussions, such as when Etta told me more about the trauma clinic she goes to, originally just listed on her map (Figure 3.5) as CSVR. (She later added a line underneath indicating its purpose.) In conjunction with the discussions they then facilitated, the maps therefore helped draw out (literally and figuratively) sites of belonging and non-belonging.

Even without labels or written descriptions of how LMW felt in different places, the presence or absence of certain other spaces can shed light on how they feel about their surroundings and help explain their resulting behaviours (Hubbard, 2016). As I argue in Chapter Five, for example, the absence of 'gay neighbourhoods' like Cape Town's De Waterkant are not just a result of LMW being financially excluded from them; their absence also indicates that LMW do not 'belong' in these spaces in a more broad sense. In this way, I try to read the "queer silences" of the maps in my analysis to consider how

they, too, disclose important information about where LMW feel comfortable or feel a sense of belonging (Gorman-Murray et al., 2010, p. 103). Having a clearer picture of where LMW go *and* avoid, along with enriched descriptions of how they feel about different places and some of the things that can transpire therein, leads to a better understanding of how space itself is ultimately produced by social relations (Massey, 2009).

Figure 3.5 Etta's Map
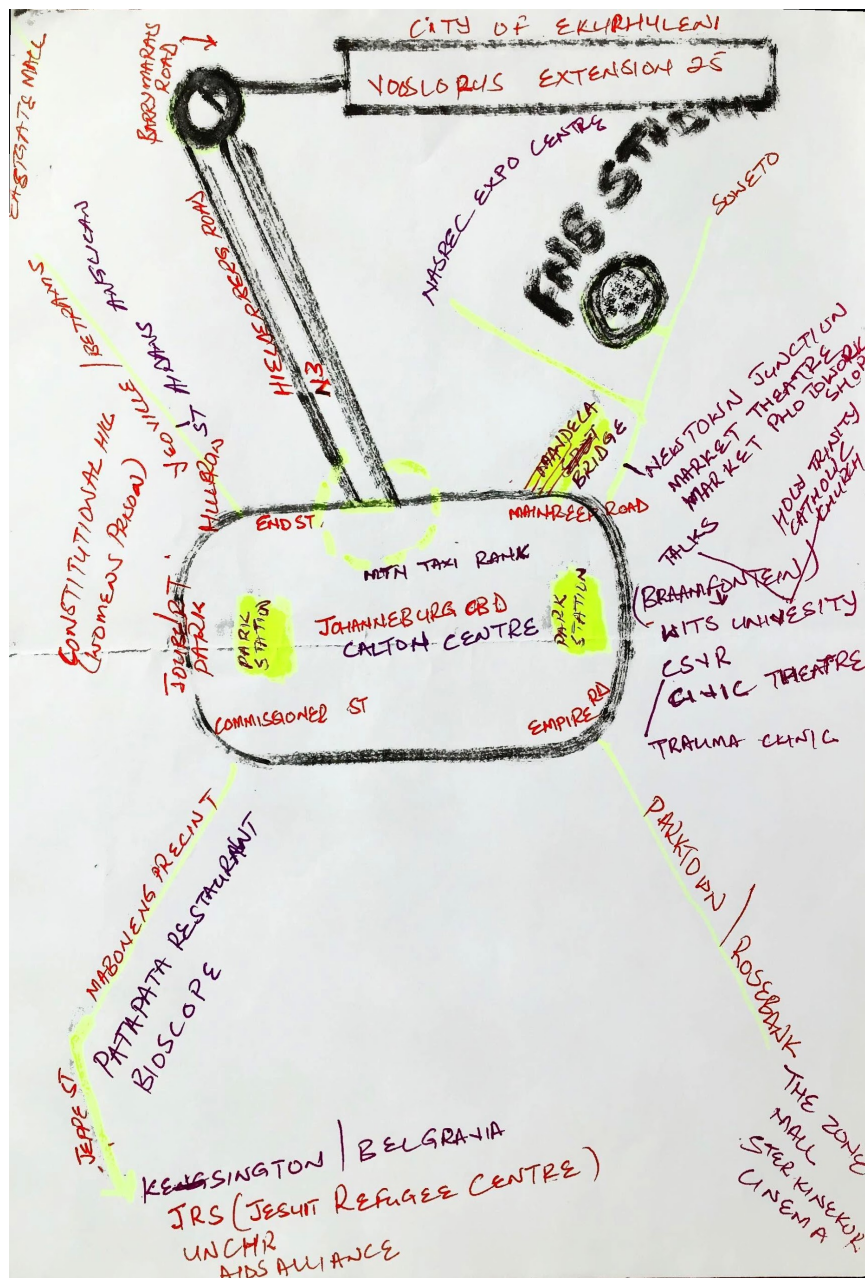
Understanding the maps' "queer silences," however, can be especially challenging in maps that are sparse to begin with. Though some of this sparseness may indeed speak to a level of unfamiliarity between researcher and participant, this was not always necessarily the case; there can be other reasons for the sparseness. Christine's sparse map belies her feelings toward her surroundings. Her map includes only the cities of Bela-Bela, Pretoria, Johannesburg, and Soweto, the neighbourhood of Tsakane, and the resort destination of Sun City. She lists Johannesburg as an "important place," but offers no indication as to what that might mean, and she also does not include any specific sites within the city. This could imply that she simply felt that she was a homebody, like Beatrice (below). In our conversations, however, it was clear that Christine was not only familiar with downtown Johannesburg's ebbs and flows, but thrived upon them. She "loved" how exciting the city was, and while she certainly made concessions to the dangers it contained, she did not dwell upon them the way her mother Etta seemed to. Ultimately, the sparseness of her map could simply speak to her disinterest in the activity itself—she seemed far more keen on *telling* me about her life, and so in her case I have drawn much more heavily from the recorded interviews.

Sparse participant maps could also simply reflect how participants felt about their lives. Some women, like Beatrice, hesitated initially when asked to draw a map of her day-to-day-life, saying that it was, "very boring." (Some, like Christine, also balked because they "can't draw.") This perceived "boringness" is very clearly reflected in Beatrice's map (Figure 3.6), where her only illustrations are four structures, with a road connecting them in a circle. The top and bottom structures are listed as 'work' and the ones on the side are listed as 'home,' indicating that she perceives her day-to-day life as a

never-ending loop between the two. Though this certainly stands in contrast to the circumstances under which we met (at an LGBT support group at a Catholic church near downtown Johannesburg), when coupled with other insights from the interview, it does indicate that Beatrice feels most at ease at her apartment in Weltevredenpark. Here, she is at far less risk of harassment from "guys who hit on [her] every day." Beatrice's self-described penchant for frequently staying home, combined with her expressed disdain toward the lewd and disrespectful men she encounters in public, indicates how she feels about being at home (i.e., that it is much safer than being out in public) and so I draw on this knowledge in discussing her spaces of belonging.

Figure 3.6 Beatrice's Map
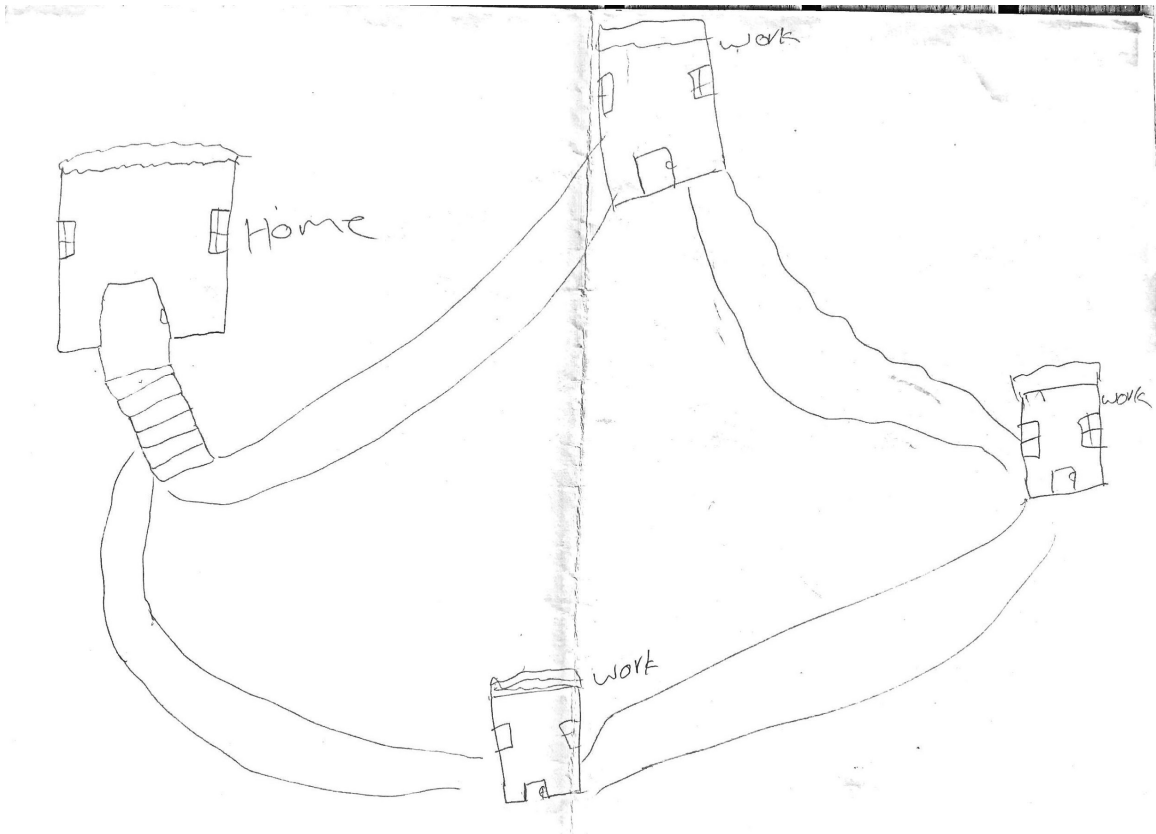
Lastly, the sparseness of Nyasha and Rumaitha's maps I believe speaks to the financial constraints that limit the spaces they are able to access (Chapter Four). In these instances, their primary concern is one of day-to-day survival. At the time I met with her, Nyasha was living and working twelve hours a day, six days a week, in an area of central Johannesburg called Yeoville (written as Yoevell on her map). Nyasha's map includes a lot of topographical reference points, much like Joyce's, but very little by way of diversions or identity-affirming establishments (Chapter Five). Even the neighbourhood bar she depicts, Time Square Cafe (Bar Time Square), she had not yet been to, though she lived just a few blocks away.

Though Rumaitha's situation was not quite as dire as Nyasha's, her mobility, and subsequently the spaces in which she was able to feel safe, was also limited. Her map, then, is a concise portrayal of the majority of the spaces of significance she had been to since leaving her home in Bellville (Belhar) at the beginning of February. She had shuttled between different living arrangements—the Pride Shelter, a place in Wynberg (Wyenborg), a couple of weeks in Pretoria, and then finally Observatory (Observatoria). When she was not at home, she could most likely be found at work (6Spin), at PASSOP, or at The Inner Circle, the LGBT Muslim support group, located in Parow (Peru). Her map being void of explicit emotional content could speak to the fact that her frequent fluctuation between work, home, The Inner Circle, and further job hunts had left her with little time to process whatever emotions she was having.

In sum, the level of detail in participants' maps can speak to their perceptions of self beyond their descriptions of themselves offered in our conversations. They also allude to emotionally-charged spaces, many of which they brought up in our discussions,

but many of which, as I detail in Chapter Five, they do not. The maps' relative lack of detail can also help us understand how and where LMW feel that that they belong. In some cases, as I argue, the sparseness of their maps can speak to a dearth in places of belonging. In others, it merely serves as a springboard for discussing when and where they *do* feel a sense of belonging.

3.8 Follow-ups

To help maintain a rapport with my participants, and to ensure continuity in between our meetings, I kept in touch with them via a phone app called WhatsApp. This is a free app available to all individuals who own smartphones. It allows its users to call and text other WhatsApp users for at no charge via a Wi-Fi connection. Its use was not something that I requested of my participants; rather, it became quite evident early on in my research that it was their preferred means of communication. I tried to check in with my participants this way at least once every other week while I was in the country. Beyond the broader motivations of maintaining rapport and continuity, my intentions behind this were to generally see how they were doing, if they needed any help with anything, etc., and thus ensuring that my research followed qualitative principles that advocate for a destabilizing of the more traditional fixed, rigid boundaries between researcher and participant (Gorman-Murray et al., 2010). As the text messages themselves were kept quite casual on my part, their responses rarely revealed anything noteworthy, but I did write down in my notes if and when they mentioned major life events—new relationships, breakups, moves, job changes, and deaths.

After I returned to Canada I messaged everyone to let them all know I had made it safely, and to enquire as to how they themselves were doing. I sent one more text

checking in with everyone one month later, and then after that I only corresponded with those who reached out to me in turn (eight of the women, plus Henry). With the exception of where and when I sought to clarify previous points, however, these conversations do not factor into my analyses.

3.9 Experience and Impressions

The conversations and interactions my participants and I had led to a total of almost 15 hours of recorded conversations, 11 maps of varying levels of detail, and pages and pages of notes that I took afterward. I am first and foremost very thankful to have found the women I did and that they were all willing, to some degree, to share their stories with me. Having in-depth discussions about their lives meant that sometimes, painful memories were recalled, and it was no doubt a challenge to put words to some of these experiences. Most of the women were quite frank in their discussions with me about both the struggles and the joys they had in their lives. A few of them also stated very clearly that it felt good to talk to someone about the problems they were having, not because they were seeking any advice, but because it simply was nice to feel heard.

Research has long moved away from more binary notions of insider or outsider (Catungal, 2017; Eliason, 2016; Gorman-Murray et al., 2010; Valentine, 2002b), but my shared similarities with my participants (I myself am a migrant in Canada and openly lesbian, and was also a similar age to many of them) meant that what they did share with me often felt very personal and relatable. My 'insider' familiarity with some of the universalities of dating women may have been what allowed me to gain easier access, and perhaps my participants felt freer to share more intimate details than they would have otherwise (Dowling, 2010; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Eliason, 2016; Lozano-Neira &

Marchbank, 2016; Talbot, 1999). A few of us shared a laugh, for instance, at some of the cross-cultural similarities in terms of the small, insular, often drama-filled world of lesbian dating pools. These commonalities no doubt helped participants feel more comfortable with me, but it also means that in my interpretations of their dating life, I may have made certain assumptions that do not actually reflect how LMW themselves understand things. Meanwhile, my 'outsider' status with respect to my race and to the South African context meant that participants may have been more careful to explain certain details to me, and in my analysis I may well be able to draw connections that would have otherwise been missed (Dowling, 2010; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Eliason, 2016; Fay, 1996). For example, in Hayfield and Huxley's (2015) joint studies on female bisexuals and body image, Hayfield used her insider status as a bisexual to find participants with relative ease. Huxley, meanwhile, used her outsider status as a straight woman to seek clarification on points that may have otherwise gone unscrutinized, such as when one participant brought up the concept of the "lesbian swagger," which, as a heterosexual, Huxley was unfamiliar with (Hayfield & Huxley, 2015, p. 99).

Despite the closeness I felt with some of the women, I tried to remain conscious and critical of how I am situated in relation to them and their respective subjectivities (Taylor, 2011). Sometimes, for instance, the closeness and power imbalances led to unintended consequences. During the evening I spent with one participant, she frankly and openly disclosed some personal issues she was having with one of the other research participants. From our subsequent interactions it seems that she might have had her guard down and disclosed more than she may have felt comfortable with in hindsight. This could be because we were at her home, where she felt more comfortable and/or because

of our perceived familiarity (Hayfield & Huxley, 2015; Watts, 2006). When I attempted to follow up on this issue, both over text and in person, she quickly assured me that things were fine and then changed the subject. As a result, I was no longer privy to *any* details about her emotional state, both with respect to this particular incident and to other ongoing events. The stories she told me and her subsequent emotional withdrawal illustrates how conversations between researcher and participant are always situated within particular times and places (Gorman-Murray et al., 2010; Valentine & Sadgrove, 2014).

As an outsider to the South African context, I also wish I had explored more of Cape Town and Johannesburg's social scenes, particularly some of the queer or queer-friendly places that some of the LMW described frequenting. My heavy reliance on PASSOP, and on the two gatekeepers this organization led me to (Henry and AJ), is partially reflective of an initial uncertainty about where else might be a welcome space for an introverted outsider to meet strangers. It also reflects a broader sense of unease I felt about exploring the two cities at night. Someone more extroverted and/or with more insider familiarity to either city's respective club scenes may have found that the women they met were better off socio-economically, or felt safer in a greater number of spaces. Having not gotten to know these places (or the women who more frequently visit them) I may have missed opportunities to learn more about how these particular spaces facilitate inclusion or exclusion beyond some of the socioeconomic barriers that I discuss in Chapter Five.

3.10 Participant Descriptions

Table 3.1 lists participants' demographics as they were as of our last meeting in either May or June, 2017. In this section, I explain the table in more detail, linking some of the trends back to broader social patterns. To offer more context, I also include information about the women's living and family situations, and I conclude with some general impressions on participants' similarities and differences.

3.10.1 Age

Most participants were in their mid-20s, with the youngest, Christine, being 20 while the oldest participant, Etta (Christine's mother), was 37. The relatively young sample (average approximate age was about 27) is reflective of both broader trends in migration as well as the method used to find participants. Worldwide, many studies show that the highest probability for migrating is between the ages of 20 and 30 years old (Zaiceva, 2014). In addition, snowball sampling often draws in people who are similar demographically, including by age (Robinson, 2014).

3.10.2 Country of Origin

Ten of the fourteen participants were born in Zimbabwe, while thirteen of the fourteen were from countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC).[13] Here, too, the method of recruiting participants also likely resulted in their being similar in terms of country of origin (Robinson, 2014). All but one of AJ's contacts, for instance, were from his home country of Zimbabwe. But despite the non-representative method of recruitment, participants' countries of origin *are* representative

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[13] An inter-governmental organization comprising sixteen southern African countries, including eSwatini, Malawi, Namibia, and Zimbabwe.

of broader trends on migrants in South Africa, the first being that Zimbabwe is by far the largest sending country, and the second being that South Africa also receives a high portion of migrants from the SADC (Carciatto, 2018).

3.10.3 Time in South Africa

The amount of time participants had lived in South Africa ranged from just over a year (Nyasha) to eighteen years (Etta), with an average of almost nine years. At least six of them moved to the country with family when they were under 18, and a few were still dependent upon family members, some of the consequences of which I discuss in later chapters. Time in the country did not seem to strongly correlate with overall 'success' in terms of having a stable job and safe housing. Instead, this success was much more dependent upon their permit status—whether they had a legal right to work in the country and whether said permit required frequent renewal or not (Chapter Four).

3.10.4 Permit Status

Because of ethical concerns I did not explicitly ask what participants' legal status was in the country; however, all but one (Veronica) volunteered this information on their own. Their statuses varied widely—four were in the country on the Zimbabwe Special Dispensation Permit (ZSP), a permit that allowed Zimbabweans to live and work in South Africa, and was set to expire in August of that year (Chapter Two). Three were residing without any legally-sanctioned documentation—Nyasha and Zoe had never had any to begin with, while Christine's visa had expired. Beatrice was married to a South African, and so had a spousal visa. Saara was able to get Permanent Residence because her grandparents were South African, and Precious was studying at the University of Cape Town and so was in the country on a Student Visa. Her fellow Capetonian Joyce was in

the country on a work visa. Lastly, two women, Etta, and Rumaitha, were there on an asylum-seeker permit and refugee permit, respectively.

Though participants had a plethora of permit categories, only two of the women, Saara and Beatrice, had any real semblance of stability. All other permits had expiration dates, and the threat of their status not being renewed (or of being expatriated at any moment, in the case of the three without legally-recognized documents) was an underlying topic of concern for many of them. Migrants' frustration of their permanent state of impermanence, despite many having been in the country for years, is also seen in research done by authors like Kihato (2013) who describes how many of the migrant women in Johannesburg she spoke with felt stuck, unable to 'settle in' to South Africa, but unable to move to any other place, either, and I reflect more on this instability in Chapter Four.

3.10.5 Employment Status

Like participants' permit status, their employment status also varied widely. Five of the women had full-time jobs, although as I discuss in Chapter Four, some jobs afforded them far more stability than others did. Two worked as self-described freelancers, Saara as a musician and video editor, and Etta as a photojournalist. Rumaitha found a part-time job working for a catering business. Though she enjoyed the work, it was quite sporadic, and she was unable to find any other part-time job to help keep her financially stable. The three women who lacked legally-sanctioned documentation also unsurprisingly had the most difficulty finding any sort of job. Christine and Nyasha both gained and lost low-wage jobs during the four months I was interacting with them while in the country. Zoe made an income selling scarves, jewellery, and Tupperware,

purchasing the merchandise wholesale (or crafting it herself, in the case of the jewellery) and selling it to others. As a PhD student, Precious was earning an income working as a Research Assistant. Though the pay itself was modest, it offered other benefits like travel opportunities and flexible working hours that still allowed her (and her partner Marcia) to relax and enjoy some social diversions. Danni, meanwhile, was also a student, but at a cosmetology school, which meant she was completely financially dependent upon her parents. As I discuss further in Chapter Four, their permanently-impermanent status as migrants intersects with their status as black lesbians to make finding stable, well-paying jobs a particularly challenging endeavour. This echoes what other researchers on queer migrants in South Africa have found, in showing how accessing employment is fraught with difficulties for these individuals (Bhagat, 2018; PASSOP, 2012).

3.10.6 Living Situations

Only one participant, Joyce, lived alone. Eight of the women lived with their significant others; two (Danni and Nyasha) lived with family members, and another two (Rumaitha and Veronica) with friends or acquaintances.[14] As explained in more depth in the next chapter, the type of neighbourhoods they stayed in varied by city. In Johannesburg, participants tended to live in affordable, economically-downtrodden neighbourhoods. AJ, Tawanda, Danni, and Veronica all stayed in a part of the city called Rosettenville, known for its large concentration of migrants (Vigneswaran, 2007). The neighbourhood was not the most ideal residence, as AJ described—his and Tawanda's apartment could get quite noisy, and it was unsafe to be outside after dark. Still, it was relatively centrally located, and thus convenient to get to a lot of other locations. Nyasha

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[14] One participant, Saara, never specified her situation.

also lived in a migrant-heavy suburb called Yeoville. While very close to the City Centre, it was known to have high rates of theft and other crime (South African Police Services, 2019).

Christine, Etta, and Beatrice lived much farther from the City Centre. Christine and Etta live east of the city in neighbourhoods known as Tsakane and Vosloorus, respectively. Both have been classified as 'low income' (M. Murray, 2009), and while Christine felt relatively safe in her neighbourhood, citing that she was unlikely to be mugged because people "know you are from that very same area," Etta kept mostly to her house, saying it was very rare to see people walking around.

Beatrice was the only Johannesburg participant to live in a higher-income neighbourhood. She stayed in Weltevredenpark, a middle-class suburb about 20 kilometres northwest of the centre of town. Here, she told me, "everybody minds their own business […] it's much safer than in the [other] locations."

In Cape Town, five of the six participants lived or settled in Observatory and Kenilworth, both racially-diverse suburbs just outside the City Bowl. The two neighbourhoods have much lower rates of crime compared to some of the outer townships (South African Police Services, 2019), and all of the women who lived there stated that they felt relatively safe (Chapter Five). Zoe was the only participant not in one of these neighbourhoods. She had recently moved from the distant suburb of Atlantis to the much closer (but still well outside of the City Bowl) neighbourhood of Grassy Park. Though crime rates here are higher than in Observatory or Kenilworth, Zoe felt that moving in with her partner made things safer than they had been in Atlantis, since there would always be another person around to keep a watch on things.

3.10.7 Out to Family

Most (ten out of fourteen) LMW had family living in South Africa, and eight of these ten had family members living in the same city. A few were 'out' to all family members, but most others were out to only a few, usually siblings rather than parents. Their families' overall level of acceptance was accordingly varied. Christine, for instance, has a mother who is a lesbian herself (Etta), and so had no problems with respect to coming out to her. Rumaitha, on the extreme other end, had outed herself to her family in East London because they had arranged for her to be married to a man. Upon her refusal, she got into a physical altercation with one of her uncles, and now bears a sizable scar on her right forearm from being stabbed during this encounter. Most participants, however, if they had outed themselves to their family, encountered mixed reactions. Tawanda's parents, for example, are very religious, and seem to accept her sexuality only begrudgingly. Her mother had made some disparaging comments toward her, but had also met her partner AJ multiple times, and had maintained regular contact with both of them. As another example, Joyce was out to her two brothers (one in Johannesburg, one in Malawi) and sister (in Malawi). She stays in touch with both brothers, visiting the one when she goes back home, but her sister has chosen to cut off contact entirely. Joyce was baffled by her sister's decision, since there had never been any animosity prior to this, and so reluctantly concluded it must have something to do with her sexuality.

3.10.8 Discussion

As noted, the method of sampling participants means that they will not be representative of the entire population of lesbian migrants in South Africa, and that they

will likely share a number of the same demographic characteristics (Robinson, 2014). This was particularly true with respect to participants' ages (mostly mid-20s) and nationalities (mostly Zimbabwean).[15] Their similarities also were evident with respect to the fact that very few of them seemed really 'settled' in their current situation—Beatrice was the only one who appeared to fit this description; she had a wife and child, and was happy with her current residence. A large part of this is no doubt due to the women's age. Given that most were in their mid-20s, it makes sense that they were still moving around, both in terms of their living situations and with respect to their occupations. But I argue that this was exacerbated by their status as migrant lesbians. As I claim throughout this dissertation, the instability and discrimination they faced as a result of their migrant status was compounded by their status as black lesbian women, making the challenge of finding safe, stable housing and jobs an especially onerous one. Given the variety of their permit statuses, living situations, and 'degrees' of outness, the commonalities found with respect to difficulties maintaining a livelihood (Chapter Four), accessing safe, comfortable spaces (Chapter Five) and monitoring others' emotions (Chapter Six) all suggest that they faced unique sets of challenges not presented to other heterosexual migrants or South African-born lesbians.

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[15] Also of note is that participants were all black, though this was not something I limited my search criteria to. Given the differing experiences of white Zimbabwean migrants to South Africa (Dube, 2017), exploring the lives and geographies of specifically white African lesbian migrants in the country would likely yield very different results.

Table 3.1 Participant Demographics

Name	Approx. age	Country of Origin	Time in SA	Status	Employed	Residence	Other notes
Cape Town							
Joyce	24	Malawi	11 years	Work Visa	Full-time	Observatory	
Marcia	26	Zimbabwe	6 years	ZSP	Full-time	Kenilworth	Partner is Precious
Precious	26	Zimbabwe	7 years	Student Visa	Student	Kenilworth	Partner is Marcia
Rumaitha	25	Somalia	10 years	Refugee	Part-Time	Observatory	
Saara	36	Namibia	12 years	Permanent Res.	Freelance	Observatory	
Zoe	34	Zimbabwe	8 years	Undocumented	Unemployed	Grassy Park	
Johannesburg							
AJ	26	Zimbabwe	7 years	ZSP	Full-time	Rosettenville	Partner is Tawanda
Beatrice	27	eSwatini	11 years	Spousal visa	Full-time	Weltevredenpark	
Christine	20	Zimbabwe	10 years	Expired visa	Unemployed	Tsakane	Daugher of Etta
Danni	22	Zimbabwe	8 years	ZSP	Student	Rosettenville	Tawanda's sister
Etta	37	Zimbabwe	18 years	Asylum-seeker	Freelance	Vosloorus	Mother of Christine
Nyasha	22		1 year	Undocumented	Unemployed	Yeoville	
Tawanda	26	Zimbabwe	8 years	ZSP	Full-time	Rosettenville	Danni's sister; Partner is AJ
Veronica	24	Zimbabwe	5 years	Unknown	Unclear	Rosettenville	
PASSOP							
Henry	32	Malawi	2 years	Work Visa	Full-time	Observatory	

And yet despite LMW's many similarities, and the fact that their situations were often exacerbated or compounded by their statuses as black, lesbian, migrant, women, the many differences in their geographies and in their geographical trajectories shows how differences exist even within identity categories (Brown, 2012; Valentine, 2007). LMW differed in terms of things like job access, neighbourhood of residence, and social support, and also in terms of how comfortable they felt with respect to their sexuality and how they actually navigated the challenges of being a black lesbian migrant (Chapter Six). The resulting narratives in this dissertation therefore portray a broad landscape of oppression made navigable through individuals' different resources, identities, and behaviours.

3.11 Limitations of the Study

The stories gathered for this dissertation, while being quite rich in terms of depth and emotion, represent only the smallest fragment of the lives of lesbian migrants in South Africa. This results in a very limited amount of generalizability, and this is true for nearly all case studies (Cohen et. al., 2011; Yin, 2009). I have sought to account for this

when analyzing the results and discussing the conclusions. But as mentioned above in Section 3.10, many aspects of the women's narratives did overlap, suggesting that they are not the only ones experiencing such things. The themes that have emerged from their stories also speak to broader trends and patterns that others have when looking at how other South African LGBT migrants fare (e.g. Beetar, 2016 or Koko et. al., 2018), and they provide valuable insight in terms of different trends or patterns of behaviour.

Lesbian migrants' stories are also, ultimately, subject to my own interpretations. As a white, middle-class (North) American woman with no prior experience in South Africa, my status as an "outsider" in these regards mean that my explanations of events and their meanings may not necessarily reflect how the women themselves felt about things or understood them. This, too, is common in qualitative research (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Eliason, 2016). Though I discuss this more in Section 3.9, I return to it here to reiterate the limitations it can pose. Where necessary, I have sought further clarification from participants (see Section 3.12), and I have also included many direct quotes from the women themselves so that readers may form their own interpretations (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2005).

That many of the women were so forthcoming in sharing their lives with me speaks both to their willingness to recount their narratives and my ability to establish trust and ensure that they felt safe. Given the relatively short time frame of five and a half months, though, I do think that spending a longer time with them could have yielded stories that were even more nuanced and in-depth. Many of the women I spoke with were very much in transition. This could be due to their age (Sections 3.10.1 and 3.10.8) and/or because I met many of them via PASSOP, which helps those who are by definition

seeking assistance and thus likely to be more unstable. Future studies could compare different age groups of lesbian migrants to see if this pattern holds into their 30s and beyond, or they could spend a more extended period of time with them to see if and when things do settle more.

3.12 Analysis and Interpretation

To navigate, analyze, and interpret the array of conversations and solicited maps, this dissertation uses narrative analysis and theories of intersectionality, in combination with ideas from feminist and queer theories. Though analysis and interpretation may seem like separate concepts, Kim (2016) argues that the two work in tandem. We analyze narrative data in order to understand and interpret participants' meanings of self, surroundings, lives, and experiences. An analysis of things like plot lines, thematic structures, and sociocultural referents are by definition interpretive at every stage (Josselson, 2006).

Methodologically, and as briefly discussed in Section 3.2, narrative analysis broadly follows qualitative research processes of investigation, which include an iterative process of examining raw data, reducing this data to themes through coding and recoding, and representing this data as figures, tables, and narratives (Kim, 2016). Unlike more focused qualitative practices like grounded theory, however, there is no step-by-step guide to conducting a narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995). Researchers must instead "flirt" with the data to find a space where aims can be worked out (Kim, 2016, p. 187).

As part of this "flirtation," Polkinghorne (1995) explains that the concepts or narratives one looks for in this process can be derived from previous theory and/or from the data itself, similar to a grounded theory approach. I engaged in both forms of

narrative analysis throughout the research process. I wanted to generate and discover new patterns in the transcripts and maps while also recognizing the fact that "data do not stand alone" (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001, p. 166). That is, I read over things with some specific themes in mind—I wanted to know where LMW were living and working, how much support they had, and how they navigated, both literally and metaphorically, the challenges of being a black lesbian migrant woman. Yet I was also open to unanticipated themes emerging. For instance, one of the common elements that appeared over and over was the role of religion, both in terms of participants' own beliefs and those of their families. As I explain in Chapter Five, this complicates their senses of belonging beyond understandings of race, gender, sexuality, and migrant status.

To help generate the different categories that described migrants' experiences of belonging, I used NVIVO software to help focus my attention on what Gieseking (2013) calls 'Narratives of Place' and 'Personalization.' Narratives of Place refer to elements that help us to see how physical, remembered, and imagined spaces intersect in terms of how a place is conceived, perceived, and lived in (Gieseking, 2013). In the context of my own research, this included things like neighbourhoods, bars, and landmarks such as Johannesburg's Constitution Hill. Personalization, meanwhile, refers to elements that reveal participants' experiences and emotions (Gieseking, 2013). As detailed in Chapter Five, many participants wrote on the maps how they themselves felt about certain places, while others discussed these emotions in our conversations. The corresponding data on Narratives of Place and Personalization also informed my analyses of intersections, places of (un)safety, and identity management by offering a visual representation of some of the barriers they faced in their quests for belonging, and how these barriers then

constrain or enable both the choices they make and their identity development (Chapter Six) (Campos-Delgado, 2018; Gieseking, 2016b).

In conducting a narrative analysis and in offering interpretations, Bowleg (2008) and others warn that researchers can make mistakes by ignoring 'missing' data or engaging in what Kim (2016) calls "arbitrary subjectivity" (p. 192). That is, we may unintentionally or subconsciously appropriate data to fit our philosophical orientation or transpose the data from one situation to another (Kim, 2016). To counter this, while also acknowledging that no research will ever be free from bias or subjectivity (Carlson, 2010), I engaged in member checking at different stages in the research process. This is a qualitative research technique that seeks clarity on things that may need a bit more context, and asks questions about how participants made sense of themselves, others, and their experiences (Baxter & Eyles, 1997; Emerson et al., 2011; St. Pierre, 1997). As part of this process, after I returned home I wrote one to two paragraph descriptions of the 11 participants I was still in contact with (the same 11 from whom I received sketch maps). These descriptions included details about their demographics discussed in Sections 3.10.1 to 3.10.7, as well as an overview of some of the biggest struggles they felt they were facing. I sent these to the women and they corrected them as needed. I sought clarity with them via text about events or descriptions where I felt I might have missed some details. For instance, in an exchange with Rumaitha about her housing situation (Chapter Four), she seemed to imply (but did not explicitly state) that she was being charged a higher rent because of her migrant status and sexuality. When I messaged her asking to clarify why she thought her rent was higher she confirmed that it was because she was a lesbian and also "not South African." Lastly, to enhance the credibility of my claims, I describe both

my own context and participants' context, and use direct quotes wherever possible (Baxter & Eyles, 1997).

The use of things like member checking and rich descriptions of context can help readers make sense of research results that are non-linear and abstract (Eastmond, 2007; Kim, 2016). Interpreting lesbian migrants' experiences also requires a lens that can account for the multifaceted nature of identities, belonging, and spatial production. For that reason, I use theories of intersectionality, in combination with ideas from queer and feminist theories, to frame my interpretations. All three lenses allow for a critical interrogation of socio-spatial interactions, as well as an interrogation of axes of difference (Eaves, 2014). These frameworks share understandings that identity categories like gender, race, or sexuality cannot be understood in isolation, and that these, in turn, cannot be disentangled from place (Bowleg, 2008). Identities and spaces are instead provisional, relational, and geographically contingent (Oswin, 2019). There is no essential 'lesbian' identity, just as there is no essential 'black' identity or 'migrant' identity (Bowleg, 2008; Oswin, 2019).

One of the hallmarks of intersectional interpretation is a broadening of the analytic scope to the structures that contribute to different experiences (Bowleg, 2008; Collins & Bilge, 2016). These structures may not be explicit or directly observable in the data themselves, but nevertheless play a huge role in how participants experience (in)equality (Cuadraz & Uttal, 1999). For example, in her research on the experiences of multiple minority stress and resilience relevant to the intersections of race, gender, and sexual orientation for black lesbians in the United States, Bowleg (2008) highlights how by explaining the context of institutional heterosexism or heterosexism in religious

organizations, this allows the analyst to bridge individual accounts within the historical

and contemporary social contexts in which they occur. Here again, narrative analysis

helps inform these interpretations. Bowleg's participants' narrative accounts are

interwoven with descriptions of how things like their race and gender can impact them,

and she uses an intersectional lens to make sense of their stories. This dissertation does

much the same. Participants told me stories about their lives, both through conversations

and through illustrations on their maps. These stories allude to different ways of being

and belonging in different spaces, and I use theories of intersectionality to help interpret

the stories and locate them within broader social structures.

3.13 Next Steps

In the next three chapters I present my results, illustrating how belonging is

intersectional—dependent upon both identities and spatial contexts. This intersectionality

includes a lack of belonging in the more practical sense, with respect to maintaining a

livelihood. Participants cannot 'belong' to a space if they cannot access it to begin with,

and Chapter Four shows how xenophobia and homophobia intersect to exclude LMW

from establishing gainful livelihoods and day-to-day routines. A sense of belonging (and

a lack thereof) can also play out in more abstract, emotional ways. Components of

belonging like feelings of safety and comfort are fractured along intersectional lines, with

some spaces being or feeling 'safe' only in certain regards, and so Chapter Five delves

further into understanding what lesbian migrants' levels of comfort can tell us about their

attachment and sense of belonging to different places. Lastly, in Chapter Six I show how

LMW must constantly manage other people's perceptions of their identity to create

spaces of inclusion and belonging. Doing so requires them to stay constantly aware of

others' emotions and actions in addition to monitoring their own. It also requires a

fracturing of their own identities, and theories of intersectionality can help in

understanding why this then leads to incomplete or inadequate spaces of belonging.

These three chapters together provide an intersectional account of LMW's experiences of

belonging, showcasing where and how they feel included and excluded, and the scales at

which these feelings can manifest.

Chapter Four: Intersections

4.1 Introduction

The spatial encounters of lesbian migrant women in South Africa are entangled in broader systems of homophobia, xenophobia, racism, and sexism. An in-depth look at lesbian migrant women's material geographies and sites of encounter reveals how these systems combine and intersect at a multitude of scales to impede the establishment of livelihoods, everyday routines, and spaces of belonging. In this chapter, I analyze how LMW experience their raced, sexualized, gendered, and migrant-ized subjectivities in their day-to-day lives, and how their everyday experiences reveal the broader "mechanisms by which systems of exclusion are replicated and recreated" (Nash, 2010, p. 1), both spatially and through discursive practices. By analyzing their identities and their outcomes intersectionally, I do more than simply describe their experiences. Instead, I show how these categories become salient, and how this happens in ways that sharply diverge from the experiences of other migrants and/or non-migrant lesbians (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). In doing so, I illustrate the ways that belonging is shaped by individuals' intersecting social locations (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

To explore how intersections of xenophobia and homophobia contribute to LMW's exclusion, I focus my analyses on four different 'sites' of encounter—jobs, housing, interpersonal relationships, and sites of self-care. These sites were chosen because they denote where and how the women spend most of their time. I argue that the banal, everyday encounters and transactions of LMW in these sites frame them as 'other,' contributing to their sense of non-belonging.

4.2 Employment and Financial (In)stability

Echoing what other researchers on queer migrants in South Africa have found, many of the women I spoke with were having difficulties obtaining jobs, particularly those without government-sanctioned documentation (PASSOP, 2012; ORAM, 2013). For many of those with jobs, meanwhile, the conditions of their employment were often temporary or insecure, and left them unable to plan for their futures because their income could never be guaranteed. Some, like Marcia, found themselves gainfully employed, but also faced a self-described "glass ceiling." Others, like AJ and Tawanda, had a consistent job and salary, but it was only enough to make ends meet. The financial instability that LMW faced could, lastly, be exacerbated through banks that refused to open accounts for people on certain categories of permit, such as asylum seekers' permits or ZSPs, and/or through tellers who openly discriminated against lesbians.

Christine, Nyasha, and Zoe all lacked government-sanctioned documentation, and so finding a job, any job, was very difficult, and all experienced bouts of joblessness to some degree. Over the course of the four months I was speaking with women in Johannesburg, Christine and Nyasha both gained and lost jobs. Christine quit her job selling VIP memberships at a clothing store after it became clear that she and her coworkers were not going to get paid. She told me over text that because she was working without papers, she felt that there was nothing she could do to recover her lost income. Nyasha found work at a store in Yeoville making R2,000 (about C$200) a month, but was fired a few months later for getting into a fight with a coworker. Her quest to find another job proved fruitless during the time we spoke. At one point she told me she thought she had secured one only to find that "the[y] wanted papers." Both these

scenarios are illustrative of the problems undocumented migrants can face worldwide—

because they lack any permit that legally allows them to work, their job options are quite

limited (Chomsky, 2014).

Neither Christine nor Nyasha were open about their sexuality at work, the

implications of which I discuss further in Chapter Six. Zoe's scenario, meanwhile,

highlights how these challenges can be exacerbated when participants do choose to make

their sexuality known. Because she lacked any sort of legally-recognized status that

would allow her to get a job, she made money by selling scarves and jewellery (and later,

Tupperware), making the jewellery herself and buying the scarves wholesale from other

merchants. Some of the merchants knew about her sexuality and harassed her as a result.

> Z: So there was another guy I used to buy stuff from Zimbabwe. So I told
> him a long time ago, "You know I don't do guys; guys are irritating;
> guys are boring. I've just, you know, stopped." […] So he sees me
> walking out with um, with my partner and, and some colleagues and then
> he says, "Hey, you!" So he said, "So you are doing women, eh? You are
> still fucking women?" in my language. […] I somehow regret telling him
> that, like…Every time he sees me he constantly seems to just shout. He
> finds it like a joke. He finds it as if something very insane and…He will
> constantly say something homophobic and very hateful towards me. Yet
> I used to give him money because he was a business guy.

Through his aggressive comments that make Zoe extremely uncomfortable, the

Zimbabwean merchant reaffirms and reasserts the heteronormativity of this particular

urban space (Rodó-de-Zárate, 2017; Tucker, 2009b). This is illustrative of how

individuals are "constantly engaged in efforts to territorialize, to claim spaces, to include

some and exclude others from particular areas" (Massey, 1998, p. 127). And though they

are both migrants, Zoe is the metaphorical outsider in this scenario. Even in spaces where

other migrants might feel they belong (e.g., in the presence of other migrants), Zoe's

sexuality precludes her from being accepted in spaces of commercial exchange.

Zoe's example of dealing with homophobic vendors is but one example of how accessing employment or livelihood is an implicitly heteronormative affair *and* of how LMW's migrant status can interact with this to further hinder many opportunities (Bhagat, 2018). Though both had the legal right to work in the country, Etta and Rumaitha found themselves in similar situations to Zoe; their employment was irregular and unpredictable, and compounded in both direct and indirect ways by their status as lesbians and as migrants. Etta worked as a freelance photojournalist, accepting gigs as they became available, while Rumaitha eventually found a part-time job working for a restaurant. Etta was quite clear about how her under-employment was related to both her sexuality *and* her permanently-impermanent status as an asylum-seeker. At our first meeting she told me about how she had recently lost out on a photojournalism gig because her employer wanted her to wear high heels and cut off her dreadlocks.[16] Etta refused, citing that wearing high heels would make mobility quite difficult—a huge disadvantage in a profession where quickly getting to the place an event is happening is paramount to success. (She also still had her dreadlocks when I met her.) Etta had further lamented at length about how difficult it is to find jobs given her perpetually-impermanent asylum-seeker status. Even for the paying gigs that she was able to secure, she found that the companies who hired her often would take advantage of the fact that she was a migrant by refusing to pay, knowing that there was little she could do to get her money. Similarly, some would pay her less than the amount they had originally agreed upon. When coupled with her status as a lesbian (which led to requests she was uncomfortable fulfilling, as mentioned above), Etta felt like she was at a major disadvantage with respect to getting treated fairly. Given her multiple outsider positions,

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[16] Dreadlocks are sometimes stereotypically associated with a black, lesbian identity (Moore, 2006).

Etta also knew she had very little recourse in terms of ensuring she was remunerated, and had ultimately resigned herself to accepting her employers' non-payment as 'part of the job.' Etta's example illustrates how the politics of belonging can be conceived of and understood intersectionally and at multiple scales (Gorman-Murray, 2011). Her body (and her hair and feet in particular) puts her at odds with her potential employer(s), who will not allow her to have a job until she rids herself of markers of her sexuality and engages in practices consistent with traditional notions of race and femininity (Gunkel, 2010), while her status as an asylum-seeker signals that she is someone who they can easily exploit. In these ways, she is excluded not just from *a* job, but a plethora of jobs at companies large and small throughout the city and throughout the country.

Rumaitha's case, too, illustrates how belonging and exclusion can be intersectional. Her lack of either connections or job experience in South Africa hindered her search for gainful employment, the former of which can be traced back to her sexuality and the latter to her migrant status. Originally having come to South Africa from Somalia after being 'adopted' by a family friend,[17] she had not received anything beyond an elementary education. Around the age of 20, she had been forced to flee to Cape Town from her home in East London after being attacked by her uncle for refusing to marry a man. Upon her arrival in the city, where she knew absolutely no one, she wound up living with a coloured family; the wife had found Rumaitha alone at the bus stop and took pity on her. The family sold vegetables for a living, and so Rumaitha helped them with that. After about a year of doing this it became evident that she was not going anywhere, literally or metaphorically and, sensing she had come to the end of her

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[17] After Rumaitha's father passed away in the war, her mother could no longer afford to care for her, and instead entrusted her to a family she worked for. This family then moved to South Africa for safety reasons, taking Rumaitha along with them.

welcome with the family, she tried to find a new job and new housing. Whereas other migrants in her situation may have drawn on support from the Somali diaspora, her masculine appearance (making her sexuality easily evident) combined with the widespread homophobia she felt from the diasporic Somali community meant that she was unable to approach them for any assistance. After eventually getting connected with Henry at PASSOP, she moved to a homeless shelter in the City Centre and a few weeks later found a part-time job working at a catering company. Work here was inconsistent; it was dependent upon how busy the company found itself. Though here her boss was sympathetic to her plight as a lesbian (he was a white, gay man that Henry knew), he was less so when it came to the irregularity of her refugee status. When Rumaitha went to Pretoria for three weeks to renew her asylum permit, her boss fired her, citing that she could not just "leave" like that. Though he eventually recanted, Rumaitha immediately began searching for other jobs, but was ultimately unsuccessful.

Rumaitha's precarity in this incident is illustrative of how the effects of homophobia are not limited to single, in-the-moment acts of homophobic aggression (Boulila, 2015; Browne, 2007), as well as how LMW's search for safety is confounded by the intersection of multiple factors. Rumaitha has little education because of being forced to move at a young age, and this, she believes, coupled with her lack of job experience, has made finding a job that much more difficult. Her refugee status further hinders her search because she occasionally must leave the city for indeterminate amounts of time. This is because South Africa's Department of Home Affairs required refugees occasionally renew their status in either Pretoria or Johannesburg, which are over 1,000 miles from Cape Town (see Chapter Two for a fuller discussion). And while

many migrants in a similar situation might turn to other migrants they know to help them find a job (Landau & Freemantle, 2010) (and indeed, it was her connection with Henry, a gay Malawian man, who helped her find the catering job), Rumaitha has few connections to rely on. This is both because she fled to Cape Town on account of her sexuality (avoiding a forced marriage), meaning she still knows very few people in the city, and because other Somalis in the city either refuse to engage with her at best, or threaten her with violence at worst, again because of her sexuality.

In stark contrast to Rumaitha's situation was Marcia, a web developer. Marcia was gainfully employed at an IT firm, where coworkers knew about her sexuality, and she made enough money not only to be able to afford her housing in a nicer neighbourhood (Section 4.3) but also to enjoy diversions like movie tickets, a gym membership, and nights out at bars in the CBD. But although many aspects of her living conditions diverged sharply from those of other LMW, including Rumaitha, she still found herself losing out financially because of her gender, race, and migrant status. This offers an interesting insight into the ways in which being free from overt discrimination in certain demographics (in this case, sexuality) does not necessarily preclude one from experiencing discrimination on the basis of other factors (Gieseking, 2016a) and sheds light on how vulnerability extends beyond one single variable (Strauss & McGrath, 2017). For Marcia, the predominance of white Europeans in her workplace meant that she could be open about both her sexuality and her nationality without fear of any obvious reprisal. In her words,

> M: M-hm! I am [out at work]. Granted, I work with um, most of my
> workmates are foreigners as well. They're actually European, and a few
> South Africans. So it's really open and no one is judge-y about [my being
> a lesbian].

The salience of her lesbian identity becomes somewhat irrelevant because the foreigners

she worked with were mostly indifferent about it. (One colleague even defended her after

another coworker made homophobic comments regarding a popular television character.)

But her coworkers' relative acceptance of her being a lesbian did not preclude them from

discriminating against her in more insidious ways.

> M: In my industry there's like a- What do you call it? If you're a black
> person you can earn as much as this much [*puts her hand by her hip*], and
> you can't get over?
> *K: Ah, like the glass ceiling?*
> M: Yeah, exactly, you can't get over that. And like, I have juniors who
> earn more than I do because they are white. I can't find any other reason
> why they're earning more than I do.
> *K: Oh?*
> M: Yeah, I do their work, I teach them, I do literally everything, but they
> earn more than I do.

Marcia is quick to blame her race as the basis upon which she is being discriminated

against, and evidence indicates that she is likely correct (Burger & Jafta, 2006; Chikarara,

2016). Additionally, an overwhelming amount of data also suggest that women in

technology sectors worldwide receive lower pay than their male colleagues, even after

controlling for factors like age and level of experience (Acker, 2009, Booysen & Nkomo,

2010; Grant Thornton, 2015; Hoobler et al., 2009). But when asked about whether she

had addressed her concerns about wage discrimination with anyone else at work, Marcia

told me that her migrant status directly interfered with this, saying, "For a person like me

personally, I'm here on a work permit that's expiring in December, so I don't really want

to burn bridges."

While something like the glass ceiling is not necessarily unique to South Africa,

when combined with other factors like racial relations in the country and how each

woman's particular migrant status renders her unstable, we can see how, as Chávez (2013) claims, systems of power and oppression interact in ways that can both engender and inhibit individual (re)actions. As someone with temporary status, Marcia felt that it was in her best interest overall not to speak up; she worried that were she to do so, she would get a reputation as a troublemaker, which could lead to her dismissal, harm future job prospects, or even prevent her from being allowed to continue to live and work in South Africa. Her precarity in this situation mirrors the precarity faced by nearly all the women I spoke with.[18] To speak out about the conditions of their employment, if they are employed at all, puts them at risk of easy dismissal. The financial implications meant that were this to happen, it would jeopardize not just their immediate living situation, but also their ability to stay in South Africa and the freedom to remain openly lesbian.

In other cases where the women had legal status and fulltime jobs, their pay was only enough to make ends meet. AJ and Tawanda both felt that their jobs, while stable, did not afford them the opportunity for advancement. In AJ's words,

> AJ: Four years later I'm still there [at my place of work]. You know how it is when you get a job that pays the bills, you just get comfortable. I've been okay all this time, but lately I, I hate it. But yeah, there's nothing I can do. I can't quit, I can't do anything. Otherwise I'll be homeless.

AJ and Tawanda both described how the lack of advancement at their jobs has led to them feeling stuck in their literal and metaphoric spaces. They lived in an apartment in Rosettenville, Johannesburg that bordered a nightclub and a busy street. On the Friday evening that I visited them there the noise started to get quite audible around 8 p.m. AJ said that later in the evening when people get drunk and start fighting that the two of

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[18] Precious, the PhD student, did not comment on the stability of her position and Veronica, the Zimbabwean transgender woman, did not comment on her employment status at all.

them would simply close the window and play their own music. When they tried to go to

sleep, however, it could be quite difficult. AJ's partner Tawanda, who had been

contemplating starting her own bakery, explained more about how she felt stuck.

> T: Yeah, so like, see. Then there's like, rent, like bills and stuff. So by
> the time I get paid I'm broke already. So like, then sometimes I get cake
> orders then it can help. But you know, it's—I would really want to do
> my own stuff, but it's scary knowing that you don't have a job. But you
> want any job. Because then you know, you know either you work or not,
> at the end of the month you're getting paid. I think working for yourself,
> you don't always know the outcome.

If Tawanda were to risk opening her own business, she could likely face a

difficult time in getting funding, as studies have shown that black entrepreneurs in South

Africa have a much more difficult time securing bank loans for businesses than do their

white counterparts (Crush, Tawodzera, et al., 2017; Fatoki & Patswawairi, 2012). Being

black *and* a migrant puts her at a further disadvantage. Though refugees, asylum seekers,

and permanent residents (including those under the DZP/ZSP program) are legally

permitted to open accounts, whether or not the banks themselves actually allow for it is

left to their discretion. Some banks refuse to recognize the validity of migrants'

documents or deem them insufficient (Amit & Kriger, 2014). Others, such as Capitec,

South Africa's largest bank by number of customers, and sixth largest by assets, openly

refuse to open bank accounts for asylum seekers *or* refugees (Capitec Bank, n.d.a; South

African Reserve Bank, 2018). Etta's experience as an asylum-seeker trying to open an

account corroborates claims that banks often make things cumbersome for migrants,

particularly black ones, and showcases yet another way that LMW's financial precarity

can be exacerbated by intersecting axes of discrimination (Koko et al., 2018). She says

that as an asylum-seeker with official documentation she still had difficulty finding a

place that would let her open an account. According to her, most banks will only offer accounts to recognized refugees; the few South African banks that do offer accounts for asylum-seekers do so while charging exorbitant rates. For migrants in the DZP/ZSP category, the fixed timeline attached to their status has meant that some banks begin to freeze the migrants' accounts once the expiry date draws near, refusing to reopen them again until the migrants can provide sufficient evidence that their status has been renewed (Chiguvare, 2018).[19] Even where banks will open accounts for non-citizens (and keep them open), all require proof of address and some, like Capitec, also require proof of employment (Capitec Bank, n.d.a). This can be especially cumbersome for migrants who lack a fixed address and/or, like Etta, lack a steady job. Many immigrants are thus forced to simply carry whatever money they may have with them on their person, which then leaves them at heightened risk of being robbed and/or assaulted (Amit & Kriger, 2014). Capitec's policies on documentation underscore the multiscalar means by which belonging and exclusion can happen. At any given branch in any given city, migrants will find themselves having to contend with these exclusionary policies. Yet with more than 800 branches nationwide (Capitec Bank, n.d.b), it is not *just* any given branch where they may be excluded, but rather a whole host of locations throughout the country.

Lastly, an example from Zoe shows how lesbian migrants' (non-)belonging can transcend international borders, and how sexuality can intersect with migrant status to help make this happen. In her quest to send remittances back home to her children in Zimbabwe via a financial services company akin to Western Union, she was nearly stymied in her efforts by a homophobic teller.

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[19] See, for instance, a public exchange between Zimbabweans with frozen accounts and Capitec Bank's official Twitter account at goo.gl/1byUBZ.

Z: I think homophobia is depending on who you tell. 'Cause I know one [Zimbabwean] lady in the bank, I told her a long time ago [that I'm a lesbian], and she was so homophobic for days until she had to tell her colleagues that, "Yo, this one is like this, this, this." And I'm like, "Dude. I told you what I told you in confidence." She wants to pray for me. And the moment you tell people from home they want to pray for you.

Not only did the woman make unkind remarks to Zoe, she tried to sabotage her even further by disclosing her sexuality to her (the banker's) colleagues. Should she have been successful in her efforts, Zoe may have been unable to remit money to her children, putting her their livelihood in jeopardy and possibly causing problems between Zoe and her children's caretakers.

When it comes to financial security, then, institutionalized xenophobia can intersect with individuals' homophobia to make sending, saving, and receiving money fraught with the potential for exclusion or rejection. This adds to the precarity LMW face with respect to jobs available to them, and the discrimination they face with respect to homophobia, xenophobia, racism, and sexism. The temporariness of their legal status in the country means they may feel less inclined to speak up about on-the-job discrimination or exploitation for fear of "burn[ing] bridges" and losing said status. It can also leave them feeling stuck in unfulfilling or underpaying jobs. For these reasons, LMW are perpetually precarious, located in undesirable jobs but unable to escape them. The instability carries over to their housing contexts. In the next section, I discuss how LMW's precarious financial status has a direct effect on the types of housing they are able to afford and the neighbourhoods in which they are able to reside. Here again, their intersecting identities as black, lesbian, migrant women can make finding desirable housing extremely difficult.

4.3 Housing

The socioeconomic circumstances of many of the women I spoke with meant that they were often financially dependent upon family members and/or in close spatial proximity to other migrants. Their sexuality frequently confounded their search for desirable housing in this regard because other migrants, including their family members, were perceived to be much more homophobic. This perception was rooted in their personal experiences, and echoes what other researchers have found. Though one study showed that about a third of South Africans say they would dislike having homosexuals as neighbours, this number jumped to forty-five percent of Namibians, ninety percent of Zimbabweans, and ninety-four percent of Malawians (Dulani et al., 2016). This study is corroborated by other findings that show that relative to South Africa, overall acceptance of homosexuality in other parts of the continent is much, much lower (Kohut, 2013; Sutherland, 2016).

Being financially dependent upon other family members meant that LMW frequently felt that they had to conform to sociocultural expectations of heteronormative behaviour, at least while at home. In fact, both of the women who lived with their family (Danni and Nyasha) kept themselves closeted, out to only a few select friends and other trustworthy family members outside of the household (discussed in further detail in Chapter Six). For others, like Etta, although she was financially independent and lived with her partner, she was very in tune with what many other gays and lesbians were going through, and summed the situation up thus:

> E: There are things that [my partner and I] are still learning right now,
> like if you don't have money you must not come out. If independent, you
> know even that that phase where [your parents] are in denial, they are
> trying to figure out what is really going on with your life, you know how

to take care of yourself. […] You have some situations whereby a lot of lesbian or gays, they are being kicked out of their family homes because of their sexuality, and sometimes you find out they don't have a job, they don't have an income. And most of them like, they ended up like, in poverty like, doing stuff, especially gays. Most of them they do prostitution.

While none of my participants were selling sex (that I knew of), one of them, Zoe, had done so in the past. Others, like Nyasha, were clearly in dire straits and, as Etta said, were not in a position to come out. Nyasha's undocumented status meant that finding a job was very difficult (Section 4.2) and in the four months I spoke with her she moved from one aunt's house in Johannesburg to another aunt's house a few hours outside the city, and then, once she was able to get a job, to her own place near Johannesburg's CBD. After losing this job, she was forced to move back in with her Johannesburg aunt, where other family members made frequent visits. Nyasha knew her family would not accept her sexuality as they were very religious, and so her dependence upon her family meant that any sort of financial support she received was effectively contingent upon her being closeted. The intersection of Nyasha's various identities also directly led to her being excluded from countless more sites, at both macro and micro scales, than she would be excluded from were she 'just' a heterosexual migrant or a lesbian South African. Dating was out of the question, as was socializing with friends; she could not afford even the cost of transport.

Danni, too, lived with her parents out of financial necessity. (She was a cosmetology student and her parents were paying for her schooling.) Her parents were, in her older sister Tawanda's words, "like part of the elders and all that stuff. You know like, the church leaders and all that. So like they were strict about church. Like praying and God and stuff." Danni was not yet out to her parents, having picked up on their

disapproval of Tawanda.

> D: To me they don't know [that I'm bisexual]. If, if it…imagine how hard it would be telling them that you are [bisexual] when you aren't even allowed to have a boyfriend. Imagine. They treat you like you like you are a five year old. So, it's like [that]. So when it comes to Tawanda and she's a little bit bigger. She's done this, or going to work or she does her own thing. So they know about Tawanda but they always judge her. But she doesn't care anymore.

The repercussions that Danni could face should she come out to her parents also illustrate how exclusion happens at a variety of scales (Gorman-Murray, 2011). On the micro scale, she might lose contact with her parents, or that contact might become more hostile. This can lead to changes at the meso scale—if, for instance, her parents cut her off financially and she is no longer able to support her schooling, her lack of education could then put future career prospects in jeopardy, in turn threatening her safety and security in South Africa at large.

Danni's lack of unconditional familial support underscores the fact that lesbian migrant women in South Africa lack (or eschew) some of the more traditional means of support that the migrant community can offer. In studies looking at lives and livelihoods of other African migrants in Cape Town and Johannesburg, authors have found that (heterosexual) migrants often rely on these ethnic networks for financial and other forms of support (Fatoki & Patswawairi, 2012; Gebre et al., 2011). For heterosexual migrant women in South Africa in particular, these networks may be used with a sense of reluctance, as doing so can mean forgoing a certain sense of independence. Nevertheless, they do still draw upon them in times of financial need (Kihato, 2013). I argue that the

fact that 'migrant networks' never came up as a topic of conversation,[20] let alone a potential source of support, is telling in that it indicates these women had either been excluded from or excluded themselves from these networks.

When proximity to other migrants *did* come up, the women I met with spoke of it in terms of it being disadvantageous. For those who were not financially dependent on family members, the high cost of living in both cities meant that a number of the participants were still living in areas with a high migrant populations and high crime rates, the former rendering them especially vulnerable to homophobic persecution. AJ, Danni, Tawanda, and Veronica all lived in the Johannesburg neighbourhood of Rosettenville, a migrant-heavy suburb about six kilometres south of the CBD. The location did have its advantages; its fairly central location made getting to work relatively easy, and the apartment prices matched their budgets. But beyond the convenience of its location and price, AJ relayed that it was not a very desirable place to live; crime rates were fairly high, he told me (A look at local police station reports of rapes, murders, and carjackings supports this; see South African Police Services, 2019.), and he and Tawanda had been on the receiving end of some hostile, homophobic stares from others when they had walked around together. Danni, meanwhile, had been mugged by "a foreigner" in Rosettenville not long prior to our meet-up in early May, and was also quite clear that this was not a place she wanted to stay in for much longer.

Likewise, for Rumaitha, the house she had shared with the coloured family just before we met was in close proximity to an area of Cape Town known as 'Little Mogadishu.' Here, she explained, the crime rate was not an issue for her so much as it was the fact that it was where most of the Somali community lived and worked

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[20] Save for organizations such as PASSOP that specifically catered to LGBT migrants.

(Alhourani, 2017; Brudvig, 2014). These individuals, in her words, "start their stories" when they see someone dressed as she is. That is, when they see a woman dressed in a masculine fashion, they spread the word very quickly, and while nothing had ever happened to her, her presence was very clearly not welcome. Rumaitha's desire to leave the community was hindered by the fact that she had very little in terms of financial resources, again, largely as a result of her being a refugee with little education (Section 4.2). Eventually deciding to make the move regardless, she felt she had no other option but to stay in a homeless shelter in the City Bowl. This shelter was the only one in the country that expressly welcomes members of the LGBT community, though online reviews still complained of both theft and outbreaks of violence amongst the residents.

For similar financial reasons, other LMW lived in neighbourhoods that, while not necessarily known for their high migrant numbers, still had higher crime rates and populations that were less tolerant of gays and lesbians. Etta and her South African partner, for instance, lived in Vosloorus, a township southeast of Johannesburg's CBD. Here, according to Etta, there had been warnings floating around on social media reminding parents to keep children indoors, lest they be abducted.

Up until February of that year, Zoe had spent close to twelve months living in Atlantis, a satellite town of Cape Town located about 60 kilometres from the City Centre. Zoe was out to some of her neighbours, and her departure was pre-empted by an assault in which an intruder broke into her home and stabbed her in the neck. When she fled to her neighbours for help they "totally ignored" her, and Zoe believed that this was in part because they disapproved of her sexuality. She instead had to call for help from another friend who lived nearby, and the two of them left the next morning. She now lives with

her partner Tasneem and Tasneem's husband in a much closer township called Grassy Park. Though Grassy Park has lower rates of murder, burglary, and sexual assault per capita than Atlantis (South African Police Services, 2019; Statistics South Africa, 2011), it is nowhere near one of the safest Cape Town suburbs. Furthermore, Zoe is now financially dependent upon Tasneem; should something happen to the two of them, Zoe would likely find herself again unable to access safe(r) housing.

For those with the ability to live outside high-migrant neighbourhoods and/or ones with higher crime rates, LMW's intersecting identities could still impede their search for housing in other ways. After living in a homeless shelter in the City Bowl for a number of months, Rumaitha was eventually able to find a place to stay in Observatory, a racially-diverse suburb just outside Cape Town's City Centre. Here, she felt her status as a migrant *and* as a lesbian put her in another disadvantaged housing situation. She was paying R500 (about $50 Canadian) more than a South African woman who stayed in an adjacent room. This woman told her this (that she herself paid R1990) and when Rumaitha protested because she was paying R2400, the woman told her, "Just keep quiet. Just know that that's the way things go." Rumaitha later clarified over text that this was likely because the woman lived there before she did and because she (Rumaitha) was a lesbian and 'not South African.' Housing discrimination is a problem that migrants and refugees face nationwide (Adjai & Lazaridis, 2013; Amisi et al., 2011), and Rumaitha's situation shows how being a lesbian can make the situation even more challenging (Bhagat, 2018; Shidlo & Ahola, 2013).

Lastly, Marcia and Precious dealt with blatant homophobia when trying to find a tenant for their spare bedroom in Kenilworth to help offset the cost of rent. They posted

an ad through a local classifieds website and met with an individual who seemed

interested until he learned that the two of them were lesbians.

> M: He was like, "Yeah, no." [*laughs*] I'm just like, "Oh my god! What is
> wrong with this guy?" He liked us and everything, and then suddenly
> he's like, "I don't know how I'd feel about staying with two lesbians."
> And like, uh, we're not going to take off our clothes and start having sex
> in front of you. Like seriously dude, what is wrong with you? [*laughs*]

Marcia was able to laugh it off, but after witnessing the overt hostility the

potential tenant displayed, she and Precious decided it would be better for them not to

rent out their apartment at all. Their ability to do so, along with their lack of immediate

need for a tenant to share the rent with, points to their financial stability relative to some

of the other participants. Many of the other women had situations that were far more dire.

Their financial difficulties discussed in Section 4.2 extend to and hinder their search for

desirable housing. Because they could not find stable work, some of the women, like

Nyasha, had to live with homophobic relatives. Others' jobs left them with only enough

income to afford housing in more dangerous neighbourhoods. Their sense of exclusion in

these spaces is evident in the way they talk about them. They have a home, but do not

frequently feel 'at home' because they are not recognized or understood for who they

really are (Wood & Waite, 2011). This contrast between *having* a home and *feeling* at

home illustrates how belonging is an inherently emotional experience (Gorman-Murray,

2011), and how LMW are frequently denied this sense of attachment to different sites.

These exclusions in places like different neighbourhoods or different housing sites

parallel exclusions found in interpersonal relationships. As I discuss in the next section,

while some women were able to find a sense of belonging through their interpersonal

connections, many others still felt unseen and unrecognized, even at the smallest scale.

4.4 Interpersonal Relationships

In their quest to find comfort, stability, and a sense of belonging when and where they could, many LMW turned to their significant others. This transpired in more practical senses, as those who were in longer-term relationships all lived with their partners, thus sharing the cost of housing, and it also happened in more abstract, emotional ways. However, these relationships also could leave them vulnerable. They did not always provide a guarantee of security, nor were they always an option to begin with.

Living with other family members meant that for some women, dating or bringing home a romantic partner was not an option. Danni, who lived with her parents, had to be secretive about her sexuality when she was at home. As the youngest of five, she felt that her status as the "baby" of the family meant that her parents were overprotective; she was "[not] even allowed to have a boyfriend," let alone a girlfriend. They already knew of (and negatively judged) her older sister Tawanda's sexuality; Danni stated that she could not imagine telling them that she was attracted to women as well. Her dating life was thus limited to nights out when she could be away from her parents' watchful eyes.

In a similar, yet even more constrained situation was Nyasha. As mentioned in Section 4.3, because Nyasha lived with homophobic aunts (itself the result of her challenges in finding a reliable source of income), she felt that dating was simply out of the question, as she did not want to risk others finding out about her sexuality. Relative to Danni's parents, Nyasha's aunts had much less expendable income, and so were unable to offer Nyasha much in the way of spending money. This meant she frequently lacked the funds to venture anywhere outside of her neighbourhood, whether to date or to simply hang out with other friends. Her intersecting statuses therefore combine to keep her

confined, both literally and metaphorically, to a very small area. She is unable to leave

her neighbourhood *and* unable to explore her sexual identity in any depth. Her only

reliable respite comes in the form of digital spaces, which I briefly discuss in Chapter

Five.

For those who did have the freedom to pursue romantic relationships, their

expressions of self were sometimes constrained by rigid gender roles, and these roles

stem from the interplay between gender, race, and sexuality. Livermon (2012) has noted

that gay and lesbian relationships in South(ern) Africa have historically been based

around a butch-femme aesthetic, and that this is especially true for relationships formed

in townships. The aesthetics centre on both gender performances and sexual roles.

Traditionally speaking, the term butch refers to lesbians who "deploy and manipulate

masculine gender codes and symbols" (Rubin, 2006, p. 472). Femmes, in this context, are

defined as the rhetorical opposite to butches, taking on more traditionally feminine

characteristics. In these relationships, the butch partner dresses in a more masculine way

and takes on more traditionally male responsibilities, including that of financial provider

and paying lobola[21] while the femme partner dresses and acts in a more stereotypically

feminine fashion, paying closer attention to fashion and makeup and taking care of the

household (Gunkel, 2010; Kheswa & Wieringa, 2005; Swarr, 2012).

These categories are not absolute; none of the women I spoke with seemed

completely beholden to these roles. The financial situations the women faced meant that

none of the self-identified butch lesbians could afford to be the sole breadwinner; nor did

the self-identified femmes have partners who had jobs that were well-paid enough to

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[21] This is a heterosexual marriage custom in parts of southern Africa involving the exchange of money and other tokens like livestock between the future husband and the family of the future wife. See Gunkel (2010), Scott (2013), or Yarbrough (2018) for more on lobola exchanges in same-sex relationships.

fully support them. But despite the blurriness of the boundaries and expectations, a number of participants still spoke of their relationships in these terms, and so understanding how they enacted these roles can speak to some of the limitations they still felt.

Two of the self-identified femmes, Zoe and Christine, lived with their partners and depended upon them to pay the rent. They both lacked the appropriate documentation necessary to work legally in South Africa, but still did what they could to get by. Occasionally, though, they would seek money from their partners for things like transportation or dinner. Heteronormative understandings of gender and gender relations also still guided these butch-femme relationships to some degree (Olasik, 2015). Zoe discussed some of the constraints of these relationships from her perspective. To her, being the femme partner can indicate a sort of helplessness; femmes are reliant upon another person to take care of them. But, she argues, it is not actually that simple.

> Z: [Being femme] is something that's always being looked down on, on being very…helpless, protected, doesn't have a mind and marriage is…you need meaning. I'm there, and I'm not just a, a person you need between your sheets to keep you warm and everything. But you know, emotionally, I contribute a lot. I think because someone contributes monetarily it becomes…yeah. There's very blurred lines.

The expected monetary contributions of the butch partner can hold a certain cultural cachet that domestic work does not (Kennedy & Davis, 2014). Zoe continued to explain how specific dynamics of a butch-femme relationship can potentially lead to inequalities that can ultimately constrain both parties in terms of the options they have for seeking new job opportunities or leaving a potentially toxic relationship. When the butch partner is expected to be the financial provider, the femme is put in a financially-

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dependent position, which can then lead to exploitation or abuse (Sanger & Lynch, 2018).

The butch partner, in turn, risks losing her partner should she no longer have a steady

source of income. Zoe noted the racial component to these roles, and spelled out the

specifics of how femmes can get put in a precarious situation, saying,

> Z: Oh, I was in one butch-femme [relationship]. Yeah. And I was the
> femme, at least, the lipstick lesbian [a lesbian who wears makeup]. Yo, it
> is so difficult. I think the heteronormative roles take over so quickly.
> Before you even know it, you are the kept one, you are the kept one.
> You're going to be protected, you are going to be looked after. And it
> just happens naturally, it's not like you have a say, and the more you
> question things and want to find out what's happening it's like, "I'm here
> to protect you." And it's worse if you don't have a steady income and
> you're not working well and making money or- And because also we
> come from a black, heterosexual environment where the guy looks after
> you, gives you money, for clothes, for hair-
>
> *K: Do they still do lobola?*
> Z: Yes. Also just general maintenance on your dating life—hair,
> makeup, everything, and then suddenly you are demanding these things.
> It's like you've fallen into the same thing because you didn't want to be
> looked after.

Complementing Zoe's explanation of femme precariousness was AJ's perspective

on the insecurities butch lesbians can contend with. Speaking to the gendered

expectations that he felt as a butch (and later, as a trans man) AJ described the pressure of

being his family's financial provider. For him, the expectations that he take care of

Tawanda and his stepson made leaving his unfulfilling job a very risky endeavour.

Though the prospects for promotion at AJ's job were slim and he was openly dissatisfied

with it, he noted that it did pay enough to afford him and Tawanda all their cost of living

expenses (Section 4.2). Tawanda was also employed full-time, but despite this fact, he

consistently referred to himself as "the provider" of the family, a clear indication of how

he viewed his role. His openly-stated desire to leave and find another job was tempered

by the fact that to him, it could mean putting his whole family in jeopardy.

The pressure AJ feels to be his partner's "provider" is compounded by the fact that he, along with a number of other LMW, cannot easily turn to his family for social or financial support should something bad happen with respect to his housing situation (Section 4.3). Like the situation faced by many of his lesbian migrant peers, this is in part because of his family's dissatisfaction with his sexuality/gender identity. Even in instances where LMW do not unilaterally depend on their families for housing, their families' rejection of their sexuality still bears consequences. From comments on style of dress, to questions about the prospect of having children, LMW can be admonished by their friends and families (and others) for not dressing and acting feminine enough. The women I spoke with who were not out to their families and friends sometimes faced comments from these individuals regarding when they would be having children. Though Joyce was not out to her uncle, she worried that he knew because of the comments he made. "[My uncle] knows, he knows because all the time he asks, 'Joyce. You can't even show me who is my, my family-in-law.' [I'm] like, 'No uncle, no I am just waiting for the time.'" Tawanda, who dressed in more masculine clothing, had a similar experience, and she described the mixed feelings she had about her parents' comments and feelings toward her. She lamented that they, "don't even put me on their [social media] profile pictures and stuff, you see? They would rather look for an old picture of mine with [hair] weaves than use that [more recent] one." These women are presented with what Gibson and Macleod (2012) call a "disjuncture of the (heterosexual) family and lesbian identity," where familial expectations of support and care do not necessarily extend to acceptance of non-normative sexualities (p. 462). The contradictions that ensued meant that they

sometimes struggled to understand their place in the familial structure. Families are 'supposed' to be places of acceptance and belonging, and so it was disheartening and confusing when they simultaneously added to lesbian migrants' sense of non-belonging (Corteen, 2002). As I argue in Chapter Six, LMW engaged in a variety of tactics to gain this acceptance, including hiding or denying their sexuality. The recognition or acceptance of only parts of their identity also echoes some of the struggles they faced at different sites of leisure and wellbeing. Here, as I argue in the next section, LMW were also made to feel that they do not belong because of who they were as black, lesbian, migrant women.

4.5 Sites of Leisure and Wellbeing

Finding fun, accessible diversions from work or home could also prove challenging because of the women's intersecting statuses. This is partially a result of their respective lack of a disposable income, discussed here and in Section 4.2, and also partially because of how many spaces are constructed as heteronormative, gendered, racialized, and nationalized (Rodó-de-Zárate, 2015).

Considering notions of socioeconomic status (SES) can "fracture" the idea of a collective lesbian identity (Johnston, 2018b, p. 557). The lives and geographies of queer migrant women with higher SES were profoundly different from those with less money and access to resources. Women of a higher SES were able to access more spaces, safer spaces, and when and where their identities as lesbian migrants did become salient, the situations were often not nearly as precarious. Nyasha's story of lacking the correct paperwork and struggling to find both jobs and housing can be extended to show how lesbian migrants can be indirectly excluded from sites of entertainment, and in multiple

ways at that. When she was working at one of the few jobs she could find that did not require legal documentation, she was working six days a week, 12 hours a day, for very little money (~C$200/month). After rent (~C$80/month), this left her with neither the time nor monetary ability to afford diversions like nights out to bars or movies. The issue was exacerbated further when she was forced to move back in with her homophobic aunt. Here, as discussed in the section above, she could not even consider bringing home a girlfriend or going out to a gay bar not just because she lacked any disposable income, but also because doing so would risk her being cut off from further income support. Nyasha was therefore largely excluded from sites of diversion because of the intersecting nexuses of her sexuality *and* migrant status.

The way that a lack of financial resources melds with other identity categories is also evident when looking at recreational sites where participants said they *would* go to if they could. Tawanda, who had stable employment but little by way of disposable income, indicated that she would like to go on more road trips, visit more clubs, and spend more time outdoors. However, as she stated on her map, she "can't afford" these things yet. She elaborated,

> T: Road trips, [I] can't afford [them] yet, but hopefully would like to do that. Like maybe go to Durban or Cape Town or anywhere out of Joburg. Even like, maybe, I don't know, anywhere else as long as it's like, away from Joburg. And then travel. I would really like to travel but like, since, since this permit thing didn't work out the…I don't know what's gonna happen.

Tawanda's comment about permit issues draws attention to the fact that accessing these certain recreational sites can be difficult not only because of financial constraints, but also because of legal ones. Those in South Africa under the DZP/ZSP program are

continually aware that South Africa might, at any moment, change the conditions of their permits, thus potentially forcing them to scramble to assemble a new plan (Chapter Two). Plans of going on vacation, therefore, are tempered by this risk. So, too, is going back home. Tawanda and AJ both expressed that they were hesitant to back to Zimbabwe on the chance that something might happen with their permits while they were away. A similar, but perhaps even direr situation was true for those without any South African documents. Zoe, who lived in Cape Town, had four children back in Zimbabwe but could not go home to see them. This, as she told me, was because for her, even leaving South Africa could be risky, lest officials detain her for being in the country undocumented. She would also have to sneak herself back in, which carried its own set of risks.

For those who did have some disposable income, events like Cape Town's and Johannesburg's annual Pride celebrations (held over a week in February and October, respectively) are often still exclusionary for LMW. Though ostensibly celebrating non-normative sexualities, they are not 'queer' in the sense that it is often only white men's sexualities that are visible (Tucker, 2009a). Sexuality and race are mutually constituted identities, and because of a multitude of factors, including their spatial contexts, black lesbians in South Africa are at a far greater risk of experiencing sexual assault than are their white counterparts (Judge, 2014; Lake, 2017; Mkhize et al., 2010; Moreau, 2015; Nath, 2011; Salo et al., 2010; Scott, 2017; Swarr, 2012).[22] Pride organizers' lack of acknowledgement of the often bleak realities black gays and lesbians can face has been

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[22] There is substantially less literature that similarly compares the risk for coloured lesbians. Given, however, the correspondingly high rates of domestic assault, theft, and murder in coloured townships, coupled with a strong adherence to traditional gender norms, this risk is also likely to be quite high (Mkhize et al., 2010; Salo et al., 2010).

brought to public attention by both academics and the South African queer community (Payi, 2018; Robertson, 2017; Schutte, 2012; Tucker, 2009b; Van Niekerk, 2017).

Saara, the freelance musician from Namibia, was one such critic of Cape Town's celebrations. She openly expressed frustration with the fact that white people had seemingly co-opted Cape Town Pride, and she instead elected only to attend the "Black Pride parade" in Khayelitsha. The parade she was (likely) referring to is the Khumbulani Pride March, which is hosted annually each May in memory of LGBT people in Western Cape who are killed because of their sexuality (Mamba Online, 2016). It is held in a different township each year—In 2015 it was in Khayelitsha, and since then has taken place in Langa, Strand, Lavender Hill, and Mfuleni (Khumbulani LGBTI Pride, n.d.).[23] In Johannesburg, too, there has been unrest and protests at the majority-white Pride events. At the 2012 Gay Pride Parade a group of about twenty activists lay down on the road, blocking the route, and called for a minute of silence in honour of the murdered black lesbians. Since then, a group called JHB People's Pride has held concurrent parades and events that are far more political and protest-oriented (JHB People's Pride, n.d.).

Ignorance of the intersecting ways in which lesbian migrants in particular can be marginalized also extends to NGOs and other human rights groups that purport to assist queers and/or migrants (Tucker, 2019). There are many NGOs in Cape Town and Johannesburg that offer assistance to LGBT individuals, but in Etta's experience, the resources at hand are overwhelmingly given to men. Etta told me about her interaction with the Dutch founder of an organization she occasionally frequents.

E: I remember last time he came said to us, "I've been into the

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[23] Both Strand and Lavender Hill are majority-coloured townships, which gives further credence to coloured lesbians facing similarly-high risks of violence.

Netherlands and I've got money. I want- I'm gonna give [money to] six
people who are not working. I'm gonna give people money. I'm not gonna
say how much, but you must go and identify a course that you wanna do,
then I will pay the rest." We write the proposal. He said, "You must go to
those schools and get uh, [price] quotations." We went to those
institutions, we got quotations, we sent to them. Not even a single lesbian
was picked. It's only benefitted the gays. So sometimes we think about
like, is it worth going to still continue with this group? Because [it]
doesn't help.

Even in my experience with PASSOP in Cape Town, which has a dedicated program for

LGBT refugees, the lack of knowledge of (and consequently, resources and support for)

issues that are specific to lesbian migrants was something that Henry, the program

director, openly acknowledged. Similar forces are at play at organizations like Triangle

Project in Cape Town or POWA (People Opposing Women Abuse) in Johannesburg.

These places focus on (queer) women's issues in particular, but do not have dedicated

resources for migrants or refugees that may be facing legal hurdles and/or threats of

xenophobia. NGO-based resources for lesbian migrant women, where and when

available, are therefore piecemeal. Though these sites may not deliberately exclude

LMW, they do not *in*clude them, either, in that LMW are not the primary constituency for

their services. And though they may not be deliberate, I argue that these oversights or

lack of inclusions are still harmful in that they contribute to LMW's continued

invisibility.

Finally, in terms of lesbian migrants' physical wellbeing, finding health care

professionals who could meet their needs as lesbians and as migrants could also prove

difficult. Etta charged that medical professionals do not take lesbian health seriously,

which leaves lesbians at greater risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections and

other diseases (McNair, 2009). Fear of being ignored also can lead them to delay seeking

medical attention to begin with (Müller, 2013). As she described it,

> E: I don't know, but these are the challenges, especially on the lesbian side. There's no way you can look at lesbian health. And when you go to the clinic sometimes they make fun out of, out of you. Because you want to know, is she safe? People they think lesbian health is safe, and there's no risks. And when you go to the clinic and say, "Okay, this is what I have. So can you guys give me something that can protect me?" Then it's a joke to them. […]Yeah. So there's this cry of saying, "Okay, we also need like, a centre for lesbians." 'Cause in every clinic now there's a gay- What do you call it? There's a space, but what about gay women? Like here in Joburg I only know about the Yeoville clinic [for gay men]. Yeah, and now they are providing I think only [on a] monthly basis. They are doing um, health teachings on gay men. We are left out. That's another huge issue, another challenge. And as a result, people they, they lose hope. They stay in their homes with whatever sickness that they have, and the transmission won't stop.

As Etta plainly states, lesbian women (and in particular black lesbian women) are "left out" of health care through structural inequalities and a failure on health care practitioners' part to acknowledge the unique needs that these women may have. Similar forces exclude them from NGOs, Pride parades, and other sites of diversion. Sites of leisure and wellbeing are most accessible to those who are easily mobile and have the financial freedom *to* move. When combined with individual actions that clearly frame these women as 'other,' there are very few places where they feel truly welcome as they are. As I sum up in the next section, this is true both with respect to sites of wellbeing, as this section indicates, and other sites of encounter as well.

4.6 Discussion

The results presented in this chapter show how homophobia and xenophobia intersect through what Crowley (1999) describes as "the dirty work of boundary maintenance" (p. 30). The politics of belonging plays out via control of access to spaces

and sites like jobs, housing, and support centres. Through this process, LMW are relegated to the 'them' category of 'us versus them' (Yuval-Davis, 2006). As a result, making a livelihood is made more difficult, and day-to-day interactions are fraught with reminders that LMW do not belong at scales and spaces large and small.

At a larger scale, the combination of broad currents of homophobia, xenophobia, racism, and sexism often make it immensely hard for LMW to find jobs, and the financial instability that happens as a result is compounded even further through difficulties in obtaining a banking account. This financial precarity also means that many LMW must find housing in areas that are objectively less safe and/or with roommates who may be hostile toward them (Koko et al., 2018). Here again, their status as migrant lesbians further confounds their search for desirable housing and renders them as the 'other.' With their limited resources, they often either live with or near other migrants, who are in turn more likely to be homophobic (Dulani et al., 2016), and/or in neighbourhoods that have higher crime rates (Koko et al., 2018). LMW also faced difficulties in maintaining interpersonal relationships. In some cases, they were heavily restricted from dating or even socializing. For those who did date, many self-identified as either butch or femme. The gendered expectations these roles carried, along with lesbian migrants' more masculine or feminine appearances, respectively, often contributed to challenging relationship dynamics, and the ease (or lack thereof) with which they were able to get along with their families. Lastly, attempts to care for themselves, whether through seeking diversions or through medical interventions, were also harder because of intersecting axes of social discrimination. Sites of queer-friendly diversions like gay bars

or clubs were often financially (and spatially) inaccessible, while places like NGOs and health care centres both overlooked the unique needs of lesbians over gay men.

An intersectional perspective helps explain just *how* access to these spaces is denied or reduced. Canham (2017) reminds us that, "the occupation of physical space is deeply informed by the intersecting confluence of race, class, age, sexuality, and place" (p. 84). LMW have difficulties making a livelihood not just because they are black, lesbians, or migrants, but because the relationality of these identity categories results in lesbian migrants' exclusion from innumerable spaces at many different times. The precarities they face in different situations can bring these intersections into sharp focus. When Etta's photojournalism employers ask her to mask her sexuality by cutting off her dreadlocks or wearing high heels, for instance, her migrant status and the precarity it causes comes to light. She feels intensely conflicted because she would rather not do either of those things, but as an asylum-seeker, gigs are very difficult to come by. She is left with the choice of staying true to herself and her sexuality and not getting paid, or compromising this for the sake of making a living. Neither of these scenarios is ideal, and neither leads to ways of creating a full sense of belonging in South African society.

These scenarios also illustrate why it is necessary to 'think queerly' about migration. Framing migrants' narratives as being about emotional *or* economic issues, as (queer) migrant theorists have often done, is short-sighted and misses the opportunity for conversations about how different systems of oppression can intersect to constrain or enable different responses (Chávez, 2013). Structural barriers that are rooted in things like homophobia or xenophobia can deny or restrain lesbian migrants' access to different spaces of both economic and emotional significance. In many cases, these barriers alone

are enough to inhibit the creation of any sort of sense of belonging. But belonging is ultimately an emotional affiliation (Wood & Waite, 2011), and an analysis of belonging is incomplete without taking into account the connection between the felt and the material (Gorman-Murray, 2017). In the next two chapters I do just this by exploring the contribution of emotions in understanding how spaces of belonging are made and remade. In doing so, I examine how spaces themselves are (re)created by the identities and actions of those who occupy them. I begin with Chapter Five, which considers the emotions of fear and comfort in shaping which spaces lesbian migrants access and how they monitor whom else may be in them. Specifically, I ask where LMW feel safe (or not) and what their levels of comfort in different places can tell us about the emotional aspects of belonging.

Chapter Five: Places of (Un)safety

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter Four, I discuss how establishing gainful livelihoods and partaking in day-to-day activities is made difficult because of currents of xenophobia and homophobia that manifest in different sites in any number of different ways. The result is that LMW are excluded from these sites, and the scale of these exclusions ranges from the nationwide to the interpersonal. Equally important to understanding their exclusions, however, is how participants feel about these spaces or how they imagine them to be, and that these feelings are every bit as material or relevant to their geographies as the places themselves (Castree, 2009). In particular, I argue that looking at LMW's emotional geographies shows how the emotion of fear pervades even in spaces that are not inherently or obviously dangerous. As Valentine (1993) argues, it is not just aggressions that lesbians suffer from that lead to their exclusions, it also stems from the fear of what could happen. And much like belonging itself, their emotions, including fear, must be analyzed intersectionally.

This chapter uses the spatial categories of safe, unsafe, and ambivalent as a way of framing and organizing the discussion of how fear can manifest and what forms that can take. Echoing my participants' use, I employ the terms 'safe' and 'comfortable' interchangeably. Their synonymy is also supported by academic researchers, with authors like Boulila (2015) and Rodó-de-Zárate (2015) using them in this manner. Moran & Skeggs (2004) explain that descriptions and understandings of safety sometimes get reduced to a narrow, physical dimension, while comfort is understood to have more of a psychological component, but that there is *always* an affective dimension to safety as

well. This was underscored by how my participants understood it. Though I had originally asked them to illustrate the places they felt 'safe' or 'unsafe' in, they would sometimes respond using terms of (dis)comfort, such as when AJ, in response to a question about how safe his apartment was, stated, "So yeah, I'm only okay when I'm in here, *then I feel comfortable*. But outside it's not so [nice]" (emphasis mine).

Using safety and comfort as frameworks by which to explore how lesbian migrant women judge spaces therefore serves to draw attention to the emotional nature of space itself. As discussed in Chapter One, emotions are inherently spatial, and different geographical locations evoke different emotional responses (Bondi et al., 2005; Canham, 2017; Pile, 2010). As emotional states, safety and comfort shape attachment to place, and are reflective of senses of belonging (Gorman-Murray, 2009). They are felt through the body, underscoring the multiscalar nature of exclusion and spatial control (Wood & Waite, 2011).

This chapter begins with a discussion of the spaces LMW deemed unsafe and what it is about these spaces, including the actions, affects, and identities of their inhabitants, that make them so. Crucially, I argue that it is not the actual presence of certain others per se that makes a place feel unsafe, but their *imagined* presence. The reverse of this is true as well. Safe spaces, as I discuss in the subsequent section, are not necessarily considered as such because of any material conditions, but because LMW imagine them to be home to socially progressive individuals. Their presence in this regard, as I explain, may be seen to ward off any threats posed by homophobic or xenophobic inhabitants. In the last section, I describe how, in many places, participants felt neither wholly safe nor wholly unsafe; they instead felt a sort of conditional safety. These 'places of ambivalence,' as I

call them, foreground how lesbian migrants' identities frequently intersect and hinder their capacity to belong and form attachments to places that may be safe or welcoming for others.

5.2 Unsafe Spaces

In this section, I analyze the characteristics of the spaces in which lesbian migrant women claimed they felt unsafe. Although some of the spaces mentioned were perceived to be unsafe for nearly *anyone* present in them, this unsafety was frequently exacerbated by lesbian migrant women's intersecting sexual orientation and migrant status. Taking an intersectional approach by looking at LMW's identities as black migrants and lesbian women together shows how there are very few places in urban South Africa where gendered and racialized power dynamics do *not* render these women as disadvantaged, excluded subjects.

Unsafe spaces are characterized by the unavoidable presence (or imagined presence) of others who may have hostile motives regarding lesbians, migrants, women, or blacks. The scale of these spaces ranged widely, from different specific bars and restaurants, to different neighbourhoods, to entire cities. Johannesburg, for instance, was widely and near-uniformly viewed as an unsafe city overall. The perception of it as unsafe stemmed partly from LMW's own identities as lesbians, migrants, and women, and partly from the high rates of theft and assault in the downtown and neighbouring areas, where many migrants live. People, I was told, were susceptible to these crimes regardless of demographics (though the problem of black-on-black crime was also brought up). Joyce, who lived in Cape Town, would pass through Johannesburg on her occasional trips to and from her hometown in Malawi. Despite having an uncle in the city

who could offer her free accommodation, Joyce refused to accept his offer, telling him that she would simply rather just continue her journey each time. To me, however, she said, "A lot of people doesn't like Johannesburg. Life is too quick in Johannesburg. Cause in Johannesburg they just come around you and they say, 'Hey, give your money, give…' And, and the way they do their things, right?"

Others echoed Joyce's sentiments. Christine, who had lived in the city for ten years, spoke of the difficulties her girlfriend Yvette faced in navigating the downtown area.

> C: Yes. I know it like from where it starts and where it ends. [*laughs*]
> And it's hard for people who never stayed in Joburg to come in town.
> She's [Yvette] afraid of Joburg like, even when I told her, "Can you go
> to the [CBD]?" She's like, "No, I have bags." It's not safe for people
> who never stayed there.

Even though Yvette was born and raised in a city about 35 kilometres east of Johannesburg's City Centre, she had rarely ventured into that part of town and was fearful of its reputation. Christine, meanwhile, enjoyed the fast pace but acknowledged that it was getting to be a bit too much for her.

> C: Yo, especially Joburg. You know, I am used to Joburg but now it's
> becoming so hard just to come. 'Cause they are saying that this car, this
> car, the stories are too much. You don't even know what- which ones to
> believe.

Cast in this light of unilateral unsafety, Johannesburg is seen as a place where one must constantly be on guard. The fear that LMW felt also affected their attachment to the city, showing how emotions can shape relationships to place (Gorman-Murray, 2009). Joyce, for instance, actively disassociated herself from it, refusing to stay within its confines.

Christine's depictions of Johannesburg also weave together different scales, showing how they are interconnected. She describes in one sentence how the city itself

can be scary for people like her partner, and in the next she states that the CBD is unsafe.

A few moments later, she was back to discussing the hardships she felt with respect to the

city as a whole. The crimes that are happening could ostensibly be happening anywhere

in the city. This was a recurring theme throughout some of the interviews with the

Johannesburg residents. Violent acts happened everywhere, making no place truly 'safe.'

The ubiquity of the threat of violence in the city was made worse or more pertinent

because of their identities as black lesbians. In addition to her explanations of why

Johannesburg could be an unsafe place for anyone, Christine also spelled out the dangers

for lesbians in particular.

> C: And I think it's- the other thing that makes it not safe, it's
> overcrowded. It's overcrowded and it's something else. Especially for
> people who never stayed there. I know each and every corner this side. I
> know, okay, when you go there by MTN- I know they don't love
> lesbians. So if you go there with your partner you're gonna be in trouble.

Christine's statements also allude to some of the high-profile murders that had

happened in the city. Her mother Etta closely followed the news for her job as a

photojournalist, and was quite disturbed by some of these events.

> E: It was on the news; I don't know how much you follow news. Yeah,
> there have been a lot of um, lesbian killings recently, I think last month.
> *K: Oh, okay. I was thinking like [you meant] last week. I have heard of*
> *some last month.*
> E: Yeah, it was last month, so I think the thing started as women- abuse
> against women. So there was a lady who was killed and burned. I don't
> know whether you heard about it.
> *K: I think I got a text from someone telling me about it.*
> E: Yeah, so a week later- I think a few days later, then a lesbian girl was
> raped and killed. She was stoned to death, actually. So yeah, it was a
> very sad, wary situation for all of us. You know, you think you're safe,
> but you are not safe. You think you are in a community whereby you feel
> you're safe, but at the same time you are not safe. So [my partner and I],
> we attended the march before her funeral, then also attended the funeral,

also attended the court.

Etta plainly states the effects these murders have had on her perceptions of safety in the city. They jeopardize the sanctity of everyday space, and put her on edge no matter where she is. She is also clear that it is lesbians in particular who are at risk. As she mentioned, she and her partner had attended protests and/or funerals for a few of the lesbian women who were killed in May of that year, and she, Danni, and Nyasha all on separate occasion alerted me (in the form of a mass text) to other killings that had happened. To the women I spoke with, these killings were perceptually different from some of the other 'gay killings' that had happened in the country in that the women were targeted not just because they were gay, but because they were gay women. Not only were they punished for deviating from the status quo, but also for their refusal to perform their gender in socially acceptable ways (Browne & Ferreira, 2015; Butler, 1990; Gontek, 2009).

Etta also lamented the lack of institutional response. In discussing another high-profile incident, she said,

> E: Yeah, and those people, they are killed in cold blood. Yeah, like in East Rand, there's a gay guy and a lesbian woman who were killed like, inside of their houses. And they and those people who killed them, they are still like, walking free. So it's the very same uh, same problem that LGBT people are facing. So [an LGBT advocacy group] invited church people, they invited police, they invited the Department of Health, they didn't pitch up [attend]; religious people, they didn't pitch up. So…people, they are still mad.

The lack of institutional response from local and national organizations like the churches, the police, and the Department of Health, both leads to and is a reflection of the invisibility of black lesbians and the problems they face (Gunkel, 2010; Logie & Rwigema, 2014). It is also illustrative of how (in)visibility itself is not confined to one

scale; it can happen in ways both large and small (Tucker, 2009a). Many of the

participants, like Etta, alluded to the fact that the South African government as a whole

only seems to pay lip service to LGBT rights, often ignoring or even encouraging the

violence that gays and lesbians in South African can face, a fact backed up by many

researchers (Bennet & Reddy, 2015; Mkhize et al., 2010; Msibi, 2009; van Zyl, 2011).

This condemnation of the government further broadens the scale of unsafety for black

lesbians to that of a nationwide crisis. It is not just in Johannesburg that this is happening;

it is everywhere.

Additionally, that the two individuals were killed in their house, a place of

supposed sanctuary, was not lost on Etta, who hesitatingly indicated that she felt safe

inside her home in Vosloorus (Chapter Four), but that the news had made her reconsider

her neighbourhood. Her daughter, Christine (who did not live with her), also stated how

these killings made her feel uneasy, saying,

> C: Even my mom, she went to um, to a funeral last- Was it last month?
> *K: M-hm*
> C: So it's, eish! It's serious! Even yesterday they had a march- the
> Soweto Uprising, because of the killings of lesbians, oh, it was very
> upsetting.

Etta's statements in particular showcase the spatial dimensions of the issue. When black

lesbians' private lives become the source of public scrutiny, the boundary between public

and private dissolves (Hubbard, 2001). And because some of the killers are still at large,

any place could be the future site of homophobic violence. Etta and others therefore

experience a general, de-spatialized fear of homophobic violence that is the result of the

convergence of gender, race, and sexuality (Logie & Rwigema, 2014).

Figure 5.1 Etta's Map
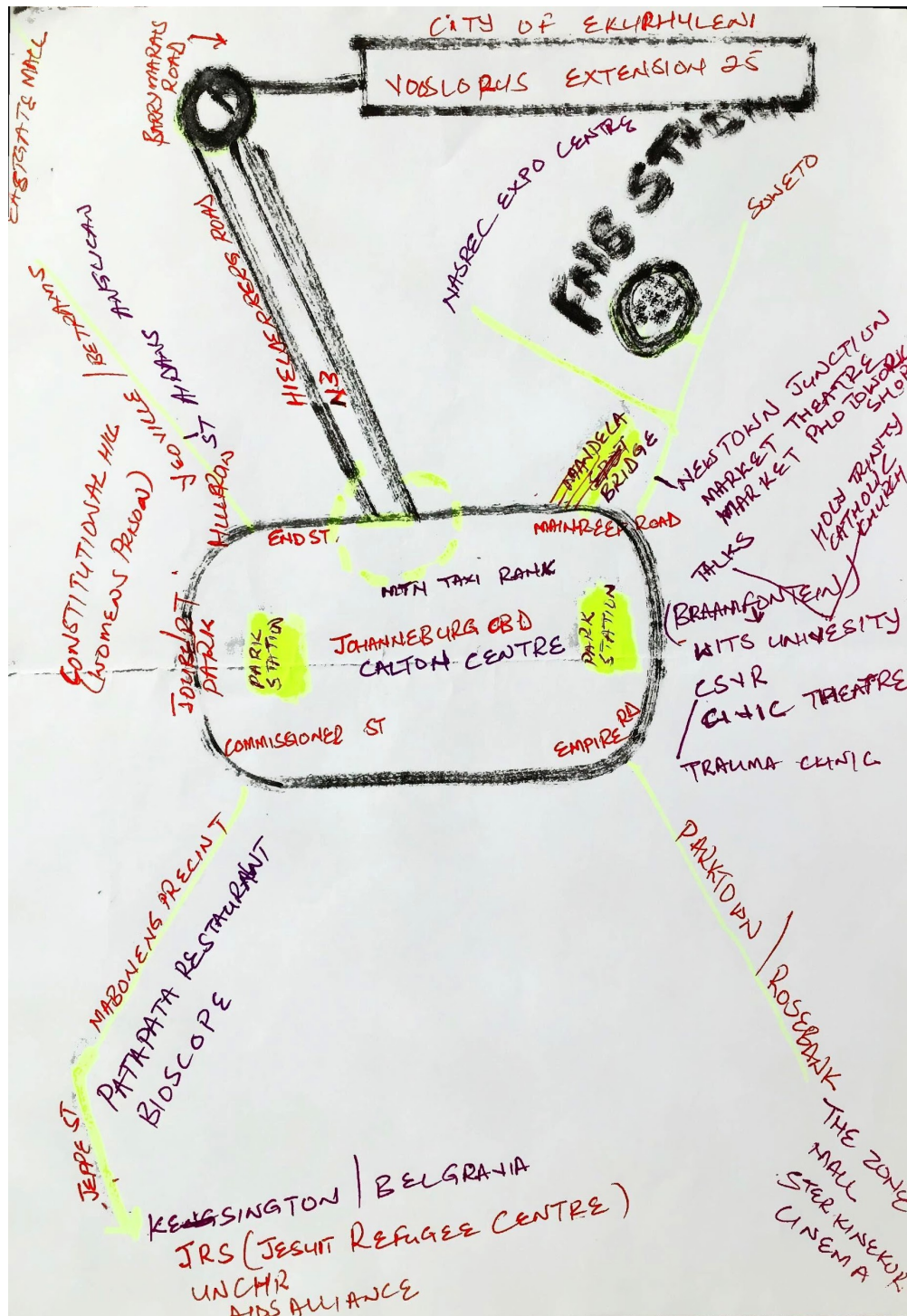
De-spatialized as this fear may be, however, the women I spoke with identified a number

of neighbourhoods in the city that were *especially* unsafe because of an increased

likelihood of being mugged or assaulted. Danni and Veronica had been mugged close to

their apartment in Rosettenville not too long prior to our first meeting. Danni was clearly

still shaken up about it, and told me that she now felt quite unsafe walking to her

apartment at night. AJ, too, told me about the neighbourhood's downsides.

> K: How do you like it here in Rosettenville?
> *AJ: I don't. [laughs]*
> K: No?
> *AJ: I don't like it at all. But because it's close to work and it's cheap, and [Tawanda] was staying here, actually. When we met I was staying in Joburg, in the CBD. So then we just decided to move here, 'cause in town there I was staying in a, I was renting a room. I was subletting a room from some, from this couple. So it was like, she had the bigger place. And I was like, "Okay, let me just move to your place." And it's closer to my work still, anyway, so yeah. […] So I don't like it here.*
> K: Why not?
> *AJ: I'm only okay when I'm in here.*
> K: Hmm
> *AJ: When I'm outside, and you see it's even better now 'cause it's a little bit dark. […] If you see this area during the day you would die. [laughs]*
> K: [*laughs*]
> *AJ: So yeah, I'm only okay when I'm in here, then I feel comfortable. But outside it's not so…But what can we do? The area is a little bit cheap. It's affordable, so…*

AJ then added,

> AJ: Later on the people, when they start getting drunk, they get so loud. They even start fighting. But if we just close the door in the kitchen, we play our own music we can't hear them. But when it's time for us to sleep…
> *K: Oof*
> AJ: Yeah. But what can we do?

As alluded to earlier in this section, Johannesburg residents knew its CBD to be a

hotspot for criminal activity as well. When we met at the Carlton Centre, in the heart of

downtown, Christine brought her girlfriend Yvette along because, in her words, "I was

afraid to come [here] alone. This thing of human trafficking and all the drama that is

happening in Joburg. It's, it's so scary." Etta, too, identified the Carlton Centre and the

CBD as dangerous places.

> E: So like, Joburg Central, I don't wanna lie to you, that's my- I don't
> like to be in town for- If I had no business I don't want to be in Joburg
> CBD. And even Carlton Centre itself, it's a hotspot.
> *K: For?*
> E: I don't know if you understand here. Hotspot, it's a spot for criminals.
> *K: Okay*
> E: And most criminal activities.
> *K: So like, theft? Or like murder?*
> E: Yeah, thefts. There are a lot of uh, pickpockets. They do happen in
> Joburg CBD. Carlton Centre, you cannot withdraw money at Carlton
> Centre, from the ATMs
> *K: Oh?*
> E: Yeah, they follow you up until they see that you are at a spot where
> they can mug you. They can mug you during broad daylight.

All of these examples illustrate the ways in which space is made safe or unsafe

through the performances and behaviour of the individuals in it. Here, the imagined threat

of a generalized, criminal other is enough to make the women I spoke with fearful of

these spaces (Lemanski, 2004). Sometimes, however, the women were more specific

about the characteristics of the individuals they found threatening. In particular, (African)

migrant men in Johannesburg were viewed as an especially noteworthy threat. Danni, still

fearful after being mugged, also told me in an aside that there was "this foreigner [in

Rosettenville] we're all scared of." She did not elaborate on what his particular

behaviours were that made him seem threatening, but that in and of itself can be telling.

Danni appears to expect that the individual's 'foreignness' is enough of an explanation as

to what makes him scary, echoing nationalist rhetoric that argues that migrants are

responsible for heightened levels of crime and inequality (Tucker, 2009b). What is

especially intriguing about this exchange is that it runs counter to other theories of

encounter that claim that we are most likely to fear those who are different from

ourselves (Ahmed, 2004). Danni is herself a black migrant who may at other times find she is at odds with this same anti-migrant rhetoric. Through her choice of words, Danni is dissociating herself from a population that she simultaneously embodies.

Though striking, Danni was not the only one who proffered that it was the mere presence of foreigners who made certain neighbourhoods unsafe. Etta and Christine both told me that the Hillbrow neighbourhood (see Etta's map, Figure 5.1, and the map of Johannesburg, Figure 3.2) was especially dangerous because of its population of foreigners.

> E: Do you know Bertrams Hillbrow? Okay, Hillbrow, it's in between these places. From End Street, immediately it's Hillbrow. And here there's a place called Joubert Park.
> *K: Ah, okay*
> E: Yeah, Joubert Park, it's like a foreign hub, right? Most foreigners live there. It's a hotspot as well. They mug you like no one's business.

> C: The part of Joburg, I can say it's in Hillbrow. I can say Hillbrow, neh. I can say the whole Joburg it's, it's surrounded by foreigners. Especially foreigners who, who, they come from the countries that lesbians- I can say lesbians, well- Even, you know this thing that we experience as lesbians. Even um, straight people, they, they do experience. 'Cause, I can make an example. Okay um, this straight girl who goes to Hillbrow, where it's surrounded by male people. They will harass you. They will harass you and insult you. Though South Africa, it's a free country.

Christine is quite clear that migrants can exacerbate the dangers of a place because of the threat of gender and sexuality-based harassment. But this in and of itself is an incomplete explanation as to why migrants' presence can signal danger. White women, too, are subject to harassment by both migrant and South African men, thus illustrating the way that fear in public space is a gendered phenomenon (Starkweather, 2007). But this fear is then also compounded by participants' race. Christine continued her intersectional analysis of safety dynamics in Hillbrow by then bringing up this very subject.

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C: That's what I was telling [Yvette], that you know us black people, it's sad how we treat each other. 'Cause especially in South Africa, like, they fight for freedom, but there is too much hate crime against us black people. Which, we still complain that whites are, are discriminating while we're discriminating us as well. So it's kind of difficult, and it's…We're not united. So it's not safe. I can say Hillbrow is not the safest place that, that I often go.

Christine's assessment of Hillbrow thus serves as a snapshot into layers of differential power imbalances in public spaces that lesbian migrant women are forced to contend with. As lesbians, their sexuality puts them at risk of harassment or assault, but even without any active performances that would give away their sexuality (Chapter Six), their mere presence as women alone can also make them vulnerable to assault and harassment, resulting in a permanent state of alert (Rodó-de-Zárate, 2017). The migrant men who may populate these spaces can exacerbate this danger, a reminder of lesbian migrant women's lack of acceptance by their own countrymen. As blacks, they are, lastly, subject to race-based violence from both blacks *and* whites (and coloureds, as other participants claimed), further reducing the spaces in which they can safely be present.

Perhaps because of my own race, participants rarely spoke openly of discrimination from whites, although this was certain to be happening (see Chapter Four). This omission, and the resulting narratives that *did* emerge around discrimination from coloureds and other blacks, speaks to how knowledge is co-constructed (Falconer Al-Hindi & Kawabata, 2002). My identity as a white woman, coupled with lesbian migrants' identities as black women meant that some topics, such as certain aspects of racial dynamics, were not discussed.

In Cape Town, too, certain places were more unsafe for LMW because of racial and

gender dynamics. Marcia and Precious openly expressed their frustrations and fears with

respect to how racial dynamics limit where in the city they can feel comfortable.

Specifically, they lamented the ways that blacks treated other blacks in public spaces,

with Precious claiming there was "brainwashing" happening (see below), meaning that

some blacks had subconsciously bought into claims of black inferiority (Adjai &

Lazaridis, 2013). In one particular scenario, the two spoke of a burger joint in an upscale

area of Cape Town they no longer frequent for this very reason. At my first meeting with

Marcia, she had offhandedly told me a story of going to a restaurant a few times and

being ignored upon arrival. She was only seated after a prolonged wait, and even then she

was given a spot in an undesirable location. She expanded on this a bit when we were

with Precious.

> M: Yes, Hudson's [Burger Joint]
> K: What happened? Like, you went there or something? Or was it a
> friend of yours?
> M: I did. We used to go there with my workmates.
> P: You used to order burgers from Hudson's if you worked late at your
> office, remember?
> M: Oh yeah, yeah. But they are racists, so we don't go there anymore.
> It's so weird, because [laughs] it's the black people being racist.
> P: I don't understand that type of brainwashing.
> M: [laughs] I know, right?
> P: It's very sad.
> M: It is, totally.

Other discussions of racial discrimination and unsafe places centred on coloureds'

discrimination against blacks. In response to an otherwise incidental question I had

seeking clarification about the city's bus systems, Marcia and Precious launched into a

discussion of where the buses head to and the stereotypes associated with different

townships in Cape Town.

M: Mitchells Plain—Lost City, Mitchells Plain—Rocklands, Mitchells Plain—Tafelberg or something. So I'm really curious about Lost City because the people that get onto the Lost City bus are very dodgy coloured people. [*laughs*] Have you noticed that?
P: I have noticed, yeah.
M: And the people that get onto the Makhaza bus are-
P: They look somewhat poor.
M: They are poor black people.
K: Ah
M: Yeah. I think it's the maids coming from work, or the people who work in Shoprite and stuff. So it's really very interesting. This one day I was sitting there just looking and there is like a group of people you can see that, okay, so these [are] getting to Lost City, these ones go to Rockland.
P: You can actually profile them where they are sitting; you can profile them.
K: Oh?
M: Exactly, yeah. The Rockland people are very racist though.
P: They don't like talking to black people.
M: Exactly
P: They are the coloured people who think they've made it in life and they are above black people.
M: It is!
P: Because Rocklands is just not- it's not all that.
M: I've never been.
P: It's, it's- I don't know how- It's like those coloured people who came out of their gang neighbourhoods, gang-infested neighbourhoods, and now they feel like they are out of it.
M: They've made it in life.
P: They've made it life, exactly.
M: Yeah, they don't talk to- Even if you ask them, "Excuse me, does this bus go via Lansdowne or…" They look at you like…
P: "Then ask the driver." That's their response in this case. It's like, why should I wait and ask the driver?
M: When you know the route!
P: Exactly. It's not like we're sleeping on the bus.
M: Sometimes they just look at you like you're not talking, or…
P: You want to steal something.
M: I'm like, oh my frickin' gosh! Seriously? Get over your ass. Anyway.

Marcia and Precious are resentful of the ways that coloureds who live in these districts distance themselves from the black population by engaging in behaviours that demean them. Marcia in particular was quite clear that she felt that coloureds themselves were

overtly racist, and was thus afraid to venture into spaces that were majority-coloured. Earlier in the conversation, she had remarked that she would feel "scared" to go to the majority-black township of Khayelitsha to visit a mutual friend of hers and Precious. Shortly after her and Precious's description of stereotypes, I enquired how it would be for her if she were to go to a place like Mitchells Plain. She responded,

> M: I would have to be very, very careful. One, I am scared of coloured people. They are very unpredictable when it comes to black people.
> *P: Yeah*
> M: They feel that they are…I don't know if better is the right word to use, but yeah, I'm really scared of coloured people. Especially those ones. I would actually gladly go to Khayelitsha than go to Mitchells Plain. I'm sure if I just go to Khayelitsha I don't have to speak to anyone.
> *K: You'd just blend in?*
> M: I just blend in and walk and, yeah.

As a black person, Marcia feels that if she did not speak to anyone (thus not giving away her Zimbabwean accent) she could 'act' like a local enough to blend in in a majority-black place like Khayelitsha. Her presence in a place like Mitchells Plain, however, immediately marks her as an outsider, thus putting her safety at risk.

Marcia and Precious centre their discussions of unsafe places largely around racial issues and the fear they felt toward coloureds in particular. As black lesbians, they are still at risk of sexuality-based assault or discrimination, but their disposable income affords them access to places in the city where this fear and risk is minimized, and the ability to avoid spaces where it would be heightened (Chapter Six). Though there were sites of homophobic encounters, such as one night outside of a bar in the CBD where Marcia and her friend were told they "look lesbian," very few places were strictly off-limits on this basis alone. Not everyone was this fortunate, calling attention to dimensions of safety as it intersects with social class (Canham, 2017).

For Zoe and Joyce, certain individuals in Cape Town's CBD knew about their orientation and would sometimes antagonise them as they passed by. In Joyce's case, her cousin had outed her to some of his friends who worked in Greenmarket Square, and she now felt unsafe in this location and avoided it—and their taunts, whenever possible. Zoe, meanwhile, had had several encounters with men who were hostile toward her because of her sexuality. In addition to the homophobic banker described in Chapter Four, there were other men in town who acted aggressively toward her.

> Z: There's a shop in town where I buy scarves there. The guy is always hitting on me every time.
> *K: Oh?*
> Z: And every time- His name is Alan, and Alan is always hitting on me. It's so irritating, and I try and try everything- that I'm gay. He doesn't understand. The other one is always preaching at me because I've got piercings and I dress like I'm crazy.
> *K: Where- So is this in town? The scarf place?*
> Z: M-hm, it's just down the road. It is so irritating all the time, you know. One is preaching, one is doing something else, and it's like the one is hitting on me, the other is just looking at me.

> Z: So there was another guy I used to buy stuff from [who was from] Zimbabwe. So I told him a long time ago, "You know I don't do guys; guys are irritating, guys are boring. I've just, you know, stopped." He used to know me when I used to sell sex, too, and make jokes about it. So he sees me walking out with um, with my partner and, and some colleagues, and then he says, "Hey, you!" So he said, "So you said you are doing women, eh? You are still fucking women?" in my language.

Unlike Joyce's harassers, who mostly remained in Greenmarket Square, Zoe's Zimbabwean wholesalers were much more transient, hawking their wares throughout the city. This then made the *entire* CBD a potentially unsafe place to be, and indeed, Zoe spoke of feeling an ominous sort of threat whenever and wherever she was downtown, particularly when she was with her partner.

Z: Yesterday we were driving home and then uh, a guy was going the other direction from us. And then my partner just looks up and looks at him. And then he looks back like one of those- So I was like, is he looking at [my partner] like, "Are you with her?" [*laughs*] She's also doing like, "Bitch, I'm with her. Fuck you, too!" [*laughs*] And the traffic is very awkward and normal. I remember one time, the day you brought the diary, I was sitting in traffic and a guy was looking- Some guys were sitting at the back of a truck, a pickup, and we're driving. So she was eating a burger and stuff because we didn't have breakfast, so we got some takeaway. And then these guys are looking at her eating, and she's chewing and everything. But you also feel that uncomfortable and stuff, like people will think two women, one very butch woman, one femme looking—Are they together? Are they friends? Are they…? And really gets that thing of, I feel awkward when people keep on staring at us and looking.

For Zoe, then, the threat of homophobic men meant that there were very few spaces where she felt totally safe. She further explained,

Z: The thing is, I think that people see me every day. So I feel that people can see through me as I walk and go about my day. I've already- I feel very penetrated. [*laughs*] I feel very transparent, yeah, not penetrated…both. [*laughs*] I feel very transparent.

The examples of Joyce and Zoe are reminiscent of the experiences of the women in Johannesburg who fear the threat of sexuality-based assault anywhere and everywhere in the city. They, too, highlight the ways in which the idea of a public/private divide, or even notions of scale, can be rendered irrelevant or inconsequential. Joyce is fortunate in that her cousin's friends tended to stay in Greenmarket Square, but if, for instance, they were to show up at a family gathering, this would throw her safety into jeopardy yet again. For Zoe, whether she is at home, out in the city, or somewhere in between as she is when she is driving, there are very few places where she is truly 'safe.' This is true whether speaking of individual places, like a home or a scarf shop, areas of town like Greenmarket Square, or even entire districts, like the CBD. The mere threat of the

presence of others who can cause her harm is enough to cast the threat of unsafety across the entire space.

The threat that Zoe's acquaintances pose and the reasons for it encapsulate how we can understand LMW's spaces of unsafety. The danger that she and others face manifest intersectionally—they are at risk because they are black lesbian migrant women. The unsafety itself manifests in the form of acts of both physical and emotional aggression from individuals who are hostile toward these women because of said identities. Though sometimes, unsafe spaces may be unsafe for anyone, it is impossible to disentangle the contribution of LMW's intersecting identities (Canham, 2017). Furthermore, that those whose presence contributes to a space's unsafety could ostensibly be anywhere in the city makes LMW fearful wherever they go, and shows how imagined geographies are related to material effects (Brown et al., 2007). It also calls into question more rigid notions of scale by showing just how overlapping these scales are (Castree, 2009, Massey, 1998). But just as LMW imagine there to be 'unsafe' individuals present, particularly in certain neighbourhoods, they also imagine other areas and neighbourhoods to have inhabitants who make these places safer. In the next section, I discuss the characteristics of safe spaces, and how these, too, are reflective of both real and imagined geographies.

5.3 Safe Spaces

Literature looking at how emotions and identities can structure our interactions with others would lead us to believe that lesbian migrant women in South Africa should feel safe where the presumed identities of other inhabitants are most like their own (Ahmed, 2004). That is, they should feel safe in spaces where they believed there to be other lesbians and other African migrants. Crucially, though, this was not the case. To

better understand how lesbian migrant women come to decide which places are safe (or unsafe) for them to occupy, and how these both shape and are shaped by their emotional attachments, one must look at the interplay between their imagined and material geographies (Gieseking, 2016b). The ways that they imagine space, and those in it, changes how they feel about and behave in said space. This, in turn, shapes their experiences of the space itself (Robinson, 2000). Lesbian migrant women felt safe in places that were presumed to be occupied and/or frequented by people who were like themselves *only in certain regards*. These presumed inhabitants were socially progressive with respect to sexuality (although not necessarily gay or lesbian themselves, a point which I discuss later on in this section), but they were *not* other African migrants. This was evidenced in Section 5.2 where Danni stated that she was fearful of "a foreigner" who lived in her neighbourhood of Rosettenville.

Safe places were also characterized by the presumed *absence* of an unknown 'other' that sought to steal from them with little regard to who they were or what identities they had. Emphasis here is on the term presumed. As Gieseking (2016b) said in his study of lesbian bars in New York, "the geographical imagination of these women's spaces is as important as their material production" (p. 56). Because participants imagine certain places to be safe, they (try to) frequent them. Their own presence, then, could signal or reinforce the idea to others like them that it is a safe space for blacks, lesbians, and/or migrants, illustrating how spaces are socially constructed by the actions and identities of those in it (Brown et al., 2007).

Figure 5.2 Zoe's Map
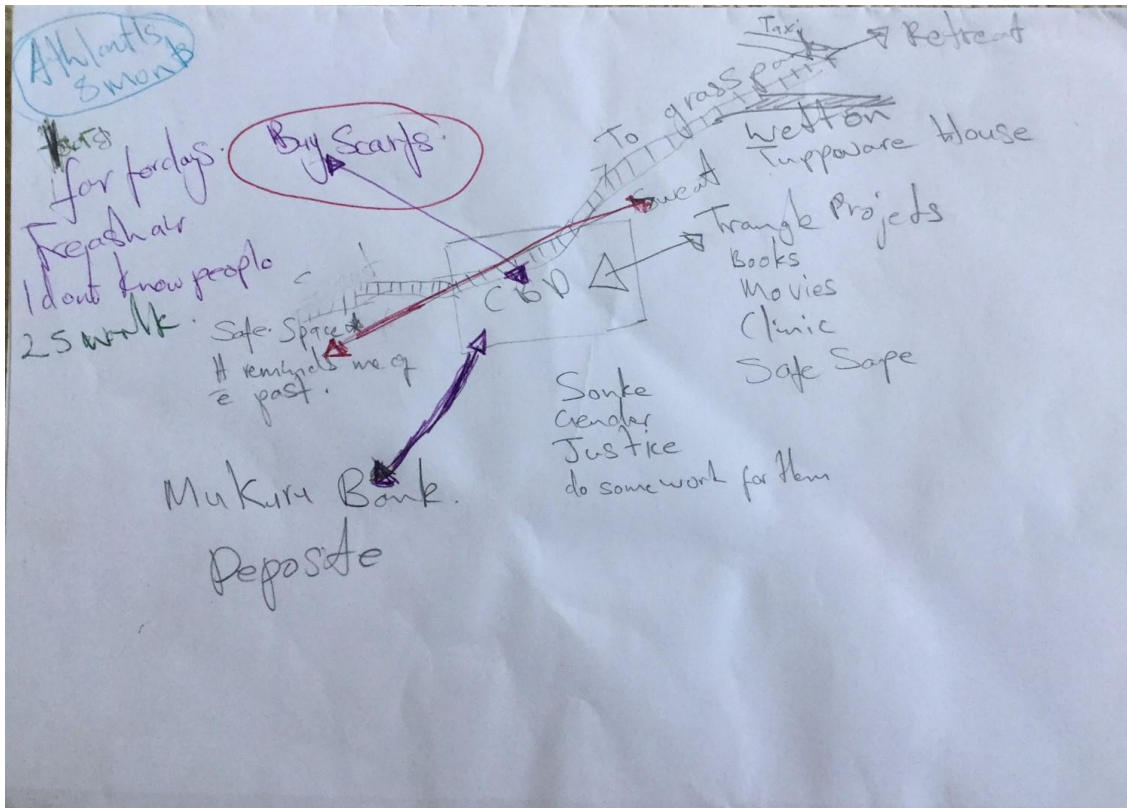
Broadly speaking, 'safe' people were imagined to populate certain neighbourhoods, depicted on their maps as recreational sites that included bars, or in conversations about transient sites such as ride shares, and also in digital sites, showing again how safety can operate simultaneously at different scales (Gieseking, 2016a). In Cape Town, three of the six participants (plus Henry) lived, at least at one point, in an area of town called Observatory, or Obz for short. Another, Zoe, spent a good bit of time there as it was home to a sex worker-friendly NGO called SWEAT and "remind[ed] her of the past" (see Figure 5.2). Under apartheid, Observatory was officially a whites-only suburb, but it was also home to many students and leftist party members, including people of various racialized categories, making it a *de facto* 'grey area.' Since the mid-1990s it has become

known for its diverse population and relatively laid-back atmosphere (Peck & Banda, 2014). All four of the women who lived or visited there (and again, Henry as well) concluded it was generally a comfortable neighbourhood to be in. Participants said that rates of muggings and assaults were nowhere near what they were in the townships, and while it was still close to the centre of town, rent there was much more affordable than it was in the City Centre. Rumaitha in particular appreciated the relative safety and stability that Obz afforded her. When I asked her in June where in Cape Town she might like to stay if money were not an issue she replied, "Hmm…I'd like to say…Observatory too is good, eh? It's nice!" The only thing Rumaitha wished she could change about her living arrangements was that she would like to have a place to herself. Saara, another Obz resident, told me she liked the "chill vibe" of the district. There was a burgeoning music scene, lots of bars and cafes, and plenty of people like her who found pleasure in unwinding over casual conversation and a shared marijuana joint.

Roughly seven kilometres south of Obz is the neighbourhood of Claremont, where I met with Marcia and Precious. Though their actual apartment was in Kenilworth, another kilometre south, they stayed in Claremont on occasion when house-sitting for Precious's PhD advisor. Marcia and Precious spoke highly of both suburbs (as seen on both women's maps, Figures 5.3 and 5.4), citing the diversity and their sense that everyone tended to keep to themselves. Marcia said of Claremont,

> M: It's a very safe 'hood.
> *K: Yeah?*
> M: Yeah, it is. And the people are friendly and…not overly friendly
> obviously, they're like- I guess it's just a neighbourhood where everyone
> minds their own business. And the crime rate is just- It's actually very
> low in Claremont. Yeah, it is and…yeah, it's just chilled.

The "chillness" of Claremont and Kenilworth also meant that they felt little

discrimination on the basis of them being migrants.

> K: Do you encounter much xenophobia?
> P: *Mm, I haven't.*
> M: Me too, yeah, I haven't. I guess it's because of the location, where we
> stay, where we work. It's not-
> P: *It's a very progressive…*
> M: Yeah. And we interact with progressive people. Yeah.

Figure 5.3 Marcia's Map
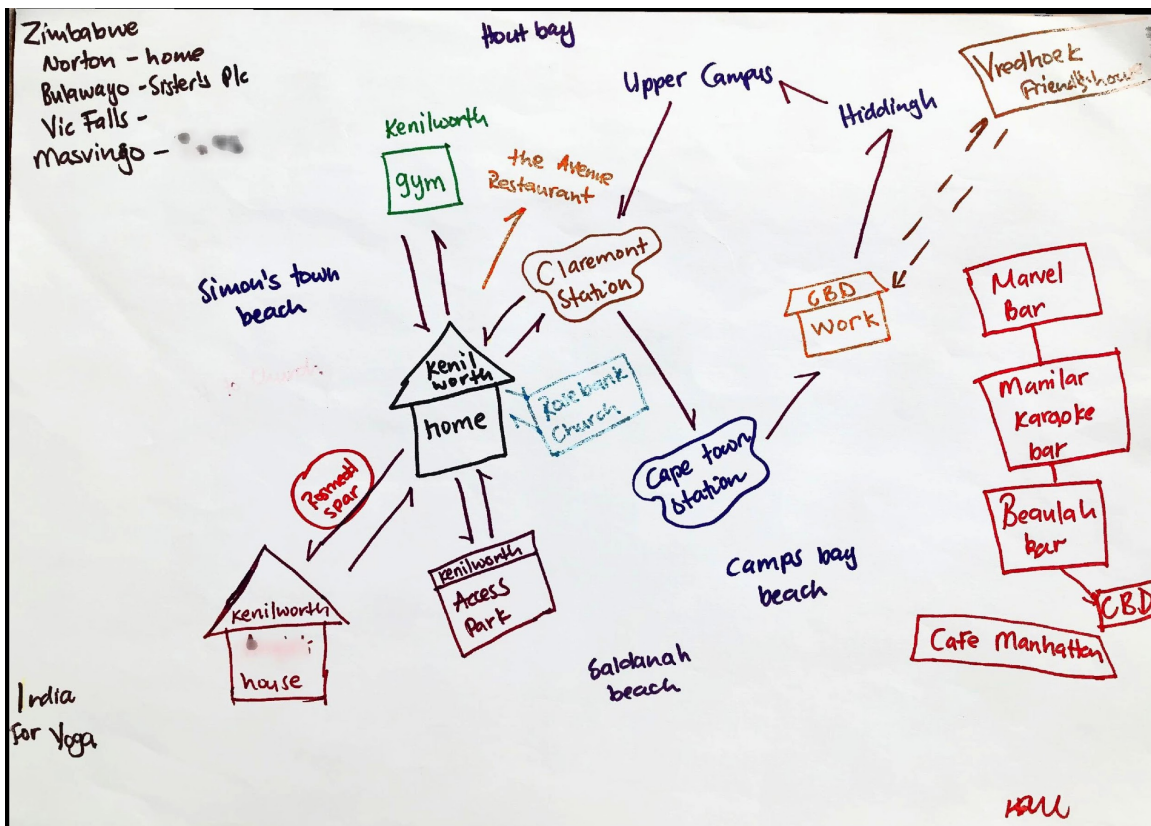
Figure 5.4 Precious's Map
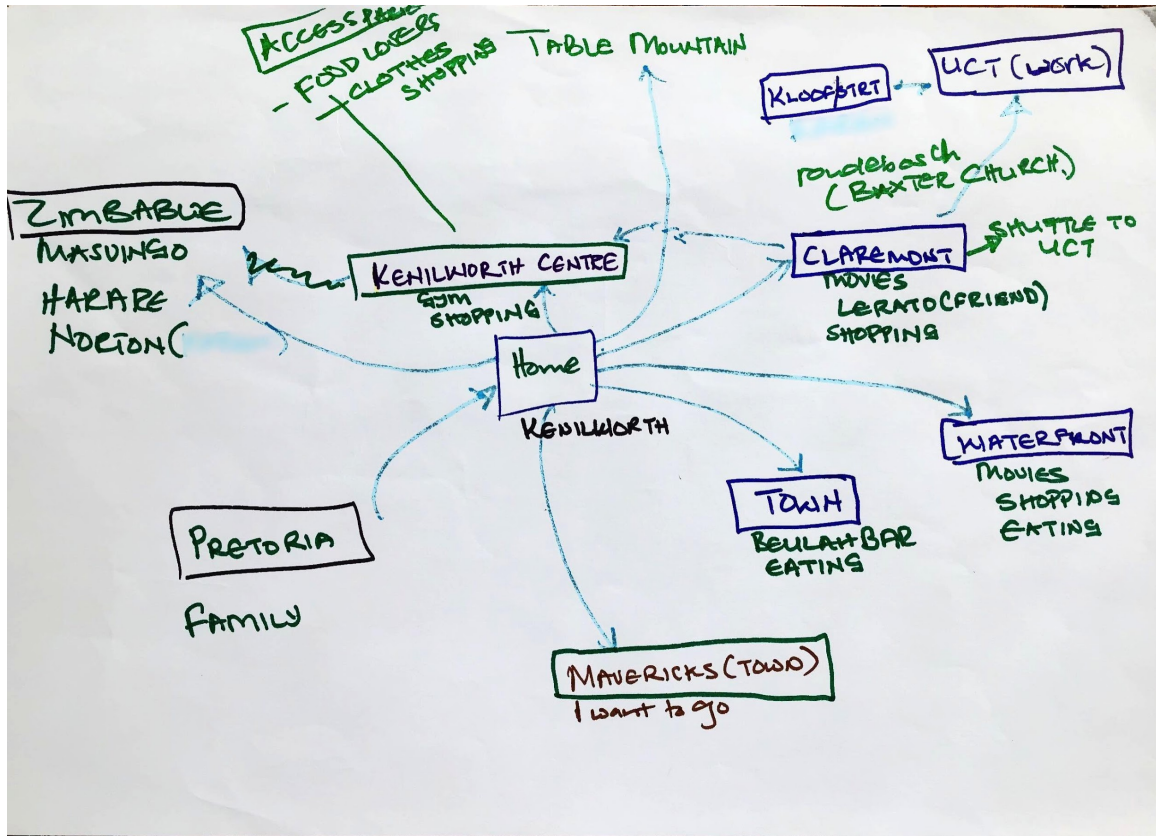
The women's sense of safety that they felt stemmed from their respective

neighbourhoods' diversity echoes sentiments expressed by other migrants in a study done

by Williams (2017). Williams tracked the various dwellings of a group of undocumented

migrants in Cape Town over a five-year period. He found that these migrants preferred

"ambiguous" places in the city over places with clearly-defined borders (p. 422). These

ambiguous places are areas that are difficult to classify in terms of the apartheid-era racial

zones that many in South Africa still employ (e.g., names like Khayelitsha, Table View,

or Mitchells Plain, which are black, white, and coloured, respectively). Specifically,

Williams identifies these as places that are (or were) on the margins of white suburbs.

Observatory has a long history of being a racially mixed, marginal neighbourhood

(Houssay-Holzschuch & Teppo, 2009) and Claremont and Kenilworth are also quite mixed, with Kenilworth in particular being 54% white, 21.4% black, 16.3% coloured, and 8.3% Indian/Asian or Other (Statistics South Africa, 2011). In a society where some whites employ various spatial strategies to avoid having to interact with blacks, the willingness of white people in these districts to live in racially diverse neighbourhoods makes them different from many of their Capetonian counterparts (Schuermans, 2016). The spatial intermingling of races in these neighbourhoods presents a challenge to raced and classed power norms, stemming from apartheid's socio-spatial legacy, which continue to reproduce geographical separation of races (Schuermans, 2016). Living in a racially-diverse neighbourhood constitutes an ongoing subversion of these power dynamics and contributes to lesbian migrant women's perceptions that these neighbourhoods are populated by people who are, in Precious's words, "very progressive."

In Johannesburg, the neighbourhoods perceived as safe were either those that were historically white, such as Sandton and Rosebank, or those that were again imagined to have socially progressive residents, such as Maboneng or Weltevredenpark. Beatrice, like some of the Cape Town residents, felt that her home in Weltevredenpark was in a relatively safe part of town because her neighbours did not pay her (or her sexuality) any mind, saying,

> B: In this area [Weltevredenpark] some people know [that I'm a lesbian]
> and some people don't, because here everybody minds their own
> business. So here's much more safe than in [some of] the [other]
> locations. […] We moved in here because it was a place convenient for
> us, and, yeah. And it's safe here.

For Etta, the photojournalist, social progressiveness meant the imagined presence

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of other creatives or intellectuals. In conversation and on her map she singled out the centrally-located neighbourhoods of Braamfontein and Maboneng as examples. Braamfontein is home to the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and is also close to the University of Johannesburg. Etta had been to a number of photography and photojournalism lectures at Wits and felt at home amongst others who shared her passion for learning. In Maboneng, where we once met, she marvelled at the inventiveness of many of the businesses, saying,

> E: So now business owners, they've taken advantage of this place [Maboneng], this development. But what I like about this place is that most people who I know live here, they're artists. You see how the place looks like this? That car, that truck. You see, it's a restaurant, but it's an old truck.
> *K: Ah, a food truck!*
> E: Yeah, so you see, I mean like, most people in this area, they are creative people.

The real and imagined presence of socially progressive individuals in certain spaces implies that LMW consider safety based on who is (or may be) present in different places. But they also gauge safety based on who they imagine is *not* there. For certain 'transient' sites like rideshares, train lines, and different gay pride events, the safety comes in the perceived lack of individuals who may steal from them or worse. In the case of private ridesharing services such as Uber and Lyft, both services offer passengers their driver's name and photo and the make and model of the car. After the exchange ends, both parties have the ability to 'rate' each other, theoretically ensuring that neither party causes harm to the other, lest the passenger get blacklisted and lest the driver lose their job. Though still not without their dangers, Uber and Lyft were seen as far better alternatives to taxis and minibuses. Said Etta,

E: Uber it's, it's almost the safest way. And I just hope and pray that this thing that is happening within the Uber organization gets sorted as quick as possible.[24] 'Cause that's the safest means of transport that I've ever seen.

Though none of the women depicted any sort of transient 'sites' like Uber or minibuses on their maps, some of them did comment in conversation about the safety of other forms of public transport, such as city buses or trains. Christine and Etta gave their votes of respective support to Johannesburg's Rea Vaya bus system and Gautrain rail system. Said Christine of Rea Vaya, "It's a government uh, government transport. I feel like it's more safe 'cause it's not- It's owned by the government, not by the people." Again, Christine is emphasising that its perceived safety comes from state-sponsored oversight and the ways that the state is able to use its power to ensure that people with bad intentions are either absent from these spaces or are too fearful of any consequences to act upon their intentions.

Other safe transient 'sites' that were sometimes cited (though not necessarily mapped out) were LGBT-centred events like Pride or themed movie nights. Despite the difficulties of access and acknowledgement discussed in Chapter Four, a number of the women did mention enjoying going to the local Pride parades or some of the other Pride-themed events. The imagined presence of other LGBT individuals coupled with the imagined lack of homophobic others meant that participants felt that there was much less risk of being persecuted or assaulted. Christine even noted that the presence of police at such events made her feel more at ease.

K: Do you go [to Soweto] often now?

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[24] I later clarified with Etta that "this thing" she was referring to was ongoing labour disputes and clashes with metered taxi drivers, both of which were in the news at the time.

C: Not really, but I- I do go there. I'm still gonna go there. [laughs] Uh, there is Soweto Pride coming and all that.
K: Ah, and that's safe?
C: It's uh, as I'm saying this, I will go there maybe when the- August or September. That is Soweto Pride. So I think it's safe 'cause the police will be there, and all the security and all that. So I think it's safe.

Christine's interpretation of safe could be referring to police presence leading to a decreased likelihood of being mugged, rather than safety from homophobic persecution, but regardless, it is noteworthy that she equates the police with any sort of safety at all, given the South African police's notoriously dismal track record with LGBT individuals *and* with African migrants (Alfaro-Velcamp & Shaw, 2016; Crush, Chikanda, & Skinner, 2015; Morrissey, 2013).

Other sites that participants noted as safe, both in person and through their illustrations on their maps, were those that were specifically designated as 'safe spaces' and had fewer socioeconomic barriers to entry. Organizational spaces like Cape Town's PASSOP, which offered free, centrally-located support services for gay and lesbian individuals, were much more accessible than many gay bars and much more likely to be mentioned or depicted in participants' maps. They were also, in many ways, viewed much more meaningfully. AJ, for example, placed Holy Trinity, the church where fortnightly LGBT meetings were held, it its own category, 'Food For My Soul.' He keeps it distinctly separate from his 'everyday' and 'once in a while' places on his map (Figure 5.5). Though sites like PASSOP and Holy Trinity might not have been able to provide many services or resources that specifically address lesbian migrants' unique needs (Chapter Four), they still served as exceedingly rare, accessible space where LMW felt both physical and emotional safety.

Other support agencies also served as safe spaces. As I was going over Etta's map

with her (Figure 5.1), she pointed to a site labelled 'CSVR' and said, "This one um, maybe if you can Google this you can get the full name?" She then explained to me (and noted on the map) that it was a trauma clinic. Here, she said, she found comfort and support that helped her process some of the things she was going through. Though the specific nature of her trauma was unclear, she had noted in a previous conversation that many health clinics do not offer support that acknowledges lesbians' unique needs. Given her strong endorsement of this specific clinic and the therapist she was seeing, I believe it is likely that the help she was receiving did address this. That she was able to point it out to me on her map and then talk about it also underscores some of the advantages of using sketch maps in conjunction with interviews or conversations. Simply asking people to talk about the places that matter to them can be both awkward and insufficient if participants cannot remember things on the spot (Gieseking, 2013). Having a visual representation not only presents the opportunity for researchers to ask about spaces and landmarks in a more natural sort of way, as I often did with participants, it also gives participants another way of thinking about and expressing their spaces and lived experiences (Gieseking, 2013).

Rumaitha, meanwhile, found solace in a group called The Inner Circle (shown on her map, Figure 5.6, as Wyenborg, [Wynberg], the suburb the group is located in). This is an organization based in Cape Town that helps LGBT Muslims come to terms with their sexuality as it relates to their religion (Al-Fitrah Foundation, n.d.). Though according to Rumaitha it does not target migrants specifically, many of the participants nevertheless were migrants, and the group helped them with various paperwork, including, in Rumaitha's case, getting a refugee passport.

Figure 5.5 AJ's Map
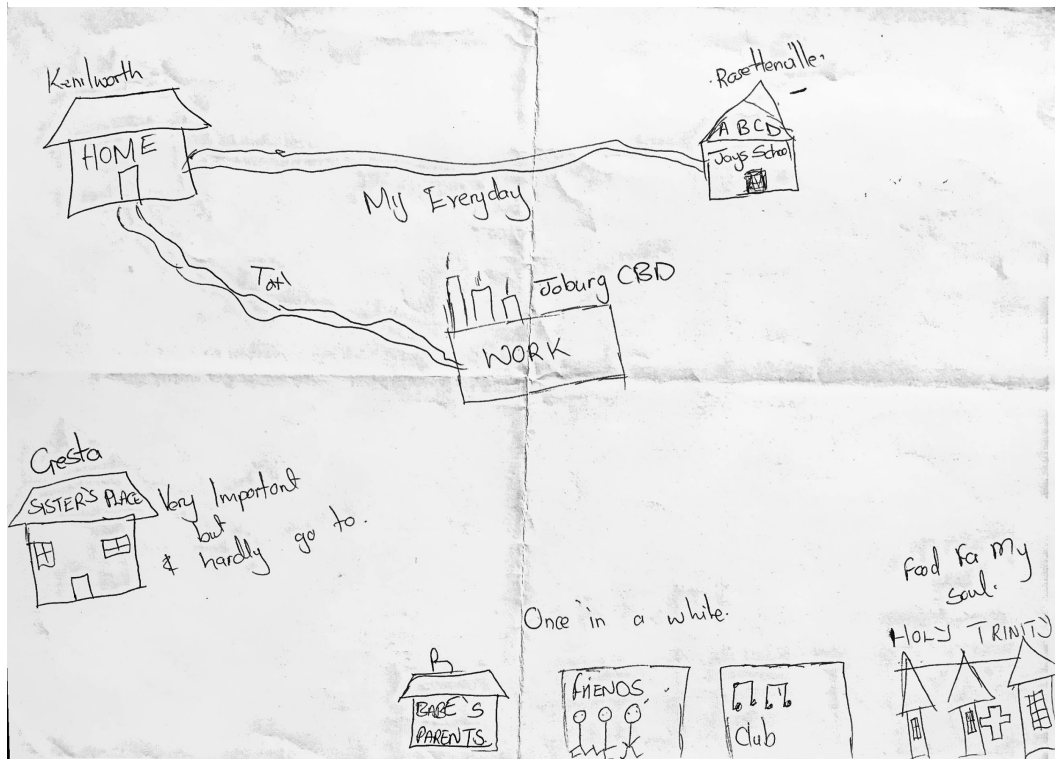
The women I spoke with also identified and portrayed on their maps a number of recreational sites where they felt comfortable. Though the neighbourhood itself was never mentioned on any maps, in Cape Town's De Waterkant district are a number of gay or gay-friendly bars that Marcia and Precious both liked to frequent. The two noted the lesbian-owned Beaulah Bar (as seen on both of their maps, Figures 5.3 and 5.4), where they would sometimes go for the occasional drink or dance, and Café Manhattan, another gay-friendly bar just around the corner. The way that they spoke of these places, however, speaks to the different ways that safety and comfort can have both physical and affective dimensions. The bars were 'safe' to the extent that the women could be openly gay without the threat of violence, but this alone does not make them a desirable place to be. Marcia and Precious did not give off the impression that the two of them felt these

bars were "liberating and supportive," as other authors have described (Valentine & Skelton, 2003, p. 863). Rather, they seemed to be one option amongst many. Beaulah Bar was cigarette smoke-filled, and while they used to frequent Café Manhattan a lot, they do not as much anymore (though Marcia "do[esn't] know why"). Authors like Gieseking (2016b) mourn the ongoing decline of lesbian bars, saying it signifies "a space that is constantly lost" (p. 59). But by looking at participants' maps not just in terms of what they contain, but also in what they do *not* contain, it becomes clear that sites like gay and lesbian bars have little bearing on the lives of most of the women I spoke with. And given these bars' inaccessibility, whether financially or for the fact that most are marketed toward white men (Visser, 2008), their relative absence from participants' maps is unsurprising. To the extent that a place like the Beaulah Bar was never *for* black lesbian migrant women in the first place, the permanent shuttering of its doors in 2018 is relatively inconsequential for them. The significance comes in the fact that the places they *can* safely occupy often necessitate a fracturing of their identities (discussed in Chapter Six).

Figure 5.6 Rumaitha's Map
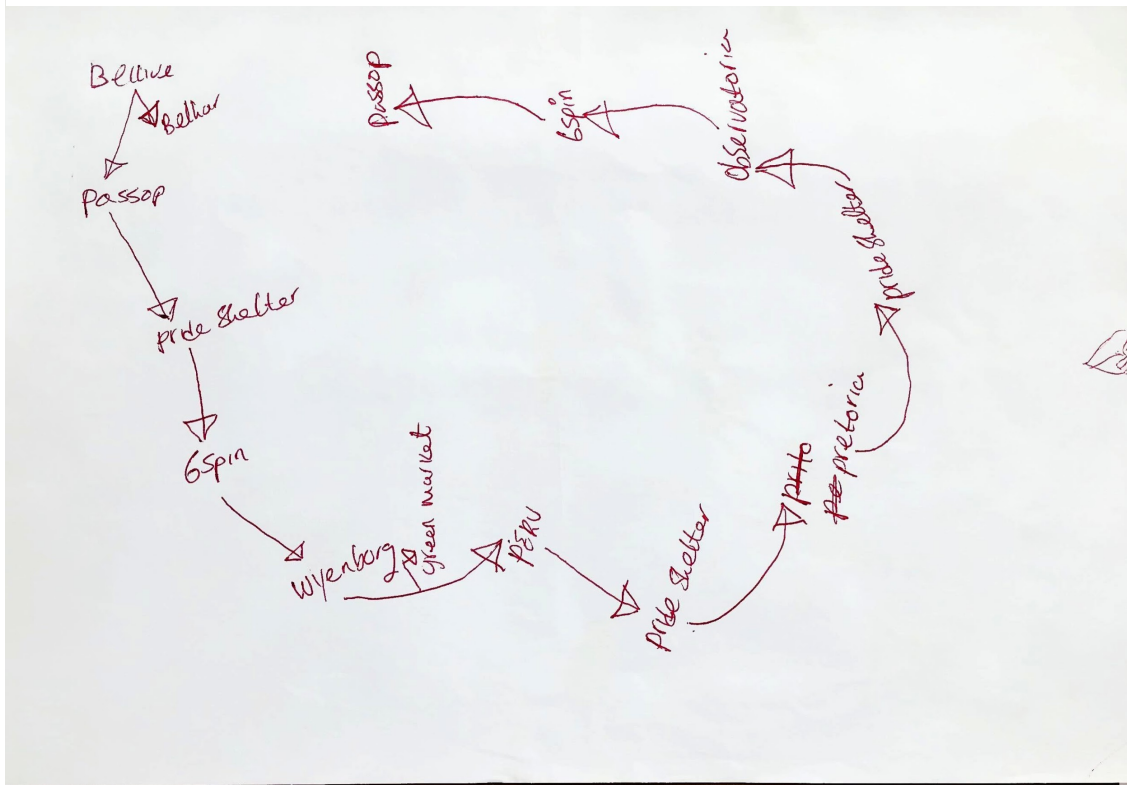
The safe spaces lesbian migrants can find and access, then, offer sites where they

can come together and feel free to 'be themselves' in. One area that I have left relatively

unexplored is the idea of digital places representing a site of safety. With the rise of

social media sites like Facebook and Instagram, and the increasing prevalence of free

messaging services like WhatsApp and Messenger, LGBT populations are using these

resources to safely explore their identities and to teach others about them (Fox & Ralston,

2016; Nash & Gorman-Murray, 2016; Zebracki, 2017). Some authors have even claimed

that the rise in accessing these digital spaces has led to the decline or 'de-gaying' of

urban spaces worldwide (Ruting, 2008). When these populations are able to connect

online, the argument goes, the need for in-person meeting sites declines (Ruting 2008).

Wight (2014) claims that these digital spaces can serve as an alternative 'home' of sorts for the LGBT population, though he also acknowledges that said spaces are not without risks. While most of the above studies focus on the Global North, LGBT populations in South Africa appear to be using online technology in a similar way, that is, as a way of socializing, organizing, and gaining access to information (Ganesh et al., 2016). McLean (2013), for instance, outlines the role that digital media played in the 2012 Johannesburg LGBT protests, where social media platforms enabled protestors to share videos, have conversations, and coordinate plans.

In my own research, I did not set out to study the women's use of social media or even think to ask them much about their social media use, and so this is an area that decidedly needs to be explored further. While, as mentioned, none of the women depicted any sort of digital sites on their maps, all 14 of them kept in touch with me through WhatsApp rather than through phone calls or their phone's built-in texting application, which alone indicates that it serves as one of their primary means of communication. Occasionally I would receive a mass text alerting me that a lesbian woman had gone missing or had been killed, while others passed on cute photos of puppies with captions wishing me a nice day. The stark contrast between the two indicates a wide range of use, from keeping one another safe and informed to keeping in touch. If they are sharing these messages to me, I feel quite confident in speculating that they are likely sharing them amongst themselves, whether through mass texts, group chats, or individual messages.

It seems that many of them had Facebook as well—some mentioned it, some sent me friend requests, and some I oversaw while they were flipping through their phones. Here, too, those who discussed it said that they used it as an opportunity where they could

both safely explore their identity and keep a close watch on who they allowed in.

> Z: Even on Facebook I don't friend everyone now. I friend certain
> people; I friend people that I know personally. I don't friend people
> that I [don't] know. And I now look at friends if they've got-
> whether they friend me, do they have gay friends that I know. Also,
> I want to see what kind of content they post, so that I'm also safe.

Zoe's reluctance to "friend" just anyone speaks also to some of the inherent dangers that digital space can present, particularly for lesbians. If a lesbian migrant woman is 'out' on social media but not out to her family and friends in South Africa and back home, she risks the possibility of being forcibly outed, where someone tells her friends and family of her status without her consent (Lang, 2016). Lesbian migrant women also run the risk of being verbally harassed online for their sexuality, which can translate into real-world violence (Schlumpf, 2018).

Gauging who to be out to and who to keep in contact with through digital media is thus done in much the same way as gauging which physical spaces are safe and which spaces to avoid and why. In safe spaces of all types, participants feel that they can 'move about' without an obvious risk of being threatened with violence because they imagine the other users or other members to be socially progressive individuals like themselves. Because of this, LMW feel that they can be open about all of their identities together, or at the very least, there is little likelihood that they will be openly confronted about them. This last point is crucial, as it points to the fact that LMW might feel themselves only partially safe or partially unsafe in certain places. In the next section, I discuss where and what these 'ambivalent' spaces are and how they, too, are constituted through the (real or imagined) actions and identities of others.

5.4 Ambivalent Spaces

When looking at safety or comfort, one cannot focus on only one variable (Rodó-de-Zárate, 2017). In the sense that no place is ever fully safe or unsafe, *all* spaces that lesbian migrant women told me about on their maps and in conversation were ambivalent; that is, they had elements of both safety and unsafety. Yet there were some instances where the women were much more explicitly ambivalent about how they felt about a certain place and their attachment to it. These were places where participants strongly felt a sense of comfort with respect to one identity, but discomfort with respect to another. These 'ambivalent spaces' are similar in description to what Rodó-de-Zárate (2015) deems 'controversial intersections.' I have opted to use the term ambivalent spaces, however, to better highlight participants' emotional attachment to these spaces.

One such ambivalent 'place' was that of religious institutions. Religion itself played a very important role in most (if not all) of the women's lives, and sites of worship were depicted on six of the eleven maps.[25] The dissonance that many of them felt between their religion and their sexual orientation meant that places of worship could be sites of intense unease. Tawanda highlighted this dissonance quite clearly, both in our conversations and on her map (Figure 5.7) saying,

> T: I do believe in God and everything. I don't know. I don't think there's anything wrong with me. I just wish I could make other people see me as like there's nothing wrong with me. As if I'm trying to be, you know, something else.

Though Rumaitha had found comfort with the Inner Circle group, it was clear that she was still facing difficulties in reconciling her identities as a lesbian and a Muslim.

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[25] Twelve of the fourteen participants mentioned attending a religious institution. Of the two who did not (Beatrice and Veronica), it is still possible that they are religious and it just happened to not come up during our conversations.

R: But to me, you see I'm in this thing. Let me just be real to you. I'm in this thing. But some, some things they, I, uh, I agree with, and some things I don't agree with.

K: M-hm

R: And, 'cause [other people in the group] are saying things like, "You don't care, let's go." There's like, there's other side, man. And then you know, being born as a Muslim I grew up without gay people. So we know that when you go to the grave I am going alone. So they even know. Rumaitha is just fifty-fifty in this thing.

Tawanda was more explicit about finding church itself to be a difficult experience.

T: And then, church. It's close to my mother's place. Then there are so many other churches there. Then the church of- Okay, I would want to go to church but then, I can't stand it. Like the people. "Is it a boy or is it a girl?" Or like, uh, "Are they trying to…Is it a girl trying to be a man?" You know?

[…]

T: Or like trying to pray for me. Like, "This one is possessed of something." Then sometimes I want to pray, but then I feel bad. Like okay, I judge myself. So then I stop [going].

For Marcia, church itself is not necessarily a site of overt discomfort, but only because she is not open about her sexuality.

M: There's actually no need to then just announce that, "Oh, so guys, hey, I'm gay."

K: Ah

M: I'm just one random girl who comes to church and goes home.

K: Okay, you don't really socialise with any of them outside?

P: Once they find out they will start preaching about you.

Figure 5.7 Tawanda's Map
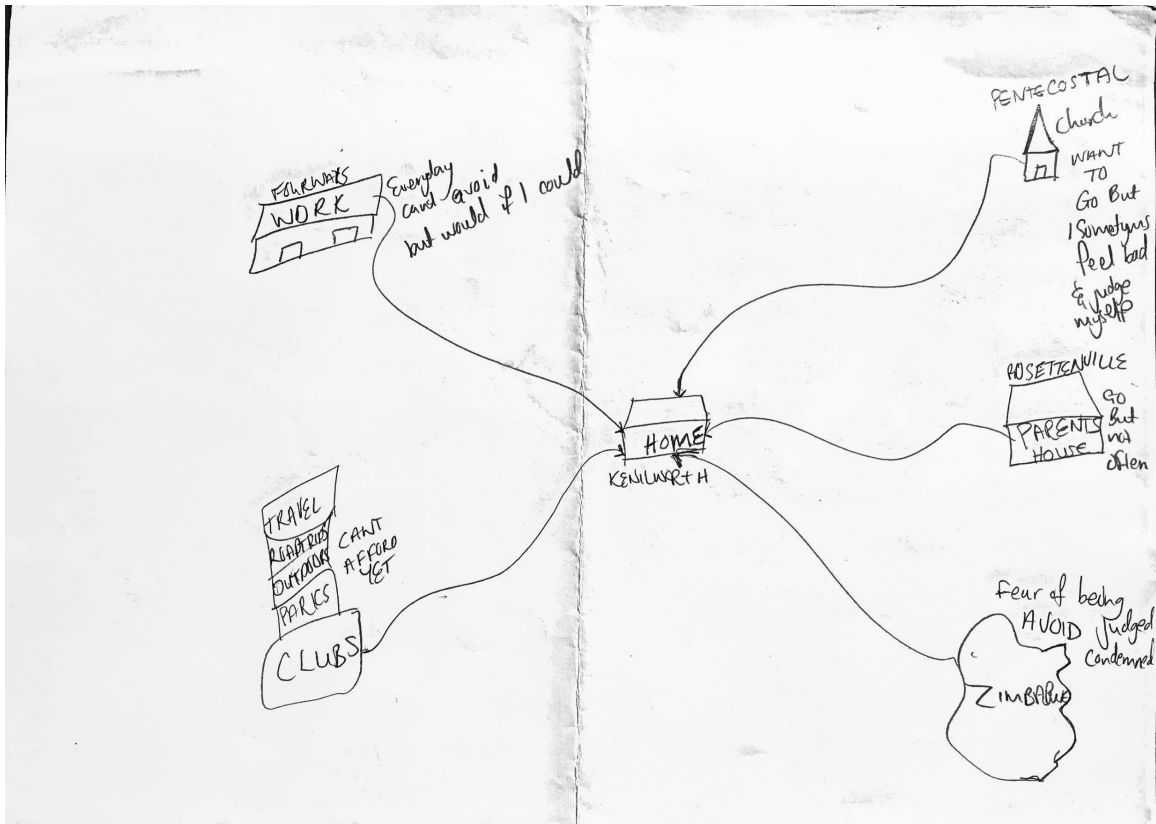
Were Marcia to be open about her sexuality, she feels that church would no longer

be a safe space. In earlier conversations, Marcia told me that she had struggled a great

deal to come to terms with her religion and sexuality. Though she had since made a lot of

progress, family gatherings can still be awkward, at best. Her parents know of her

sexuality but will not acknowledge it, and she says that her grandmother, "is always like

on that tangent where she would pray about the evil people who practice um, that."

Because religious traditions were so often family-based, any site where participants

visited their family members could potentially be fraught with turmoil if and when

religion was brought up, illustrating once again the multiscalar nature of safety and

belonging (Gorman-Murray, 2011). In response, Marcia says she's learned to, "turn a

blind ear to it [*sic*]."

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Marcia, Precious, and Tawanda were all clear that they had no problem with Christianity itself. Rather, it was the religion's adherents who made their lives difficult. In this way, religion itself becomes a despatialized 'site' of ambivalence. It does not matter *where* a church is located, so long as the members of its congregation attend and continue to demand that the women meet their expectations of heterosexuality. Rumaitha, meanwhile, had found a place that was accepting of her sexuality (Inner Circle), but she still felt ostracized because of internal struggles. Thus, until she is able to come to terms with herself, places of worship will *always* be a site of ambivalence.

The ambivalence that religion poses points to the ways in which spaces are transformed by the people who inhabit them. A church itself does not provide safety for lesbian migrant women if the people who attend it do not accept their sexuality. Similarly, for many LGBT individuals, even home can be dangerous and alienating if the other residents harbour homophobic beliefs (Brown et al., 2007; Browne & Brown, 2016; Gorman-Murray, 2008). The lesbian migrant women I spoke with had mixed experiences with their places of residence, some of which did indeed stem from living with family members (Chapter Four). Others were free to be open about their sexuality, but due to financial constraints were dependent upon living with their partners. Were they to break up with their partner, their housing status would be put in jeopardy.

As discussed in Chapter Four, lesbian migrant women who lacked a steady job were often forced to live with family members, who were at best displeased about their daughters' sexuality and did not want to hear about it, and at worse, could kick them out. The perceived lack of choice in living situations coupled with being forced to stay closeted led to feelings of despair. After Nyasha lost her job in Yeoville and had to move

back in with family members she grew quite despondent, telling me over text,

> N: I wish u could hear how ma family talks, and ma mom does not even care about me. It hurts especially to me. I feel all alone—they're here sitting with me but I'm not talking, jus busy with ma phone. They are talking but as for me, I feel like an outsider.

In this situation, Nyasha has a space to stay that is at least free from the threat of physical harm, but the emotional turmoil she experiences in having to stay closeted is destroying her confidence as well as her attachment to her family. Her sense of belonging in this sense is de-spatialized since she effectively belongs nowhere (Jackson, 2014), and this has an impact on how she feels about living in South Africa overall. After her statement about feeling like an outsider she added, "Earlier today [my family and I] were jus talking about ma life and I said if really I have become a baggage then I will go back home. [My parents] think I don't know how to talk."

Nyasha speaks of her living situation in pessimistic terms. She is again perhaps safe from physical harm, but feels confined in terms of expressions of self. This confinement, however, is also reflected in the map that she drew (Figure 5.8). Though not quite topographically accurate, it shows a relatively small range of spaces located within about a seven and a half kilometre range, from Louis Botha Avenue (Luwis Bother) near Washington Court (her apartment complex) in the northeast, to the Wemmer Pan (Dam) in the southeast. When contrasted with a map like Marcia's (Figure 5.3), which shows spaces both across the city of Cape Town *and* outside of the country (e.g., India for yoga), we can see how the maps themselves offer a lens into the way LMW experience space (Gieseking, 2013). Nyasha's map is also notably quite stark and void of emotions. Part of this is admittedly likely due to the fact that I was not able to loan her any

colourful markers like I did with some of the others. But the starkness still stands out even when contrasted to some of the other black and white ones like AJ's (Figure 5.5) or Tawanda's (Figure 5.7). Compared to theirs, which clearly show different types of places along with how they feel about some of them, Nyasha's is relatively barren. I made a note to myself after my first meeting with Nyasha that she seemed a bit withdrawn, and her sketch map gives visualization to that.

Figure 5.8 Nyasha's Map

The bleakness of her situation again largely stems from the fact that she is unable to maintain a livelihood for herself, and must instead rely on others to keep her safe physically, but not emotionally. A similar scenario played out for Zoe, who lived with her partner and was dependent upon that relationship in order to ensure her safe housing. I discuss this in Chapter Four in explaining how these circumstances can put financially-

unstable LMW in a bad position should they and their partner break up, but I argue here

that it leads to them feeling emotionally ambivalent about South Africa itself. In Zoe's

case, she had left her home in Atlantis after being stabbed in her house. She moved in

with her partner of about a year, Tasneem, who lived in a suburb of Cape Town called

Grassy Park, about 20 kilometres from the City Centre. Tasneem was married to a man

who frequently travelled for work and did not know that his wife and Zoe were

romantically involved. The stress of having to lead a double life very clearly weighed

Zoe down. At one point, she told me,

> Z: I find it like, really depressing sometimes, that I'm with someone and
> I can't really…She told me who she was from the beginning, so I don't
> have a problem with that setup. But in my mind I don't know what's
> happening.

Zoe's case is quite extreme in that not only is she dependent upon Tasneem for

housing (Chapter Four), but she is *also* unable to be her true self around Tasneem when

Tasneem's husband is around. She stands to lose her housing for two different reasons,

one if she and Tasneem break up, and two if Tasneem's husband should discover the

actual nature of Zoe and Tasneem's relationship. The stress of this was put in sharp focus

one afternoon when she received an aggressive text message from Tasneem while we

were having a conversation.

> Z: [*sighs*] If someone gave me money I would catch a bus going back to
> Zimbabwe tomorrow and just leave everything behind…I don't know
> how and I don't know why, it's just…How can someone say that, "Ever
> since you came into my life [things have been bad]?" Like I don't know
> how to reply to that. What do I say? And I've been trying to break up
> with her every time; it doesn't work out.

Here again, because Zoe is having difficulty at home, she questions out loud whether she

might leave South Africa, a notion she also discussed in another conversation. Her sense of attachment is fractured, and so in these moments she is drawn more toward the emotional connections she feels to her homeland (Jackson, 2014).

Zoe also elaborated on some of the emotional imbalances that can happen in relationships where one partner is financially and/or emotionally dependent upon the other for stability. She says that she has seen a number of lesbian relationships where the femme partner becomes very "clingy" or emotionally attached, and the butch partner will "…toss them around, and fuck around, and fuck with their mind around, and they still…remain solid on how they stand." By this, she means that the butch partner is likely to remain emotionally detached and unfaithful to her partner. Though Zoe says it is not *always* the butch partner who maintains her distance, it is a much more likely scenario than the reverse. She also spoke back to those who believe lesbian relationships to be less tension-filled or somehow easier than heterosexual ones.

> Z: And you keep on hearing this thing of like, two women who have vaginas cannot be dangerous, or harm to each other, and I find that that is the worst, wrongest stereotype ever. I think two women together are the most dangerous people.
> K: Hm, why?
> Z: Because emotionally you are dependent on each other, or at least one is dependent on the other. The other one is there to benefit or to manipulate the other one. Whether you are the one, the manipulator or the manipulated one.
> K: Yeah. But it's one or the other?
> Z: And you don't feel it. Yeah, and it's always that one person who's so solid in the relationship, who knows why they're doing what they're doing, and the other one who's just in love.

Zoe's argument that femmes are not necessarily always the ones at a disadvantage was corroborated by others' stories. One of the butch-identified women I spoke with was having issues in her personal life that illustrates how a codependent, butch-femme

relationship can be emotionally damaging to both parties. Though this person

(pseudonym redacted here to further protect anonymity) had lost any sexual attraction for

her partner, she felt compelled to stay in the relationship in part because,

> I'm used to this life that we have together. Like, sort of like, she has
> things that she does for me. I wake up in the morning, [if] she's not
> going to work she prepares my lunch, she irons my clothes, she just- All
> I have to do is get up and go take a shower and then come back.
> Everything is all laid out for me here. Like, what you're wearing
> tomorrow? And then I get my outfit for the next day.

The comfort of this person's relationship comes at the cost of it being hard to remove

herself from it, both literally and figuratively, should things deteriorate (as they were

starting to).

But even in homes where LMW were not dealing with contentious interpersonal

relationships, they could still feel ambivalent with respect to their levels of comfort. In

her search for a job and a place to live, Rumaitha had spent about three months total at

the LGBT homeless shelter in Cape Town's City Centre. Though relatively safe in terms

of being able to be open about her sexuality, Rumaitha had to carefully monitor the

behaviour and emotions of others.

> R: At the Pride Shelter it's…it's only safe if you take care of yourself.
> Whenever they are talking about you, you answer them back. It's like,
> you show them no. Everyone wants to bully you, wants to show you he's
> the one. So it depends on you. You've gotta stand for yourself, you see?

At the shelter, Rumaitha's movements were also often controlled by the site's

coordinators. She had to be up at certain time to start chores, back in at a fixed time in the

evening, and had to periodically prove that she was looking for jobs during the day. In

this way, she was again 'safe' in the physical sense, but still uncomfortable in the sense

that she was unable to exert a lot of control over her actions, showing how safety is not reducible to one position (Rodó-de-Zárate, 2017). When she finally did move to a house in Observatory she had more freedom to move around the city (Section 5.3), but her housemate, an older white Afrikaans woman, regarded her suspiciously.

> R: So she was saying her bed is there, my bed is here. She comes in, she opens the window and it's winter. You ask her [not to]. She tells me, "No, I can't sleep without window." She starts coughing now I'm asking. And then she thinks that um, when she comes and puts her bag there, and I'm coming there, she'll leave the door open. She thinks I'm going to search her bag; she thinks I'm a thief. I can just see she is not safe with me.

The woman never explicitly told Rumaitha that Rumaitha made her feel unsafe; Rumaitha felt the woman's behaviours said enough on their own. Nor did the woman ever allude to the possible reasons for her feeling unsafe, leaving Rumaitha to only speculate. In this case, it could likely be any combination of Rumaitha's sexuality, race, or migrant status.

Recreationally, many of the women found that gay or gay-friendly bars were financially inaccessible (Chapter Four), and so they are shown infrequently on their maps. But even for women who did have the financial means to go to such sites on occasion, these places' gay-friendliness alone only ensured a partial amount of safety, as the following two scenarios illustrate. The first is an incident that took place at the Manila Bar, a karaoke joint in downtown Cape Town that Marcia and Precious liked to frequent because it is mixed-race and gay-friendly. One evening, Marcia went up to sing a song. As she began, two white women came up and started singing with her.

> M: So now this chick says- one of the two people who came onto the stage, "I can't believe you know this song! It's a white people song!"
> *All: [laughs]*

M: Oh my god, oh my god.
K: Wow.
M: Yeah, exactly! I literally didn't know what to say or what to do. I just looked at her and continued singing my song. And then after, we got off [stage] and blah blah blah, then she comes and says, "I'm so sorry. I-" Did she say, "I was being rude," or, "if I was rude?"
K: Is this a South African, by the way?
M: She must be South African, yes.
K: As far as you could tell?
M: Yeah, because she's one of those. You know you can tell. Um-
P: She's a white princess, neh? But she looks like white trash.
M: She did, hey? The ones who try so hard to make sure you realize that-
Both: They are white.
M: Dude, I see that!
P: Ugh. She was as ugly as they come. Like, I was just like, eish! Just calm down. We are all having fun here; we came to have fun. There is no need for you to say that, "white people's song."
M: Like yes, we can see that. [*mocking*] "That's a white song! That's a white people's song! I can't believe you know it!"
P: Like it's only there for white people, right?
M: Right? Only white people can listen and speak?
P: Ugh

This encounter offers an example of the way that performances themselves can be racially codified, and how this then instantaneously transforms the spaces from safe to unsafe, or at least disconcertingly awkward. In this woman's eyes, Marcia had failed to perform blackness in a socially acceptable way by singing a song this woman felt belonged exclusively to white people. Though the woman may not have meant any obvious harm (as evidenced by her apology), in claiming racial ownership over a song in a country where whiteness still holds power, she claims an ownership to the space itself. Marcia, as a black woman, is not free to participate in white culture without risk of reprimand (Tucker, 2009b).

The second incident took place with Rumaitha at the gay-friendly Café Manhattan. Rumaitha and I had settled in and just gotten our drinks when she saw two men she knew from The Inner Circle, the gay Muslim group. After exchanging pleasantries, the two left

and Rumaitha's face immediately fell as she began to realize what had happened. Rumaitha had previously told those in the group that she was a devout Muslim and as such, never drank alcohol. The two men who passed by had just caught her with a beer. This would not be a huge deal (the men themselves were at the bar too, after all) were it not for the fact that the group was helping her pay for housing and with getting her Refugee Travel Document. Their funding in these regards was partially contingent upon Rumaitha being a devout Muslim (and thus abstaining from alcohol), and she spent the remainder of the evening fearful that she had lost this crucial piece of financial and social support.

Through these two examples, we see how the supposed safety of places like the Manila Bar or Café Manhattan is contingent upon the actions that transpire within them, both by lesbian migrant women and by those who hold power over those spaces. In Marcia's case, her presence in that space was not problematic until she performed an action that a white woman deemed abnormal. For Rumaitha, the decision to drink was made problematic *only because of* the presence of others whom she knew *and* who were like her in many ways. This again highlights the importance of understanding lesbian migrant women in the context of power structures. A space like Café Manhattan might be safe for Rumaitha until it becomes occupied by the two men from The Inner Circle. Even then, her unsafety was contingent upon the two men seeing her with a beer in hand, understanding that this presented a challenge to her devoutness, reporting this offence to the people in charge at The Inner Circle, and then these people taking action. The mere presence of these same two men at Café Manhattan would not affect Marcia and Precious's safety were these men to witness the two of them drinking a beer, nor would

they affect Rumaitha's safety were they to appear at another (non-alcoholic) venue. Their power is spatially and contextually contingent, and ultimately illustrative of how safe and unsafe places (and those in between) as a whole are not static, fixed sites. Instead they are made and remade through performances and practices, including surveillance of other people's behaviour.

Analysis of spaces deemed ambivalent through discussions and through interpreting participants' maps can help us understand how imagined spaces interact with material realities to produce ever-shifting geographies. When a space that was assumed to be safe becomes occupied by someone whose presence and/or actions then make it unsafe, it is immediately transformed, and lesbian migrant women are forced to re-evaluate and reassess their own performances and behaviours and respond accordingly. Similarly, when a place is constantly falling short of expectations, or when safety is only available when certain aspects of participants' identities are hidden, these women must adapt their behaviours based on any number of social constraints. These ambivalent spaces illustrate the contingent spatial and temporal disjunctures between material and imagined spaces, and how these impact how lesbian migrant women must constantly navigate and negotiate their surroundings (Gieseking, 2016a).

5.5 Discussion

As the above examples illustrate, the notion of comfort is "not reducible to only one position" (Rodó-de-Zárate, 2017, pp. 311-312), and the task of identifying where lesbian migrant women are (un)safe is far from straightforward. To the extent that lesbian migrant women are by definition a mobile population, it comes as no surprise that their spaces are not fixed. Taking a look at participants' maps specifically, we can see how

LMW also find their spaces constrained, and when combined with their narratives of their day-to-day lives, they reveal what Saarinen (1973) calls an "invisible landscape (i.e., the 'invisible' effects of social prestige)" (p. 158). Their intersecting identities lead to few spaces where safety is assured, while also inhibiting access to the few ones that do exist.

An analysis of the places lesbian migrant women do occupy and feel safe or unsafe in also illustrates the fluid nature of space itself. Spaces of safety can become unsafe (and vice versa) through the presence of other individuals, their respective performances, and the power that these individuals can wield. In this way, an analysis of LMW's levels of fear and comfort shows how emotions themselves are intersectional and constituted relationally, contributing to lesbian migrant's senses of belonging in complex ways (Gorman-Murray, 2009; Wood & Waite, 2011).

Broadly speaking, unsafe places are ones thought to be occupied by those with hostile motives toward anyone and/or specifically toward LMW. Because these individuals are mobile, however, *any* place can ostensibly become unsafe with their presence, illustrating the fluidity of both space and scale (Massey, 2005; Pessar & Mahler, 2003; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Conversely, safe spaces are thought to have socially progressive residents who are accepting of LMW's identities. But when these individuals turn out *not* to be as socially progressive as previously imagined, such as when a white women singled out Marcia for singing "white people music," the safety of these spaces is again called into question. Ambivalent spaces therefore highlight not just the ways that spaces can shift based on the actions of others, but also how LMW can be 'partially' accepted or partially safe.

The fluidity of safe spaces means that 'safety' itself is always an ongoing and

contingent process, as opposed to a fixed state, location, or destination. This draws

attention to how to 'queer' understandings of space by looking at the fluidity of sexual

subjectivities and the proliferation of categories (Gorman-Murray et al., 2010). It also

means that lesbian migrant women in South Africa have to be constantly on the alert as to

how the politics of belonging may play out in any given space. They must monitor who

else is in their spaces, which aspects of their identity could signal acceptance or danger,

and then change or modify their behaviours accordingly (Smuts, 2011). This, I argue,

contributes to an inability for LMW to form emotional attachments to spaces and places.

Wood and Waite (2011) remind us that belonging is an affective connection to places

based on both feeling safe *and* being understood. If safety is always in question, and if

there is always a possibility for misunderstandings to arise, then the capacity to form

these connections is severely hindered. LMW must instead devote their mental capacities

to constantly being on alert to threats to their safety. This includes not just a potential

shift in who else may be present in any given space, as discussed in this chapter, but to a

shift in others' comfort, as I explore in the next. Because lesbian migrants' intersecting

identity categories often put them in disadvantageous social locations, their personal

emotions and expressions thereof frequently come second to the feelings of others. This,

too, compromises LMW's sense of belonging and makes living their lives as-is an

unwieldy, demanding and often dangerous undertaking.

Chapter Six: Identity Management

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter Five I analyzed how webs of power dynamics can confound the search for spaces of safety and render a sense of non-belonging. Because of lesbian migrant women's intersecting identities, places they can venture to or inhabit that are unequivocally safe are nearly non-existent. To suggest, however, that lesbian migrant women are solely victims of their identities is to ignore the agency they possess and exercise. In this chapter, I argue that not only are they aware of their intersecting positions and how this limits the sites they can both safely access and belong to, they also use a variety of spatial strategies to challenge and counter these limits and create spaces of belonging. These strategies add to understandings of how access to different sites of being and belonging is melded with understandings of self in relation to broader, heteronormative social contexts (Jensen, 2011), and how the body itself can be a site at which identity and belonging are constructed (Gorman-Murray, 2009). This chapter therefore begins with an explanation of Orne's (2011) concept of 'strategic outness.' I explore why strategic outness is necessary for creating spaces of inclusion and how it is linked to expanded understandings of Arlie Hochschild's (1983) concept of emotional labour. I then discuss three of the main spatial strategies LMW used to create spaces of inclusion—avoidance, speculation, and direct engagement—and explain how these strategies build spaces of inclusion, but often only partially. I conclude with an overview of the reasons why lesbian migrant women may choose to use different strategies in different spaces.

6.2 Strategic Outness and Emotional Labour

The women I spoke with lead lives that are deeply fragmented and multifaceted. The mere fact of being a black lesbian migrant woman is fraught with risks in nearly every space these women occupy, whether domestic, work, social, or public space, and this contributes to an overall social context where LMW have very few spaces to which they truly belong. To mitigate these risks and to create sites where they do feel they belong (if only partially), they often purposely opt to conceal or reveal certain parts of their identity in different places, settings, and times. Their status as black women is largely self-evident, and so that which remains an option to disclose or not are their identities as migrants and as lesbians. Though some authors have found that black migrants to South Africa will try to hide or downplay their migrant status through masking their accents, speaking only South African languages, and avoiding contact with other migrants in order to shield themselves from xenophobic aggression (Landau & Freemantle, 2010), the women I met with did not take active measures to conceal their nationality, and they downplayed the threat of xenophobia. Those who did attempt to disassociate themselves from their compatriots did so in order to lessen the threats of homophobia or more generalized acts of physical aggression (Chapter Five).

Thus, lesbian migrant women used the most spatial control when it came to disclosure of their sexuality. The choice in when, where, and to whom to disclose it is part of a broad identity management tactic that Orne (2011) refers to as 'strategic outness.' This extends Valentine's (1993) classic assertion that lesbians must engage in different, specific ways of being in different spaces throughout their day. Orne (2011) claims that most research on the 'coming out' process only examines the "actual

declarative statement" (p. 689). That is, authors focus on when and where queer

individuals will explicitly tell another of their sexuality. But this 'direct disclosure,' as he

calls it, is far from the only way individuals can come out of or stay in the closet. Other

tactics Orne (2011) identifies include leaving clues, which hint at homosexuality but do

not suggest it directly; concealment, where gays and lesbians actively mask markers of

their gay identity; and speculation, where they do not actively conceal their identities, but

are not direct about it, either. Regardless of the method, Orne (2011) reminds us that

'coming out' is an ongoing practice that involves the continual (re)assessment of deciding

just how 'out' it is safe to be in any given location at any given time. Its employment as a

concept draws attention to the fact that there is no endpoint or destination involved in the

coming out *process* (Orne, 2011). 'The closet' is not a fixed location, but rather a

continuum upon which lesbians negotiate their sexual identities (Fisher, 2003). Through

this deliberate, strategic oscillation between 'out' and 'closeted,' lesbian migrant women

can gain control over their narrative and ensure their continued safety (Canham, 2017;

Kawale, 2004; Sólveigar- Guðmundsdóttir, 2018). Invisibility in this case becomes not

something that LMW must 'endure,' but a strategic choice that they use to escape harsh

judgment from others (Smith et al., 2018).

Although the migrant women I spoke with in Cape Town and Johannesburg were

certainly aware of their precarious positions that resulted from their intersecting statuses,

they actively sought (and found) ways to 'fit in' in nearly all of the spaces they inhabited

through the use of strategic outness, among other tactics. But while recognizing the

power in being able to control one's environment through the use of strategic outness,

Orne (2011) and others acknowledge that despite the agency strategic outness can offer, it

can come at a cost. The strain of 'lying' and self-monitoring, and the fear that lesbian migrant women have of slipping, of outing themselves to someone who may be hostile toward their identity(ies), can lead to isolation and psychological distress (Orne, 2011; Smuts, 2011; Valentine, 1993), all of which serve to reinforce their non-belonging (Wood & Waite, 2011). This isolation can be especially pronounced in the context of queer migrants, who not only face social stigma and exclusion on the basis of their sexuality, but are also socially and financially denied access to more mainstream sources of LGBT social support, such as bars and clubs, because of their race, country of origin, and/or socioeconomic status (Asencio, 2009; Doyal et al, 2008; O'Neill & Kia, 2012).

The sheer volume of strain and effort that LMW must go through in managing their identities implies that it requires a great deal of work, and I argue alongside Orne (2011) that the duplicity and self-surveillance of strategic outness is tantamount to what is known as "emotional labour" (p. 694). The term originated with Arlie Hochschild (1983) as a way to describe how women, traditionally in female-dominated professions, must conceal their own feelings and identities in order to manage the feelings of others and meet socially acceptable codes of conduct. Other authors have since expanded the definition and used it to describe the psychological work involved in managing others' emotions at home, in male-dominated professions, and in other social spheres (Steinberg & Figart, 1999). In her work with black lesbian women in Johannesburg, for instance, Kawale (2004) argues that the women she interviewed expended a great deal of emotional labour in trying to mitigate the fears of others regarding their perceptions and understandings of same-sex attraction. To avoid upsetting their families, for instance, these women were very selective in whom they came out to, and they actively worked to

conceal or downplay their lesbian identities in their families' presence. Even when these women were 'out' in the public sphere, such as to 'gay-friendly' colleagues, this did not guarantee that they were able to express their sexuality in the same way that heterosexual women could. One woman, for instance, found that two of her heterosexual female colleagues reacted with disgust when she described her night flirting with a woman at a bar. This disgust happened despite the fact that the two heterosexual women regularly told of their nights courting men at bars. As a result, Kawale (2004) claims, the lesbian woman felt she could no longer display any "emotional spontaneity" (p. 572). She had to engage in emotional labour via the management of both her own feelings *and* the feelings of her colleagues.

Kawale's example illustrates how emotions, identity, and sexuality can all be spatially regulated. At work, and in the presence of certain colleagues, the lesbian woman had to conceal her lesbian identity, even after she had come out. Understanding and underscoring the emotional, spatial, and identity-based components of strategic outness can help expand its relevance and applicability, and in this chapter I build upon Orne's (2011) original definition by doing just that. Although Orne indeed mentions the emotional toll that comes with self-surveillance, he does not elaborate upon or explain how emotions like fear—be it others' fear or lesbians' own fears—can also help shape which strategy gays and lesbians use in any given situation. And though he hints at strategic outness's spatial components, stating that very few people are 'out' to everyone wherever they go, he does not address the fact that the strategies individuals use are inherently spatial; people choose to come out (or not) based on their location along with their perceptions of who else may be present in said space. Adding a spatial dimension to

strategic outness can lead to more insight on who controls spaces and who gets branded 'deviant' or an 'outsider.'

Orne lastly does not detail how intersecting identities can complicate the process of deciding which strategy to employ in any given situation, with Orne himself admitting that, "future work should examine intersectional implications" (p. 699). Taking further consideration of lesbian migrant women's emotions (and the emotions of others), spaces, and identity categories shows how these categories are mutually transformative (Hopkins, 2019). In the next three sections I thus explain and extend upon some of the strategies Orne outlines in order to account for how and why participants make the choices they make with respect to their sexuality in creating spaces of belonging.

6.3 Avoidance

Orne (2011) rightly claims that, "participants choose methods based not only on social context, but on the desired social context" (p. 692). But when and where gays and lesbians' desired social context is antithetical to heteronormative power structures and spaces, the challenge of finding and (re)producing spaces that *are* desired becomes immensely difficult. The notion of choosing strategies and tactics based on social context also brings attention to strategic outness's spatial component, which Orne mentions but does not elaborate upon. Strategic outness, as Orne understands it, speaks to the strategies gays and lesbians use in the places they *are*; it overlooks the act of avoiding certain places as a strategy. This, I argue, is a tactic of strategic outness in and of itself, and should be included alongside the tactics that Orne mentions.

Participants were all asked to create a map of their day-to-day lives, and to also include those places that they deliberately try to avoid. As these places often did not

overlap (i.e., in some cases there were spaces that they would like to have avoided, and/or did try to avoid but were unable to for various reasons), many participants opted not to include the avoided ones at all (Chapter Three). But when further questioned, all participants offered narratives about what and where these places were, how they avoided them, and why they felt unsafe there (Chapter Five). The overriding feeling that participants expressed about these 'avoided' places was one of fear, and more specifically fear of physical assault.

Some of the women were quite explicit about the links between feelings of fear and the act of avoidance. When travelling back to Malawi, Joyce chooses not to spend the night in Johannesburg with a friend of her uncle's out of her explicit fear of getting mugged (or worse). She also avoided Greenmarket Square in Cape Town, as she is afraid of the sexual harassment she will face from her cousin's friends. Rumaitha was also quite clear about the linkages between fear and avoidance, saying, "I used to avoid Bellville because I was scared." Marcia, meanwhile, stated that it was her fear of certain people that led her to avoid places like Mitchells Plain, a predominantly coloured township, claiming, "I'm really scared of coloured people, especially those ones [who live in Mitchells Plain]. I would actually gladly go to Khayelitsha [a predominantly black township] than go to Mitchells Plain."

Even when participants could not choose to avoid being in or passing through places in which they felt unsafe, they still 'avoided' them by leaving as quickly as possible and trying not to interact with anyone. For Tawanda to get to her job in the relatively safe neighbourhood of Sandton (Fourways) she is forced to go via downtown Johannesburg to catch a minibus. As she indicates on her map (Figure 6.1), she would

avoid doing so if she could. Instead, however, she says, "Like I come through Joburg every day so like, so when I drop off neh, I actually run; I'm so scared." Her fear had been amplified after getting mugged one time with her mother and brother.

Figure 6.1 Tawanda's Map
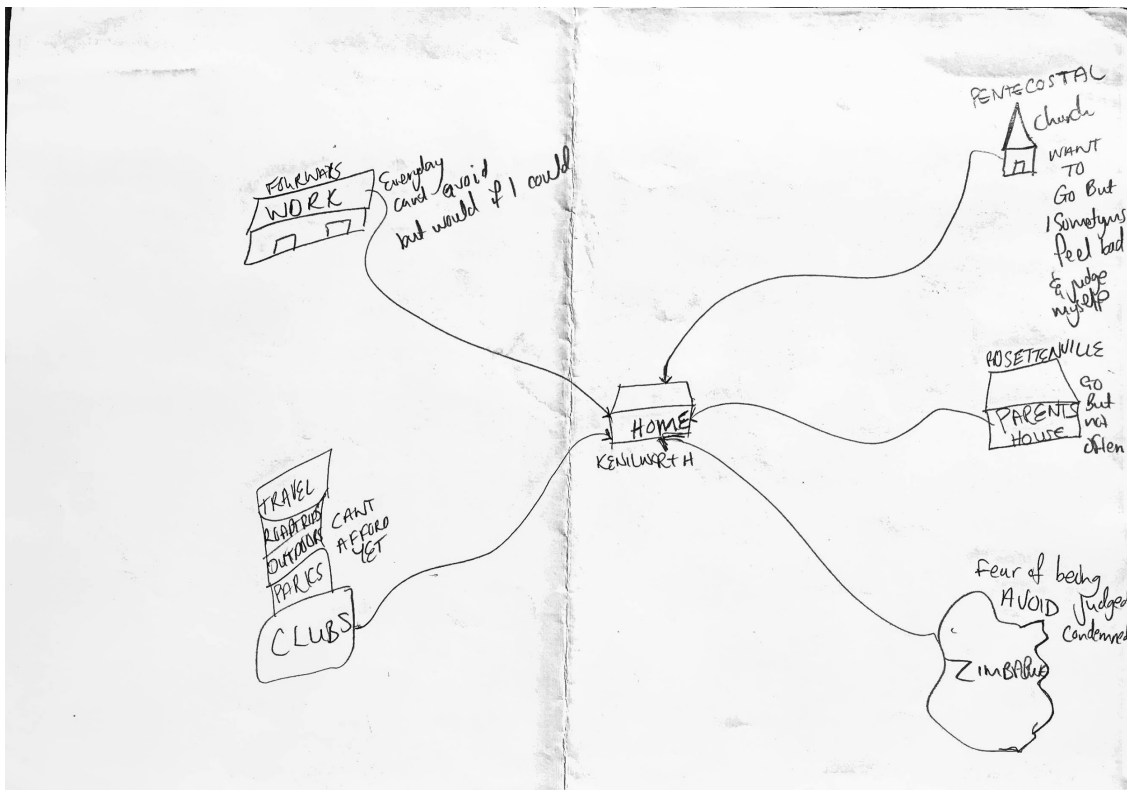
In other instances, participants refused to venture to certain areas unless someone else accompanied them, and/or if they knew someone else who would be there to meet them. Like most Johannesburg participants, AJ and Tawanda consciously avoided the neighbourhood of Hillbrow to the best of their abilities. On one rare occasion, though, they did decide to venture to the district after Tawanda had made a birthday cake for a gay male friend of hers who lived there. Thus, the two of them felt obliged to attend said friend's party. A fight soon broke out when a heterosexual man put his arm around the

birthday boy, and AJ and Tawanda fled, describing the incident as one that had "terrified" them. They noted that to even catch a cab they had to hike a few blocks, as cab drivers themselves were afraid of the area.

In another example, when Christine and I met at a mall restaurant in downtown Johannesburg, she unexpectedly brought her partner, Yvette, with her. She matter-of-factly explained herself by stating, "I was afraid to come alone. This thing of human trafficking and all the drama that is happening in Joburg, it's, it's so scary." But even Yvette needed coaxing. Christine told me, "She's afraid of Joburg like, even when I told her, 'Can you go to the [CBD]?' She's like, 'No, I have bags.' It's not safe for people who never stayed there." Christine's demand that Yvette accompany her implies that she may have avoided coming to the CBD alone.

The choice to avoid unsafe spaces is especially necessary for those whose appearance and mannerisms easily give away their sexuality, or for those who had already been 'outed' to others known to be in those spaces. For Joyce and Rumaitha, the threat of sexuality-based harassment in Greenmarket Square or Bellville (where a number of Somalis lived), respectively, was unavoidable in the sense that they did not have the ability to hide their sexuality through concealment or speculation (Section 6.4), and so their only option to stay safe was to try to stay away from these spaces altogether. In Joyce's case, she had already been outed to various other occupants by her cousin (Chapter Five). In Rumaitha's case, her butch, masculine appearance meant that something like concealment or speculation was never an option. As she explained it, "You know, when you're Somali and you see another person like this…I'm dressing up

like a man, I'm walking like this. It's…they are against it." In this way, her presence

instantly and automatically 'outs' her.

In another example, in talking about whether she would feel comfortable going

back to visit friends in Zimbabwe, Tawanda said,

> T: When I came here neh from Zim it was 2009. I was just so girly, you
> know? [Even] with the like, tomboyish style you could still see that I am
> a girl. You know, do my hair. So okay, it was fine. But then, going back
> now like this? I don't know; I'm so afraid. So I try to avoid going back.
> And I don't think I would, no.

Tawanda fears that with the way she presently looks, she might not get the benefit of the

doubt. That is, even if she does not explicitly tell others that she is a lesbian, she might

still be subject to homophobic violence by those who suspect, and so to remain safe she

tries to avoid going home to Zimbabwe as much as she can. Etta, too, explained the links

between appearance, location, and violence, and how her fears therein led her to avoid

certain places.

> E: Yeah, I was saying like uh, we have as much as uh, I've tried to be
> very, very cautious. Especially drinking at township bars and the so-
> called 'taverns.'
> *K: Mm*
> E: It's not safe at all.
> *K: Is it not safe because of who you are? Or is it just like not safe*
> *period? Do you know what I mean?*
> E: Uh, from what we have seen happen, especially for who I am, it's not
> safe. Because most killings- I can say most killings that have happened,
> especially for lesbians, they happened in taverns.
> *K: Mm. So you just…don't go?*
> E: [My partner and I] just don't go into taverns at all.
> *K: What makes a tavern different from like a bar?*
> E: Um, you know, in townships, I think in bars, like in places like this
> [Pata Pata Restaurant], it's a space that accommodates everyone. I think
> it's a space where people understand that people, they are entitled to
> their own sexual orientation. So in townships, I think they still lack
> knowledge. Remember they have, in lesbian communities, there's this

uh, kind of labels that- When someone is hard-core butch, they [are]
call[ed] hard-core butch, or butch.
K: Stone butch?
E: Yeah, so most people, especially I would say men in townships would
say that, "You want to become a man." That's why you see those
killings; before they kill you they rape you. They want to show you that
you are not a man; you are a woman. […] So that's why I say to myself,
I and my partner, it's a no-go and uh, for our own safety it's a no-go.

Again, Etta is quite clear that she is afraid of taverns in townships because of the risk of

being sexually assaulted and/or killed because of her sexuality (made more obvious by

her appearance), and that this fear keeps her away from these locations. That so many

LMW engage in or feel that they have to engage in this act of avoidance underscores Puar

et al.'s (2003) assertion that "non-normative sexuality is often tantamount to spatial

displacement" (p. 386). There are countless places they do not have access to because of

their sexuality and appearances. In this way, too, their bodies become a 'site' of non-

belonging, forcing them to move to and through different spaces.

Etta's statement also underscores the point that the threat of sexuality-motivated

violence is not distributed equally across all lesbians. Eves (2004) claims that historically,

butch lesbians have been the visible representation of lesbians in general. Their visibility

is advantageous in that they are able to challenge heteronormative hegemony and thus

'queer' the spaces they occupy, but this visibility also is more likely to incite hostility and

violence, and butch lesbians face a much greater threat in those spaces (Gunkel, 2010;

Swarr, 2012). Butch lesbians, as Kawale (2004) charges, can "rupture" heterosexualized

spaces. Their "incorrect" performances "challenge the emotions of onlookers" (p. 574).

By avoiding spaces like taverns, I argue that they are performing emotional labour in that

they are conscious of others' affective perceptions of them and altering their behaviours

accordingly.

The threat that butch women in particular face at different types of locations further exemplifies how understandings of belonging and inclusion are intersectionalized in complex ways. It is not just a combination of one's gender and sexuality that can jeopardize belonging, for instance, but how and where one chooses to enact them (Brown et al., 2007). It also adds nuance to Orne's (2011) discussion of avoidance and strategic outness. That is, LMW create spaces of inclusion not just through considerations of geographic settings and their occupants (imagined or otherwise), but also through reflections of themselves and what messages their bodies are conveying. For those who are easily and frequently read as gay from their appearance, they have fewer options in terms of choosing when and where to disclose their sexuality, and this then factors into how they are able to manage perceptions of their identity. As I explain in the next section, many other LMW use heteronormative understandings of gender and sexuality to their advantage through a tactic that Orne (2011) calls speculation.

6.4 Speculation

To give themselves some respite from a society that frequently offers black lesbian migrant women very little say over where they can go and what they can do there, some of the women I spoke with sought control in the fact that they could effectively remain hidden about their sexuality when and where they wanted to. While some went to active measures, such as making up boyfriends or talking about male romantic interests (which Orne [2011] refers to as concealment), others, particularly feminine-looking women, were able to hide themselves through what Orne (2011) calls speculation. With this strategy, gays and lesbians do not actively disclose that they are attracted to people of the same gender, but they also make no attempt to hide it. The use of speculation as a way to

ensure their safety and belonging while still not outright *lying* about their sexuality was a strategy that lesbian migrant women used in all realms, from family life, to work, to spaces of leisure. Its employment as a livelihood tactic necessarily relies on heteronormative assumptions, and affords lesbian migrant women the power to 'hide in plain sight.' It is also, as I argue, exemplary of the ways in which they feel they must engage in emotional labour in order to create spaces of belonging and to remain safe.

6.4.1 Taking Advantage of Heteronormativity

When considering where and when to use speculation, participants must balance their desire to be honest with themselves and with others against the responsibilities they feel in managing others' emotions, particularly with respect to their sexuality. That some LMW can use speculation to effectively hide in plain sight in this way is a result of their being in a heteronormative society. In heteronormative societies, feminine-looking women are assumed to be heterosexual, and femme lesbians can use this to their advantage simply by failing to correct others' (incorrect) assumptions about their sexuality and sexual orientations (Eves, 2004). This silence, wherein lesbians do not necessarily *lie* about or conceal their sexuality (e.g., through making up stories of boyfriends), but also refrain from being forthcoming about it, "opens up spaces for community tolerance of [lesbian] relationships" (Bonthuys, 2008, p. 734). Crucially, this silence around matters of sexuality "isolates, but also protects" lesbians (Morgan & Wieringa, 2005, p. 19). As long as women continue to give off the appearance that all is 'normal' by going to school, getting a job, etc., they can retain their family's (and the community's) social and financial support (Bonthuys, 2008; Morgan & Wieringa, 2005).

The situation of Danni, who is not yet out to her family, typifies this strategy. She

claims that her and her girlfriend's feminine appearances have spared them from

experiencing much in the way of homophobia when they are out together.

> D: [My girlfriend] is not really that butch. We look just the same.
> K: *Oh, okay. So [being together in public] is okay?*
> D: People will just say that we are friends, friends, friends, yes. [*laughs*]
> K: *Ah*
> D: Yeah, it's cool. We don't get those weird looks. People will just say,
> "Oh, look at those cute twins. Oh, look at those cute girls. Are you
> sisters?" "Yes."

She later went on to clarify that the only time she has experienced homophobia in public

(by way of threatening glares) is when she was in Rosettenville with her sister Tawanda,

and Tawanda's partner AJ, both of whom dress and act in a more stereotypically

masculine manner. But when contrasted with some of her other experiences, Tawanda's

own experiences with getting threatening glares in certain locations illustrates how even

concepts of 'butch' or 'femme' are not as clear-cut as they may seem (Eves, 2004).

> T: So then there was this old granny [at work]. She really liked me. She
> even gave me a lift to my house, like in a motherly kind of love. She
> treated me like a baby. So when she saw AJ on one of my pictures, like
> on my phone or something, she thought AJ was a, was a man, you know.
> And then I- she never asked me like, are you lesbian or like what. She
> never did, but then, the other time these guys, they're from the kitchen.
> They told her. But she still never confronted me about it. I don't know
> why. 'Cause then she'd be like, "How is your husband?" I'd say, "My
> husband is fine." [*laughs*] But I always wondered like, how did she take
> it? Did she avoid it because she didn't want it to be true? Or she didn't
> believe it, or what? I don't know.

Tawanda never did correct her coworker's assumption that she was married to a man,

preferring instead the halting safety that came in her coworker assuming she was

heterosexual. Left unspoken was that if she clarified things with her coworker and

affirmed that she was indeed a lesbian, and that her "husband" at that time still identified

as a lesbian woman as well, the friendliness between them might evaporate. Here, too, we

see how tactics of strategic outness are spatial and situational. In some spaces, like her

neighbourhood of Rosettenville, speculation does not work in that she is still read as a

lesbian by many of the space's inhabitants. At work, however, and in the presence of her

elder coworker she can and does use it to stay safe.

At Christine's work, she too uses speculation. Christine's map was relatively

sparse, and so in our conversation discussing it I sought to use narrative questions to elicit

more stories (Kim, 2016). In response to a question I asked about her working

environment, Christine clearly spelled out the material benefits the assumption of

heterosexuality has for her.

> K: Are you out to any of your coworkers? Do they know?
> C: *Uh, no. I'm still new. [*laughs*] I can't just be out with everything.*
> *Though you know it's, it's, what can I say? It's easy with us femmes. And*
> *if they don't love uh, lesbians in the workplace, us femmes it's much*
> *safer and better than [it is for] her [my partner]. Definitely they will*
> *know 'This one [my partner] is not straight.' But for me, it's hard for*
> *them to identify if I am or not.*

Christine fears coming out to her coworkers because of what could happen were they to

be homophobic. Her statement about how, "It's easy with us femmes," implies a shared

understanding of the fact that feminine-looking lesbians do not have to go to great lengths

to hide their sexuality the way that more masculine-looking lesbians might. Her

affirmative assertion that it is difficult for others to identify if she is a lesbian or not again

underscores the culture of heteronormativity. Meanwhile, the consequential absence of

non-heteronormative behaviours leads to the illusion that heterosexuality is the only

'natural' or 'normal' sexuality (Hubbard, 2008). By dressing in stereotypically feminine

ways and choosing not to discuss her same-sex partner, Christine benefits from this culture of heteronormativity. In doing so, however, she is also maintaining the status quo and reaffirming the heterosexuality of that space (Rodó-de-Zárate, 2015).

At a family level, too, participants engaged in emotional labour via speculation by staying 'closeted' (even after some family members had found out) to maintain harmony. Marcia's mother found out Marcia was gay through word-of-mouth, but never confronted Marcia about it, and Marcia herself has not dared to say anything. Back when she was living in Zimbabwe, her uncle caught her making out with a girl from the neighbourhood one day.

> M: So he told my mom and my mom was like, "I don't understand; what is that?" And I really didn't explain anything, actually. Yeah, I was what? I think I was fifteen or sixteen. I was actually very scared. […] Anyway, that's how my mother knows…or got to know.

What Marcia's uncle had disclosed to her mother was that, while Marcia was living with him during high school, he had caught Marcia kissing a girl from the neighbourhood. ("Such a rookie mistake.") Her mother, however, "[doesn't] understand." Marcia sought not to clarify this lack of understanding, and they have not spoken about it since. Her choice in not doing so leads to an uneasy truce, of sorts. Marcia's mother does not have to face or consider her daughter's sexuality, but Marcia is then constantly engaging in emotional labour by hiding her sexuality whenever she and her mother interact. This may not be explicit—Marcia does not engage in concealment through telling of a fictitious boyfriend or cutting her dreadlocks to appear more feminine—but she must still be careful when discussing her activities (e.g., if she had gone to the Beaulah Bar the night before) and in her descriptions of Precious. Marcia's mother lives in Zimbabwe, but the

two of them occasionally speak over the phone or through text. Wherever Marcia chooses to have these conversations therefore become 'sites' where she must be on guard. This indicates how belonging is both spatial and temporal. If Marcia is chatting with her mother while at home, for instance, 'home' temporarily loses its claim as a safe space where Marcia can feel free to be herself (Chapter Five), but this safety resumes once she hangs up.

The above scenarios illustrate ways that LMW can use heteronormativity to their advantage to avoid unsafe circumstances and/or rejection by close friends and family members. But though their overall safety heavily factors into why they may not 'directly disclose' their sexuality to others, it is not the only factor they take into consideration. In the next section, I explore some of the other reasons that LMW may choose to be less than forthcoming about their sexuality in order to create spaces of (partial) inclusion.

6.4.2 Identity Balancing

Thus far, this chapter has focused almost exclusively on the time-space strategies lesbian migrant women use to create spaces of safety, belonging, and inclusion as they relate to their gender and sexuality. But gender and sexuality are not the only identity categories that matter in terms of whether or not LMW feel they belong in any given space, and focusing on when and where their sexuality may or may not be welcomed reveals only part of the picture in terms of how they create spaces of inclusion. LMW also consider how welcome they may be with respect to other identity categories when creating spaces of belonging for themselves. Some of the women's sketch maps, for instance, show that there are some places where they feel safe or included with respect to certain specific parts of their identity, but that are exclusionary toward other parts. I argue

that as part of the process of speculation (or concealment), LMW are consciously or unconsciously choosing to sacrifice the inclusion they may feel with respect to others knowing about their sexuality in order to feel *more* included in other categories. This adds to Orne's (2011) understandings of strategic outness in that it better explains *how* individuals consider their desired social contexts, and the resulting actions that they choose. In this section, then, I offer a few examples of how LMW themselves explained their conscious decision to conceal parts of their identity for safety and inclusion in other realms.

One example can be seen with Marcia at her job, where she worked with mostly "white Europeans." Though she felt that her coworkers discriminated against her for being black and being a woman, and that this was compounded by her migrant status (Chapter Four), most of them also defended her right to be openly gay. But being in this environment still did not protect her from being attacked for it. The particular incident in question happened when another coworker (who did not know of Marcia's sexuality) claimed that gay people are "the most horrible, disgusting human beings in the world," and that she, "believe[s] they should just all die." Marcia herself did not say anything to defend herself, stating instead that, "I was hurt, 'cause I don't think I'm a horrible human being. I don't think I should die." Her choice to remain silent came because she felt that she should not ruffle any proverbial feathers. Even though, again, it was an ostensibly safe environment for sexual minorities and Marcia could seemingly have defended herself against her coworker's attack, she sacrificed this openness about her sexuality to maintain harmony. This shows how the decision on which strategic outness tactic to employ is not simply a matter of whether or not participants feel they may be physically

safe in doing so. Marcia had made it clear that she did not want to cause any emotional disturbances at her job. Her situation is reminiscent of Kawale's (2004) example of a lesbian South African woman in a 'gay-friendly' work environment whose colleagues nevertheless reacted negatively when she told them about a woman she was interested in. Marcia knows she is already in a precarious position as a black migrant woman (Chapters Four and Five), and so her choice to engage in emotional labour and thus spare her coworker's feelings while her own had been hurt is illustrative of the constant leveraging she feels she must undertake.

The emotionally-fraught balancing of participants' identities, and subsequent fracturing of their spaces of inclusion also played out in or around religious institutions. Religion played an especially important role in the lives of many of the participants, as discussed in Chapter Five. Five of the women mapped out places of spiritual importance, while Christine, whose map was quite sparse, spoke at some length about a church that she was hoping to attend and about church-hosted get-togethers she had attended in the past. Participants often shared a religious connection with their family, and it was largely because of this connection that they could not quite escape their family's homophobia. Tawanda explicitly noted on her map (Figure 6.1) the emotional turmoil she felt with regard to her and her family's church, stating that she, "want[s] to go but I sometimes feel bad and judge myself." The statement on her map about her feelings is demonstrative of how sketch maps can be multisensory means of communication (Gieseking, 2013; Powell, 2010). It also shows how images evoke narratives (Kim, 2016). In Tawanda's case, a minimalist depiction of a church led to an entire discussion about religion, emotions, and belonging.

The ambivalence of these spaces is clearly linked to LMW's intersecting identities (Chapter Five), but rather than avoid these institutions entirely (Section 6.3), LMW find ways of creating space for themselves. Marcia acknowledged that those who attend her Shona-speaking church service with her in Rosebank are not likely to condemn her and ostracize her on the spot.

> M: But then I didn't go for a long time. Then my friend's mom, actually Phumzile's mom came. And then she kinda like, revived my faith and stuff. Then I started going back. But they don't know me and I don't know them.
> K: *So you just-*
> M: There's actually no need to then just announce that, "Oh, so guys, hey, I'm gay."
> K: *Right*
> M: I'm just one random girl who comes to church and goes home.

The service, Marcia said, is "much…reviving. [*laughs*]" In this way, Marcia is able to autonomously fulfill her spiritual needs, but she still opts to remain closeted while doing so. She does not discuss her personal life with other (mostly Zimbabwean) churchgoers, and Precious does not go with her. I did not get the sense that coming out to her fellow congregants would create a life-threating situation per se. Rather, it might make future church services awkward or uncomfortable. In this way, the idea of identity balancing can better account for the tactical and emotional forethought of lesbian migrant women's choices beyond Orne's (2011) original understanding of strategic outness.

Precious, meanwhile, attends a different church in Rosebank, where at one point, she said, "They were busy preaching about lesbians and gays every week." Precious was less forthcoming about her internal struggles with accepting herself, but she did admit that she has made fun of other gays and lesbians at church.

M: What do you think Sandra will do if she found out?
P: She will stop talking to me.
M: You think so?
K: Is that your sister?
P: No, my friend. My oldest friend. We've been friends for like, years
and years.
K: But she doesn't know?
P: She doesn't know.
M: Does she suspect?
P: She doesn't, that one, she doesn't. Like I didn't-
M: It's not in her radar, hey?
P: It's not. Sometimes at church we'll be busy making fun of people who
look gay in the crowd.
M: You are such a bad gay person!
P: That was then.
M: Okay

By attending church services at congregations that denounce homosexuality, participants

must balance the spiritual satisfaction they receive and the companionship they share

with the friends and family members they attend with against the disparaging messages

toward their sexuality. Participants were thus engaging in emotional labour through the

suppression of their sexuality in order to maintain a cordial atmosphere.

Rumaitha, too, was struggling with the disconnect between her religion and her

sexuality, saying, "You end up asking yourself, 'Why am I doing this?' 'Cause it's bad.

When you die, you will be alone in your grave." Though Rumaitha had found a space that

was slowly helping her to embrace her spirituality and her sexuality together, her

disadvantaged socioeconomic position meant that she still had to conceal parts of her

identity in order to foster a sense of inclusion. As described in Chapter Five, there was an

incident where Rumaitha was caught drinking alcohol by a member of her Muslim LGBT

group, which then placed in jeopardy the financial and social support she was set to

receive in order to secure her refugee passport. Though 'alcohol drinker' is hardly an

identity category in the way that something like sexuality or nationality are, the effect it

had was to remind Rumaitha that she was being watched at all times. This results in her being forced to *constantly* monitor herself and adjust her behaviours accordingly in order to create and maintain spaces of (partial) inclusion; in almost no space is she ever able to fully relax or fully belong.

That lesbian migrant women have to constantly (re)evaluate their surroundings also draws attention to the spatial and temporal dimensions of strategic outness. By Orne's (2011) definition, strategic outness is a continual process, and so there are very few places in which gays and lesbians are ever *not* considering, to some degree, how 'out' they can be. Though safe spaces (Chapter Five) may include those where participants are out to everyone around them, this is time- and people-dependent, and so even if participants feel free to be themselves, or feel that they can 'directly disclose' that they are lesbians, they are constantly engaged in a process of (re)assessing the safety of the situation. This is exemplified when looking at 'safe' neighbourhoods (Chapter Five), which were often ones where other socially progressive individuals were assumed to be present. In this regard, participants faced far fewer risks were others to 'read' them as lesbians, and consequently, they felt less obligated to engage in the emotional labour necessary to hide their sexuality (Kawale, 2004). But an incident with Marcia and Precious illustrates the instability that lesbian migrant women face in day-to-day interactions, as well as why there is a constant need to self-monitor. In the incident, Marcia, Precious, and their friend Mpumi were standing outside a bar they liked to frequent waiting for their rideshare to arrive. A man suddenly approached them and began hitting on Precious while subsequently denigrating Marcia and Mpumi, saying that they "look[ed] lesbian." To maintain her safety, Precious felt that she had to deny even

knowing Marcia or Mpumi, let alone disclosing that she and Marcia were in a relationship. The necessitated fragmentation of her (and Marcia's) identity and the emotional labour she is forced to engage in to avoid upsetting or enraging the stranger speaks to the fragility of safety itself and the mental strength required to merely exist in the public sphere (Canham, 2017). To the extent that Marcia and Precious go out together at all, and with Marcia having dreadlocks, and neither of them overly fond of wearing makeup, their general *modus operandi* at places like the aforementioned bar could be interpreted as speculation—they may not hold hands or engage in other public displays of affection, but they are not going to great lengths to hide themselves, either. But when confronted with someone who overtly threatens this safety, their tactics immediately switch to one of concealment—denying not only they are lesbians, but that they even know each other to begin with (Orne, 2011). Repeated incidents like this could also mean that they begin to avoid going to the bar altogether, or if they do go, they may restrict how late they stay. In this way, we can see how others' emotions (or their imagined emotions) restrict lesbian migrant women's movements throughout the city and the actions they engage in in different spaces.

The scenario with Marcia and Precious also calls attention to how lesbian migrant women must constantly be in tune with others' emotions so that they can adjust their behaviours accordingly. This process of constantly monitoring the emotions of others and switching tactics accordingly—whether through speculation, concealment, or avoiding spaces entirely, is both emotionally exhausting and confusing, The near-ubiquity of spaces where lesbian migrant women are required to do this highlights the need for spaces where they can 'be themselves' without risk of safety threats, but also where they

can feel seen and understood. As Gorman-Murray (2009) argues, "Intersubjective connection in places is critical for generating feelings of comfort" (p. 448).

This discordance is made more germane by looking at places and situations where participants feel comfortable not just 'directly disclosing' their sexuality, as Orne (2011) calls it, but where they can actively understand how it mutually constitutes other aspects of their identity, a process or tactic that I call direct engagement. This again goes beyond Orne's (2011) and others' ideas of identity management through the process of direct disclosure. Direct engagement recognizes that disclosure in and of itself can have little effect on a person's environment and understanding of self if it happens in an place that is unsupportive or ignorant of other aspects of said person's identity. This process enables lesbian migrant women not just to 'come out,' but to do so while having a better understanding of what impact their sexuality has in all areas of their life.

6.5 Direct Engagement

In Chapter Five I identified some of the few spaces where LMW feel very comfortable because they feel they can 'be themselves' there. These were spaces participants told me about through their maps and in conversation where, not only were they free to display physical affection toward other women and/or be vocally open about their sexuality, but where they could and did grapple with the emotional and material effects that different aspects of their identities had on their lives. This is a tactic I refer to as 'direct engagement,' and it expands Orne's (2011) descriptions of strategic outness by emphasizing the emotional components that can come with having to constantly reconcile and monitor a whole range of identities. I argue that having safe spaces where LMW can

discuss and process the events going on in their life is important for avoiding emotional burnout and feeling as though they do truly belong somewhere.

Etta was able to 'directly engage' with what had happened to her at the trauma clinic at a Johannesburg NGO dedicated to helping victims of violence (Figure 6.2). Here, she was able to get free psychotherapy. Though Etta never outright described the trauma she had undergone, only saying, "I've been through…been through a certain trauma back home, so someone referred me to this [clinic]," my reading of her "silences" is that the trauma was sexual in nature, and quite likely related to her sexuality (Gorman-Murray et al., 2010, p. 104). On the clinic's website it claims that it assists victims of violence through helping them process their feelings on the trauma they have experienced, and in Etta's words, it has been, "very, very helpful" in this regard (Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, n.d.).

Zoe, too, had experienced sexual violence, and pegged Cape Town's SWEAT (Sex Workers Education & Advocacy Taskforce) as a safe space to help her come to terms with that experience (Figure 6.3), describing the organization as, "very feminist." In the days when she used to sell sex, she got lost somewhere in Observatory and ended up spotting the place. From there she, "just walked in and asked for counselling; they helped." Again, I argue that the sense of belonging she feels here extends beyond feelings of safety and acceptance because she is able to be openly lesbian (Chapter Five). In spaces like SWEAT, LMW are welcomed and encouraged to actively engage with how their identities intersect with each other and with the world around them.

Figure 6.2 Etta's Map
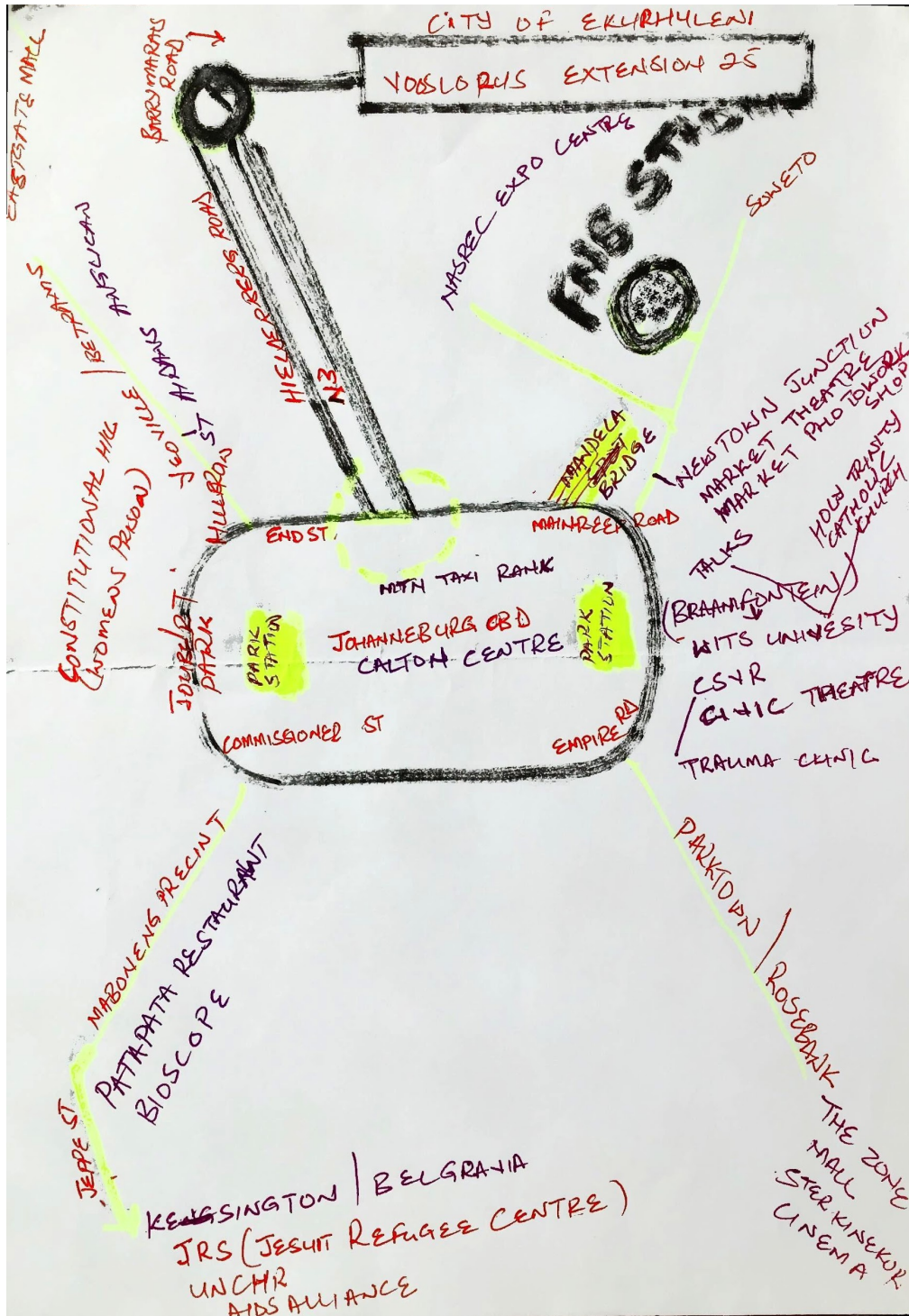
Figure 6.3 Zoe's Map
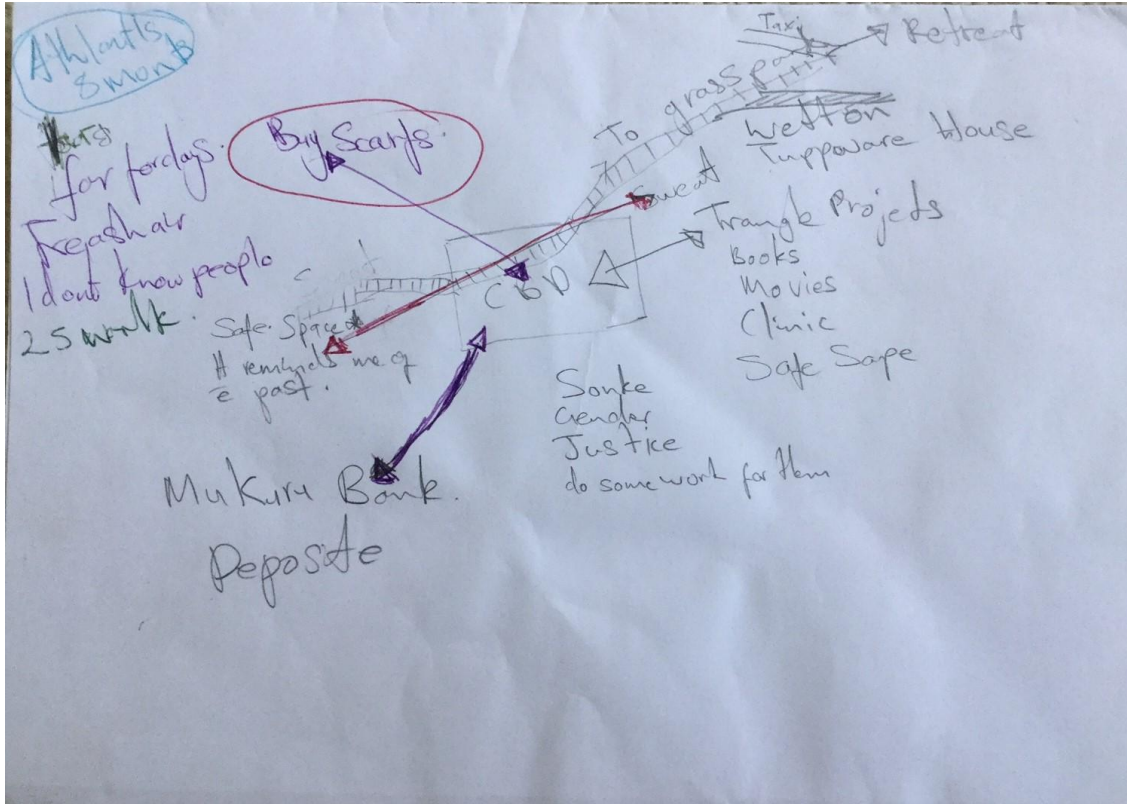
For AJ, meanwhile, the Holy Trinity Catholic Church serves as "food for [his] soul" (as seen in Figure 6.4). The fortnightly services he attends here are not explicitly religious in nature (though participants are free discuss religion should they choose), but they are expressly welcome to *all* members of the queer umbrella, including newly-out trans people like AJ. Similarly, while not being a group for migrants *per se*, many of those who attended were from the African diaspora. The language AJ used, both in his map and in talking to me, to describe what Holy Trinity means to him implies a holistic connection, where he is able to thrive through the expression of a more complete identity, encompassing his spiritual, emotional, and gender identities. The night that I attended a meeting, the topic of discussion (chosen by one of the members the previous session) was on the families that we "adopt" (i.e. our friends) versus those we are born to. Everyone

was invited and encouraged to share how they felt about and related to both groups of people, and to ask questions of other group members. In doing so, participants discussed things like the tensions they felt around their biological families compared to how, around their friends, they could be their "true selves."

Figure 6.4 – AJ's Map
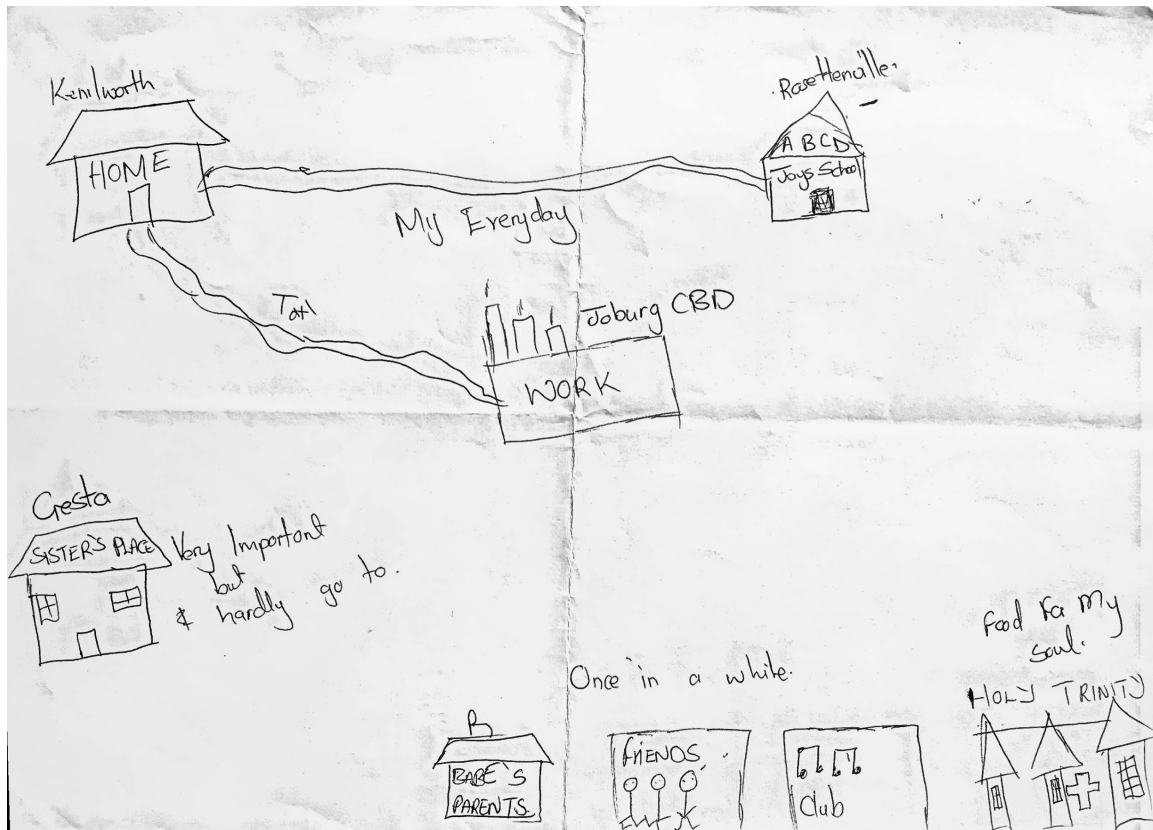
In sum, an analysis of lesbian migrants' behavioural and emotional actions in spaces like gay bars and restaurants that are touted as gay-friendly shows how this distinction alone is not enough to negate lesbian migrants' need to self-monitor and adapt behaviours that downplay parts of their identity. By looking at their behaviours in spaces that encourage them to engage with their different identity categories, we can see just how fractured their senses of belonging are in most other places. These sites where they

can feel 'whole' are an exception. In countless other sites they are required to stay on guard and pay attention to their actions, to the identities of others present, and to the emotional responses these individuals may have.

6.6 Discussion

Lesbian migrant women have an array of tactics that they employ to keep them safe and create spaces of inclusion. These tactics explain some of the ways that they can manage their identities in a society that grants them very little power. The decisions to use a certain tactic in any given location requires complex considerations of who else is in the space, what that space is 'for,' (e.g., work, leisure, studying, etc.), what the women themselves need from that space, and how others might feel about them being 'out,' along with the repercussions of this. In this way, we can see how their belonging in and movements through the city is not just a matter of what spaces they are and are not 'allowed' to be in, or even what spaces they feel safe or unsafe in. Lesbian migrant women have a choice, albeit a very constrained one, in how they want to present themselves, and these choices have an effect on where they do and avoid, and how others respond to them in those spaces. These choices often (though not always) hinge upon how 'out' they feel comfortable being with respect to their sexuality. This reinforces that the oft-used metaphor of 'the closet' is not as binary a concept as many think it to be (Fisher, 2003; Orne, 2011). It is instead a continuum upon which lesbian migrant women continually negotiate their identities (Fisher, 2003).

Viewing the decisions that LMW make about the disclosure of their emotions vis-à-vis their sexuality as conscious choices rather than unconscious reactions also serves to disrupt discourses of behaviours as being *either* rational or emotional (Gorman-Murray,

2017). I argue that lesbian migrant women choose to conceal or reveal their emotions for reasons that are quite rational. Sometimes, having this choice means choosing to avoid a place entirely. Whether a place is unsafe in general or unsafe especially for lesbians, the decision and the ability to stay away from somewhere is reflective of both power and agency and, I argue, should be considered a tactic of strategic outness (Orne, 2011). That it is indeed a tactic is called into focus when looking at how and when lesbian migrant talk about going to places that they *wish* they could stay away from. In these instances, then, they will try to leave the spaces as quickly as possible and avoid interacting with any others for fear that they may 'catch on' to their sexuality.

When and where the consequences of being outed are perhaps slightly less severe, lesbian migrant women may instead engage in speculation, where they do not actively try to cover up or conceal the fact that they are a lesbian, but they do not disclose it to anyone, either. The efficacy of this tactic in keeping others unaware of their sexuality speaks to society's heteronormative biases, where individuals are presumed to be heterosexual unless otherwise indicated.

In other instances, though coming out may not lead to grave danger, lesbian migrant women may still choose to remain relatively closeted because of the effects that coming out could have on their other identities and places of attachment. That is, they stand to lose social support in other arenas, whether emotional support from friends and family, or spiritual support from fellow churchgoers. The choice to remain closeted so that they may be welcomed in other spaces is a form of speculation that I call identity balancing. Knowing where and why lesbian migrant women engage in it can help further explain and understand how the sites they inhabit and their spatial strategies in those sites

are linked to their perceptions of self. Viewed through an intersectional lens, we can see how spatial context is relevant to the decisions that get made in different ways and at different times (Anthias, 2013; Rodó-de-Zárate & Baylina, 2018). There is not one rule that governs evenly across space; there are "interacting spheres of values" that are mediated relationally and in a lot of different ways (Kihato, 2013, p. 127).

Decisions on where and when to 'come out' (and the degree of 'outness' therein) are also contingent not just upon how safe a situation or location may or may not be, but on the perceived emotional needs of others. This emotional labour of monitoring and safeguarding others' emotions often comes at the expense of lesbian migrant women's own peace of mind. The frequent emotional labour that LMW feel they must engage in calls attention to how inclusion and belonging are intersectional, temporal, and spatial (Bürkner, 2012). It additionally showcases how the politics of belonging can play out (Yuval-Davis, 2006). If, as Crowley (1999) claims, the politics of belonging is about "the dirty work of boundary maintenance," I argue that lesbian migrants' frequent acquiescence to the emotional needs of others solidifies these boundaries through their positioning as literal and metaphorical outsiders (p. 30).

Lastly, emotional labour in these different spatial contexts necessarily requires a fracturing of lesbian migrants' identities through the concerted suppression of their sexuality, and I argue that this interferes with lesbian migrants' ability to fully engage with and explore their own identities. Understandings of self are derived in part from the multiple connections we have to other people (Conradson & McKay, 2007). If these connections are fractured, or are contingent upon performances not reflective of LMW's

real identities, LMW lose their ability to effect change in their environments and to create

spaces where they truly belong.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The few studies that have looked at the lives of black lesbian migrants in South Africa clearly reveal that these individuals face hardships above and beyond those of lesbian citizens or heterosexual migrants (Dill et al., 2016; Koko et al., 2018; ORAM, 2013; PASSOP, 2012). This dissertation adds to this work by showing how lesbian migrants' intersecting identity categories inhibit the creation of spaces of belonging. With principles of qualitative narrative inquiry serving as methodological guidelines, and with intersectionality theory framing my analysis, I have used the narratives that were disclosed to me through interviews and sketch maps to show how the identities of lesbian migrants in urban South Africa can interact with each other, how this shapes the spaces in which they can safely be, and what they do to carve out space for themselves. Taken in conjunction, the results show how queer migrants' lives, and in particular their senses of belonging, are shaped by their gender, race, sexuality, and migrant status. The results also further understandings of the social production of space by providing examples of the way that identity and space are mutually constituted.

The three results chapters build off each other in explaining the myriad ways that belonging is constructed through access to and creation of space, and they explain how spaces themselves reflect and impact LMW's identity categories. Chapter Four shows how lesbian migrants are frequently denied access to different spaces, thereby denying them the ability to form a gainful livelihood and establish day-to-day routines. Even in spaces to which they do have access, however, their safety herein in not guaranteed, and so Chapter Five explores how this safety is constructed and understood, and how it goes

hand-in-hand with their intersecting identities and the identities of those occupying any given place. In many spaces, LMW are only partially safe and therefore only partially included; that is, they may be safe with respect to their migrant identities, for instance, but not their sexuality. In seeking to maintain the safety they are able find, however imperfect, LMW must be constantly aware of others' emotions, lest something change for the worse, and so Chapter Six examines the ways in which they control their own emotions and expressions of their identity in order to maintain an uneasy sort of truce.

In this chapter, I first draw together some of the conceptual threads from Chapters Four through Six, explaining more thoroughly some of the chapters' main points as they relate to my research objectives, and what, more broadly, they can tell us about how and where lesbian migrants belong in urban South African society. Following this, I offer suggestions for organizations, policymakers, and state officials who want to support black lesbian migrants in bettering their lives, and also point to some of the obstacles in doing so. I then draw out some of the research's theoretical implications relating more broadly to geographies of belonging, emotional geographies, intersectionality theory, and queer migration scholarship.

7.2 Intersections

The first objective was to identify if and how xenophobia and homophobia intersect to exclude LMW from establishing gainful livelihoods and day-to-day routines. A consideration of lesbian migrants' everyday spatial encounters shows how their interactions with others and their environment are defined and constrained by their identities as black, lesbian, migrant women. Because of their intersecting identity categories, then, LMW experience intense surveillance and a near-total inability to easily

earn a livelihood and freely adapt healthy routines. Though narrative accounts, I show how this transpires in terms of getting a stable, well-paying job, accessing safe and secure housing, establishing and maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships, and engaging with sites of leisure and wellbeing.

While the women I spoke with had a variety of different permits or legal statuses (Chapter Three), the impermanence of most of these meant employers were reluctant to hire them or, in the case of Rumaitha, fired them when they had to keep taking time off to renew their statuses. The jobs that they were able to find were either low-wage or paid less than a fair rate (when employers paid them at all). But their vulnerability with respect to these jobs stemmed not just from their migrant statuses, but also from a combination of their identities as black, lesbian, migrant women. Marcia articulated these intersecting disadvantages quite well, explaining that in terms of pay, there was a glass ceiling she faced as a black woman, but as a migrant in the country she did not want to speak up for fear of losing her job and being forced to go home to Zimbabwe. She is quite clear that her race, gender, and migrant status combined all put her in a less privileged position.

Their lower socioeconomic status left them with limited resources in terms of finding adequate housing. As a result, some of the women lived in inexpensive neighbourhoods that were unsafe because of higher crime rates and proximity to other migrants. Others, like Rumaitha, lived with roommates who were openly hostile with respect to their sexuality *and* migrant status. Eight of the women lived with their significant others, and their dependence on their partners for housing highlights how relationships could sometimes be constrained by interpersonal expectations. For instance, those who were in self-identified butch-femme relationships often felt pressured to either

provide for their partner or let their partner provide for them. Family relationships, too, were impacted by gendered and cultural expectations. Women like Tawanda felt that their parents were judging them because they failed to meet certain standards of femininity.

Lastly, in attempting to care for themselves, whether through the pursuit of social diversions or through more traditional health care systems, intersecting axes of discrimination also inhibited LMW from accessing such sites to the fullest, or at all. Self-described gay bars or other queer-friendly locales could be financially out of reach, while more health-focused places like NGOs and doctors' offices all overlooked the distinct needs of lesbians.

Through an intersectional lens it is possible to see how the spaces lesbian migrant women occupy frequently and continually reinforce their status and identities as outsiders, and that having all of these statuses in combination leads to intense surveillance and a perpetual instability, thus resulting in a near-total inability to establish healthy routines or gainful livelihoods. This denial in terms of access to spaces large and small because of intersecting factors like homophobia and xenophobia also, broadly, makes finding spaces of belonging immensely challenging. These factors, as Held (2015) and Schuermans (2016) remind us, are rooted in emotions, and in the remaining two results chapters I explored how emotions can regulate or enable lesbian migrants' senses of belonging.

7.3 Places of (Un)safety

Chapter Five's objective was to examine how safe or comfortable lesbian migrant women feel in different spaces, and how their levels of comfort speak to their (lack of)

attachment. Using participants' sketch maps and our related discussions, I show how LMW gauge a space's safety based on the imagined or presumed characteristics of others who may occupy these places, and how these characteristics contrast (or match) their own identities. Even in spaces that were not necessarily 'obviously' dangerous, participants still feared what could happen to them should other individuals not be as tolerant toward them as they may have expected. This forces LMW to constantly be on guard, and I argue that this permanent, pervasive fear and resulting state of alert contribute to lesbian migrants' non-belonging.

Lesbian migrant women deliberately sought and avoided certain places based on how safe they perceived them to be, and what made a space feel safe was the presumed presence of other socially-progressive individuals. These were people who were thought to be unlikely to engage with the women in any harmful way. Unsafe spaces, meanwhile, were those that the women thought harboured people with regressive beliefs and/or to be a haven for thieves. This highlights the role of imaginative geographies with respect to the material effects in people's lives (Brown et al., 2007). Because the women *imagined* certain places to be full of thieves, for instance, they did their best to avoid them (Chapter Six).

But in many cases, participants were neither fully welcomed (or at least left unbothered) by a space's inhabitants, nor were they fully outcast or at high risk of theft. In some cases, they may be welcomed into migrant communities because they themselves are migrants, but not *fully* welcomed, as their sexual attraction to other women was cause for concern. Furthermore, because spaces are created by people, and people are always on the move, there is almost always the potential for an imagined other to appear and

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transform a space from 'safe' to 'unsafe.' Safety, then, is rarely a yes/no (Rodó-de-Zárate, 2017); most spaces are ambivalent. For lesbian migrant women, the sheer volume of ambivalent spaces, I argue, is a manifestation of their intersectional inequalities. The intense scrutiny that they are subjected to because of their intersecting statuses means that countless others wield power over them and have the ability to threaten their wellbeing.

An analysis of the spaces lesbian migrant women occupy and the characteristics thereof show how it is not necessarily the characteristics of a space itself that enable them to discern its safety; it is the identities of the space's inhabitants, the social power they possess relative to lesbian migrants, and their (perceived) actions therein. As stated, the ever-changing nature of space means that there are few places where lesbian migrant women can ever just 'be themselves' without having to monitor who else is in a space and what actions these others might undertake. This has implications not just for spaces where they feel safe or not, but for what they actually do in these spaces, discussed in the next section.

7.4 Identity Management

The last objective was to identify some of the strategies lesbian migrant women use to manage the perceptions of their identity and to create spaces of inclusion and belonging. These strategies, which I argue both reflect and build off of Orne's (2011) concept of strategic outness, reflect a desire to both remain safe and, to some extent, true to themselves, while also ensuring support from others. Coinciding with most of these strategies, I contend that LMW must frequently engage in emotional labour by being attuned to others' emotions and suppressing parts of their own identity. Doing so makes

others feel more comfortable and creates spaces of partial inclusion, but it also compromises lesbian migrants' overall sense of belonging.

The paucity of spaces where lesbian migrant women did *not* have to worry about the characteristics of the space's occupants (Chapter Five) meant that they had to near-constantly monitor and modify their own behaviour, lest they encounter someone with bad intentions. In some cases they simply avoided spaces entirely, which, I argue, is a strategy in and of itself. The other two tactics, however, centred on what to do with respect to their sexuality—they could use speculation, or they could directly engage with it.

By engaging in speculation, lesbian migrants take advantage of the heteronormativity of space while simultaneously upholding it. Because South African society (and indeed, all societies) is built around heteronormative assumptions of behaviour, where people are assumed to be straight unless they say or do otherwise (Bhagat, 2018; Canham, 2017), lesbian migrant women who dressed in a more feminine way could effectively 'hide in plain sight.' By leaving unchecked others' (incorrect) assumptions of their sexuality, they create spaces of safety and inclusion. But because space is constructed not just through what performances occur, but also through what performances do *not* occur, the absence of any sexuality besides heterosexuality gives the illusion that heterosexuality is natural, and therefore the only acceptable sexual identity (Browne, 2007).

The use of speculation also challenges the fixity and linearity of the coming out narrative—where participants 'start' as closeted and 'end' with being out—and shows how individuals can oscillate back and forth along this trajectory. Most women, for

instance, were out to friends but closeted to at least some of their family members. Heteronormativity, meanwhile, ensures that for many lesbians, they will *always* have to out themselves if they wish others to know their sexuality (Orne, 2011). Here, the analogy of 'the closet' as a place to be and emerge from also falls away, and lesbian migrant women's strategic use of speculation further queers linear understandings of the coming out process by showing how it is a *lifelong* process with no single endpoint.

All of the above strategies require that lesbian migrant women pay attention to their surroundings in order to note the 'safety' of who else is sharing a space with them, and they must monitor their own behaviours accordingly. The expenditure of this emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983; Kawale, 2004; Sólveigar-Guðmundsdóttir, 2018; Steinberg & Figart, 1999) means that the presentation of their identities is still contingent upon the identities and behaviours of others who may occupy any given space. It also means that their belonging in any given space is only partial—should lesbian migrants fully out themselves, their belonging may be compromised. The only strategy that lets them 'be themselves' in all of their intersecting identities, including their sexuality, is one I call direct engagement. Lesbian migrants' use of it has direct implications for how individuals and NGOs could help improve the lives of lesbian migrants, and so I next discuss the two in conjunction. I also discuss how agents and agencies beyond NGOs can contribute to lesbian migrants' wellbeing, and some of the obstacles they may face in doing so.

7.5 Opportunities and Obstacles

Through the process of direct engagement, participants choose to grapple with the spiritual and material effects that all of their intersecting identities have on their lives.

Doing so, as I argue in Chapter Six, provides immense social, material, and spiritual benefits. The relative dearth of spaces where participants felt they could partake in this process underscores the need for more of them. The few sites where LMW did use direct engagement tended to be with groups or organizations designed with their specific, intersecting identities in mind. Most notable of this was Cape Town's PASSOP, which specifically targeted lesbian and gay migrants. Other examples are groups like gay Muslim-focused The Inner Circle in Cape Town or the fortnightly LGBT meetings at a Catholic church in Johannesburg. These congregations, while not explicitly being *for* lesbian migrants as PASSOP was, still provided sites where queer migrants were likely to come in contact with each other. The qualitative content of these sites all differed— PASSOP offered legal resources, The Inner Circle provided spiritual guidance, and the meetings at the Catholic Church mostly just offered a space for like-minded individuals to come and chat. A number of the women I spoke with also expressed to me at the end of our first chat that it felt relieving to have told their story to someone who cared. In combination with the language they used to express how they felt about these various NGOs, I contend that what is most helpful about these sites is not the content they may provide per se, but the fact that they offer a place where lesbian migrant women can be seen and heard, and thus feel that they truly belong.

To that end, I do offer a number of more specific suggestions for how to ensure that LMW feel included across a range of scales. The first is for existing South African NGOs that already gear their services toward migrant populations more broadly and wish to do more to reach out to lesbian migrants. Other reports looking at how to build more inclusive cities for migrants have suggested things like language programs that target

migrants specifically or civic introduction programs to help them better understand and fit into a new culture (Gebhardt, 2014; Mouritsen & Jaeger, 2018). But because the women I spoke with felt that other African migrants were more likely to be homophobic, they tended to forgo a lot of deliberate contact with them. If a lesbian migrant feels that getting support from a migrant-focused NGO or NGO-sponsored program may put her in contact with homophobic others, she may be very hesitant to reach out. South African support services and NGOs that aid migrants might therefore want to consider having a separate branch specifically for lesbian and gay migrants, as PASSOP does, or consider having another space for them entirely.

Knowing, however, that many lesbians appropriate space differently than gay men do (Matebeni, 2008) and that many black lesbian migrants lack the ability to move freely and easily throughout either Cape Town or Johannesburg, aid groups might also want to consider more home-based forms of support. Groups could offer training for 'social lynchpins' like AJ, who could then run informal get-togethers from the privacy of their own homes. Alternatively, they could offer instructions on creating digital sites and digital spaces to the same effect. These measures would meet lesbian migrants where they are, literally and figuratively, and provide connections to people who can truly 'see' and hear them, and offer their support.

NGOs like PASSOP could also consider doing more community outreach. Goh (2018), for instance, illustrates how queer activist groups in New York have found success in promoting working relationships with park trusts and community board members. These relationships foster more inclusive spaces through a reduction in the control and oversight over marginalized members of the queer community. Goh's

description of the "unjust geographies" that some queer New Yorkers face on account of their race, class, gender, and sexuality mirror those faced by LMW in South Africa, and so I argue that this could be an effective approach here as well (p. 463).

The decision to engage in community outreach, however, should not exclusively fall on queer migrant-friendly NGOs. Women like Etta lamented the apathy expressed by churches and the Department of Health toward the struggles that gays and lesbians can face (Chapter Five), citing their failure to attend an NGO-sponsored workshop as an example of this. I contend that more established community organizations should do more to reach out to groups like PASSOP, especially considering, in my personal experience, the lack of funding some of the latter groups are faced with.

Etta also stated that the police did attend the aforementioned workshop, pointing to another way to make cities safer and more inclusive. Goh (2018) notes that queer rights organizations have rebuked more traditional 'eyes on the streets' approaches to safety, where heavier police presence was thought to increase safety. She and many others argue that an increase in policing regularly leads to more arrests and more violence toward marginalized members of the LGBT community, and this is true in cities across the globe (Diéz, 2018; Morrissey, 2013; Steele et al., 2018; Wong, 2012). Advocates instead argue for sensitivity training, as the workshops help provide, along with decriminalizing sex work and a redistributing of police funding toward social services (Gouws, 2016; Robertson, 2016). These I again claim could work in South Africa as well. I also contend that the re-training should be extended to Refugee Status Discrimination Officers (RSDOs) as well. Though RSDOs' discriminatory practices are rooted in broader systems of xenophobia, racism, homophobia, and sexism, and thus cannot be

'fixed' by a few days' worth of education, offering them a better understanding of some of the realities that gays and lesbians face elsewhere could nevertheless help them to make fairer judgments when it comes to deciding cases of sexual asylum (Fassin et al., 2017; Palmary, 2016).

Finally, policymakers must do better to ensure that lesbians, migrants, and lesbian migrants are included in broader poverty reduction measures. The country's R350 (~C$35) per month COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant for unemployed workers, for instance, initially excluded special permit holders and asylum-seekers; only after a court ruling was this overturned. Other programs like education initiatives or job-seeking assistance can be more inclusive by being more deliberate in whom they invite to attend. They could, for example, again seek out social lynchpins like AJ, who can then reach out to his own networks of friends. This can help ensure more marginalized individuals are made aware of the programs and understand that others like them will be there.

I offer these suggestions while also acknowledging some of the contradictory forces among individuals and state actors that may hinder their implementation. As mentioned above, the unwillingness on the part of RSDOs to accept and admit gay and lesbian migrants stem from broader currents of various forms of discrimination. Much of the country's sexism and homophobia, for instance, are rooted in a culture that denies women's sexuality and sexual agency (Campbell et al., 2006; Gunkel, 2010). These discriminatory beliefs are pervasive, and are also held by actors like politicians, police officers, and religious figures (Gunkel, 2010; Vincent & Howell, 2014). The NGOs that attempt to counter these beliefs are sometimes funded through international agencies (or are international in their origins), and this can make other South Africans wary of the

messages they are sending (Ndashe, 2013). Epprecht (2012), for instance, claims that internationally-funded agencies that push for gay rights are often regarded as agents of Western cultural imperialism. It can be difficult for these agencies to do community outreach, for example, when so many in the community are already distrustful of their messages. This further serves to emphasize why appeals for compassion on behalf of the LGBT community must come from a number of different sources, not just NGOs. Having this variety will cast a wider net in terms of responsibility, will help combat the perception that LGBT acceptance is somehow un-African, and will ensure that the changes are more systemic than superficial.

7.6 Theoretical Applications and Directions for Future Research

In this section I look at my conclusions in the broader context of social geography. In doing so, I show how some of the results add to contemporary geographical work, particularly geographies of belonging, emotional geographies, intersectionality theory, and queer migration scholarship. I also offer suggestions of how this research can be used to further other research on sexuality and migration in the Global South.

Looking at where and how black lesbian migrants in South Africa do and do not belong first and foremost contributes to work on geographies of belonging. LMW's sketch maps and narrative accounts show how belonging itself is both an individual and social phenomenon, linked to identity categories and broader social structures (Antonsich, 2010). Because belonging is ultimately an emotional affiliation to space (Gorman-Murray, 2011), this dissertation also shows how emotions themselves can "coalesce around or within certain places" (Bondi et al., 2005, p. 3). Belonging is also

shaped by individuals' multiple social identities in combination with their geographical

locations, and this dissertation adds to theories of intersectionality by showing why

spatial considerations are essential. Finally, this thesis counters some queer migrant

scholars' claims that to be a considered a queer migrant, an individual's sexuality must be

a deciding factor in their decision to move. It demonstrates how sexuality shapes

migration trajectories regardless of original motives.

7.6.1 Geographies of Belonging

Returning to Yuval-Davis' (2006) analytical framework for studying belonging,

this dissertation shows how lesbian migrant women 'belong' to different social locations,

how their narratives reflect their identities and their desire for attachment, and how

belonging itself is constructed through boundary maintenance. Looking intersectionally at

the ways that different identity categories like gender, race, and sexuality constitute one

another shows how LMW 'belong' to these categories differently than do their fellow

compatriots or other black South African lesbians. In many cases, their sense of

belonging is compromised because, while they may find acceptance with respect to one

identity category, they are rejected on the basis of another.

Lesbian migrants' narratives reflect and explain these discordant belongings and

draw attention to the affective dimensions that come with it. The stories LMW told me

about interactions with their friends, partners, and family members often spoke to the

emotional connections they had, did not have, or hoped to have with them. In seeking

these connections, the women also explained what actions they undertook to facilitate

them, drawing attention to the discursive practices and politics that enable or inhibit

belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Belonging is created through continual mundane,

everyday interactions and negotiations, and this dissertation shows how acts from others that are as banal as furtive glances and hushed whispers operate in conjunction to cast LMW as 'the other' (Jackson, 2014).

These acts lastly transpire at a variety of different scales, showing how belonging is "at once national, local, and multiple in its formation" (Jackson, 2014, p. 1666). A snide comment at a family gathering, for instance, may be indicative of a lack of familial acceptance, but the same action from a bank employee at a nationwide chain can signify a more collective, national intolerance for bodies that disrupt the status quo (De Craene, 2017).

7.6.2 Emotional Geographies

Belonging is at its core an emotional affiliation to space (Gorman-Murray, 2011; Wood & Waite, 2011), and so this thesis adds to understandings of emotional geographies by showing how LMW's emotions coalesce around different spaces at different scales (Bondi et al., 2005; Gorman-Murray, 2009). LMW felt fearful toward the entire city of Johannesburg, for instance, but they also felt similar apprehensions toward certain neighbourhoods, certain sites, and even certain individuals.

Part of the fear they felt stemmed from how imagined others might react to their sexuality (which is itself inherently emotion-based) (Davidson & Milligan, 2004). The threat of homophobic violence that these women faced sheds light on cultural norms regarding women's sexuality, and specifically black women's sexuality. Same-sex attraction for black women is deemed intolerable, and through the implied threat of violence, sexuality is controlled and regulated (Gunkel, 2010). This results in a dearth of

acts of implying same-sex attraction, and through the lack of these 'other' performances, the heteronormativity of space is reiterated and upheld (Valentine, 1996).

Many of the lesbian migrants experiencing these threats of violence also encountered them in their home countries. Though their sexuality was not necessarily the driving force behind their migration (Section 7.6.4), the invariable emotional upheaval that migrants can experience was compounded by the fact that they faced sexuality-based persecution in both places. These threats of violence, however, are not constant or stagnant. Because they too originate from the emotions of others, they also shift and change across space, time, and scale. If queer migration can be thought of as a 'quest' for emotional and ontological security (Knopp, 2004), this study shows that for black lesbian migrants in South Africa, the quest will always be ongoing; there is no 'place' of emotional or physical safety, only fleeting moments in time and space.

7.6.3 Intersectionality Theory

A narrative account of LMW's lives shows how their multiple and intersecting identities are crucial for understanding their everyday interactions in any number of different spaces. Things like gender, race, and class cannot be disentangled from one another and understood as separate categories; they must instead be understood relationally (Collins & Bilge, 2016). It is my participants' experiences as black, lesbian, migrant women in conjunction that led to their specific, spatially-oriented experiences with safety, belonging, and inclusion, and so this dissertation offers an example of why intersectional analyses of identity formation must account for the role of space.

Intersectionality theory helps us understand why it is that lesbian migrant women do what they do and why their sense of belonging is so frequently compromised. This

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thesis looks at spaces, large and small, where inclusion and exclusion happen. It explains how people have different reactions to LMW's identities in different spaces and at different times, and the role that different spaces and identity categories play in the process of inclusion and belonging. This contributes to more complex and dynamic understandings of social relations and social structures and furthers understandings of connection to place (Rodó-de-Zárate & Baylina, 2018).

By focusing on lesbian migrants' lived experiences of belonging in particular, and how intersections of space and place are integral to understanding them, this thesis lastly answers calls to consider the role of geography as part of intersectionality's many "vectors of relationality" (Hopkins & Noble, 2009, p. 518). In order to belong to almost any degree, LMW must frequently pay attention to their social context. This highlights the importance of spatial context itself, and draws attention to the various systems of power that work in conjunction to maintain the status quo (Valentine, 2007; Wood & Waite, 2011).

7.6.4 Queer Migration

Contrasting views on who is and is not considered a queer migrant have contested the significance of whether or not a migrant cites their sexuality as a reason for migrating. While some scholars claim that sexuality *must* be a motivating factor in order for someone to be counted as a queer migrant (Gorman-Murray, 2009), I and others argue that the motives are irrelevant. This thesis demonstrates the significance of sexuality and how it interacts with and through all other identity categories. In all contexts, but *especially* those like South Africa, where non-normative sexualities are not widely accepted, sexuality has a clear effect not just in terms of belonging, but also in identity

expression and formation, safety and comfort, and emotional management. In other words, it has a clear impact on queer migrants' experiences regardless of whether or not it drove them to migrate in the first place. Intersections of race, gender, and *African* migrant status also highlight the plurality of sexualities in South Africa. The near-ubiquitous threats of violence black lesbian migrant women face, along with their frequent inability to access 'gay-friendly' spaces, both point to different types or understandings of non-normative sexualities. Some, like those of wealthier, white, gay men, are far more acceptable. This has implications for understanding how identities are created and how spaces themselves are used and created. As mentioned in Section 7.5, because LMW interact with space in unique ways, places hoping to engage different segments of the population cannot take a one-size-fits-all approach.

This dissertation also challenges how researchers understand migrant and queer communities. Bürkner (2012) claims that certain approaches to working with and researching migrant communities treat their existence as a natural, "almost inevitable" formation, where the reality is much more complex (p. 189), and I argue that something similar applies to approaches to queer communities. Through an intersectional lens it is possible to see how migrant and queer community formation is far from inevitable. These communities take shape in distinct, intersectional, exclusionary forms that again frequently render LMW as the 'other.' The 'unnaturalness' of migrant and queer communities' formations points to the necessity of considering the role of sexuality in migration studies and considering the role of other identity categories like race in the formation of queer communities (Bürkner, 2012; Tucker, 2009b).

7.6.5 Directions for Future Research

Tucker and Hassan (in press) call for to researchers to "better appreciate" how individuals with non-normative sexualities in the Global South engage with their environment and how they deploy different strategies to respond to different challenges and inequalities (p. 1). This study exemplifies and responds to this call. Other research can and should continue along these lines. Doing so will continue to broaden our understandings of what sexuality *is* and how it both shapes and reflects our social environments (Tucker, 2019).

This dissertation illustrates, for instance, how lesbian migrants engage in what Bürkner (2012) describes as "more complex ways of community building" (p. 189). The formation of informal social networks that serve as support systems challenges more top-down approaches to creating spaces of social inclusion (Tucker & Hassan, in press), and so this research offers a starting point for further research that could explore how lesbian migrants actually form these social networks.

The lesbian migrant women I spoke with were also quite similar in terms of their demographics (Chapter Three). They were (mostly) young, black, lower-SES women living in an urban environment. A focus on individuals who are different in any of these regards is likely to lead to very different results, and this could further bolster understandings of how space and sexuality intersect with other demographic characteristics to facilitate or hinder the creation of spaces of belonging (Wood & Waite, 2011).

Lastly, the study focuses on belonging and inclusion at a number of different sites and scales. Further work could take a more micro, site-specific approach to how lesbian

migrants create a sense of belonging. Tucker and Hassan (in press), for instance, suggest that in the Global South, individuals with non-normative sexualities are more likely to find work in informal sectors. How do lesbian migrants in particular navigate the informal sector, and how does their presence contribute to or challenge existing understandings of the (hetero)sexualization of space? These suggestions, while not meant to be exhaustive, offer a series of starting points for researchers looking to continue to question understandings of sexuality, belonging, and the social (re)production of space.

7.7 'Thinking Intersectionally' about Lesbian Migrant Women

In sitting down and writing this concluding chapter, I have reflected back on some of the stumbling blocks I had in 'thinking intersectionally' about lesbian migrant women. Bowleg (2008) reminds us that intersectionality requires researchers who employ the perspective to broaden their analytical scope beyond the collected data to include cultural and geographical context, and to challenge taken-for-granted power structures. The same is true for queer and feminist research (Browne & Nash, 2010; Moss, 2002). In this section, I reflect on the process of writing about lesbian migrants' narratives, and how thinking intersectionally about them forced me to rethink ideas and frameworks I had previously not considered. Doing so offers both the opportunity to remain accountable as well as a chance for the reader to get a better sense of how my relation to the research process affected the outcome (Di Feliciantonio & Gadelha, 2017; McDonald, 2013).

Reading back over previous drafts of my findings, as well as personal journals kept at the time, I clearly struggled with how to make linear something so inherently abstract. The stories that the women told wove back and forth through time and across place and scale. There are no obvious starting or ending points to their narratives, and no

obvious ways to make order of where they went and how they felt. Any attempt to categorize these narratives risks essentializing them (Oswin, 2008). The challenge of turning narratives of place and self into something sequential and absolute is not one that I alone have contended with (see, for instance, Di Feliciantonio & Gadelha, 2017), but it left me stymied for months on end. Previous drafts shifted from almost no order to too much order, and were decidedly 'un-intersectional' in how they presented the results. Chapter Four, for instance, had originally been divided into discrete sub-headings that each illustrated some of the ways that sexuality can intersect with things like gender or with race. I did very little to interrogate how, even in spaces where sexuality appeared to be the most important social division, its presentation was still conditional upon intersections of space and other identity categories (Yuval-Davis, 2011). All three results chapters, meanwhile, did little to account for the role of emotions in the social construction of space. I took these emotions for granted, missing the opportunity to question the crucial role they played in getting by and feeling safe. And though I had originally discussed them in my chapter on strategic outness, I had not made their connection to a sense of belonging (Chapter One). The subsequent drafts read as finite and detached. They did little to actually challenge or contradict traditional, masculinist notions of objectivity (Gorman-Murray, 2017).

To actually present what I had learned in an intersectional way, I had to illustrate how both identity categories and spaces themselves are fluid, even if the narratives and maps are 'fixed' in place through my writing about them (Brown & Knopp, 2008). I also had to push myself more to disrupt the dualities between things like thinking versus feeling or rationality versus emotion (Gorman-Murray, 2017). In addition to calling

attention to the role of emotions in lesbian migrants' experiences of belonging across all chapters, Chapter Four now better explains how lesbian migrants' intersecting identities *cannot* be disentangled from one another. No matter the space, these identities *all* play a role in what transpires therein. In Chapter Five I talk about the characteristics of what can make a space safe or unsafe alongside examples of spaces that were frequently spoken of this way. Speaking of the actions that can transpire within certain spaces speaks more to how spaces themselves are not fixed, but rather "constellations of temporary coherence" (Massey, 1998, p. 125). Lastly in Chapter Six, I better explain the connections between emotions, identities, and the creation of spaces of (partial) belonging. These changes not only reflect intersectional (re)considerations of how dualities can be disrupted, they also reflect a process of self-examination—of exploring the role of my own emotions and subjectivities in how I came to produce the knowledge I did (Lee & León, 2019).

7.8 Final Thoughts

> Z: Like, what is home? And where is home? Or is it just like a place? Or a country? Or a belonging?

Zoe's question to me during a mid-April conversation, while meant to be rhetorical, also serves to underscore the complexities of finding spaces where lesbian migrant women can feel free to exist. Concepts of home and belonging are somewhat overlapping, and they are far from straightforward. Belonging, as Wood and Waite (2011) remind us, is, "about feeling 'at home' and 'secure,' but it is equally about being recognised and understood" (p. 1). As these women navigate and negotiate the contradictions of both their 'home' country and their newly-adopted home, they are frequently left feeling that they have no home to actually belong to (Staeheli & Nagel,

2006). As Zoe so sagely pointed out, the ambiguity as to what 'home' really means to her alludes to the fact that that there is little way for her to ever feel 'at home.' Zoe's identities as a black, lesbian, migrant, woman also intersect to render her (and other LMW) metaphorically invisible (Luibhéid, 2004). The possibilities of being "recognised and understood" in a social and spatial context where she is largely unseen are therefore few and far between. Faced with this set of circumstances, LMW engage in patterns of strategic outness to stay safe. They avoid certain places and suppress parts of their identity in order to ensure a tacit sort of acceptance from family members and strangers alike.

By explaining how xenophobia and homophobia intersect to exclude LMW from establishing gainful livelihoods, how safe they do or do not feel in different spaces, and how they manage other people's perceptions of their identity to create spaces of inclusion and belonging (however partial), this dissertation accounts for some of the intersectionalities of belonging and how belonging itself transpires across a range of different spatial scales (Wood & Waite, 2011). But while lesbian migrants face a context of frequent spatial exclusion, the women I spoke with all had friends and, in many cases, family members that they could trust and be open with. They had created networks of inclusion and belonging that frequently transcended the limitations posed by their homophobic roommates, for instance, or their less-than-safe neighbourhoods. Their resilience and their determination to remain safe while creating spaces of inclusion for themselves should ring optimistic.

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Appendix A: Queer Migrant Women Recruitment Letter

My name is Kayla Baumgartner, and I am a graduate student at Western University in London, Canada. I am working on a research project to understand the lives of non-heterosexual female migrants living in South African cities. I understand that these women's lives are complicated by negative perceptions towards immigrants, women, and members of the LGBT community. At present, there is very little information about where non-heterosexual female migrants go and live, how they feel and behave in these places, and what characterizes the places they feel safe and unsafe.

If you identify yourself as being in this category, I am hoping you are willing to share your insights on your experiences as you continue to adapt to life in South Africa.

This study will help researchers, policy makers, and the general public to understand how South African policies and culture are shaping the lives of non-heterosexual migrant women and how they make use of the space around them. This information can be used to suggest interventions and strategies that might help these women to feel more safe and secure in their environment. You will not be compensated for your participation, but I will reimburse you for travel and lunch expenses.

To be eligible for the study, you must be at least 18 years of age, from an African country, and feel comfortable speaking and writing in English. If you are interested in participating, or if you know someone else who might be, please contact:

Kayla Baumgartner
PhD Candidate, Dept. of Geography
University of Western Ontario

Appendix B: PASSOP Staff Recruitment Letter

<u>Non-heterosexual migrant women in South Africa</u>

I am working on a research project to understand the lives of non-heterosexual female migrants living in South African cities. I understand that these women's lives are complicated by negative cultural perceptions towards immigrants, women, and members of the LGBT community. At present, there is very little information about where they go and live, how they feel and behave in these places, and what characterizes the places they feel safe and unsafe.

As you work or volunteer with migrants and/or queer women, I am hoping you are willing to share your insights on their experiences adjusting to and living in Cape Town/ Johannesburg.

I would like to interview you, which will take approximately 1 hour. I will do my very best to keep your identity confidential.

This study will help researchers, policy makers, and the general public to understand how South African policies and culture are shaping the lives of non-heterosexual migrant women and how they make use of the space around them. This information can be used to suggest interventions and strategies that might help these women to feel more safe and secure in their environment.

If you are interested in participating, or if you know someone else who might be, please contact:

Kayla Baumgartner
PhD Candidate, Dept. of Geography
University of Western Ontario

Appendix C: Queer Migrant Women Information Letter

This information and consent form briefly explains this research project and what your participation will involve, should you choose to participate. Please take the time to read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have. You and the researcher will each keep one copy of this information & consent form.

The purpose behind this project is to better understand the experiences of migrant women in South Africa who do not identify as heterosexual. There is very little research that focuses on how non-heterosexual migrant women fare after moving to South Africa. My hope is to learn more about these experiences as a way to help individuals inside and outside South Africa understand these experiences as well as to provide appropriate recommendations for groups who assist non-heterosexual and/or migrant women.

You are being asked to share your experiences as a non-heterosexual female migrant living in South Africa. This will be done through two interviews (one at the beginning and one at the end of the 3-month time frame) and a journal that you will be asked to write. The journal will be provided to you, and you can record as much or as little detail as you choose. You will be asked to meet with me once a month to share your journal and go over some of the past month's events. All interviews and meetings will likely take between 30 minutes and one hour. Should you prefer, we can instead "meet" over a video-messaging app (like WhatsApp or Skype). With your permission, the interviews and meetings will be audio recorded, though you may choose to participate without recording. To make communication between us easier, I am also asking to store your phone numbers in my phone (under a pseudonym). Conversations will be deleted on a weekly basis.

At the end of the 3-month time period, I will ask to collect the journal, but you may choose to keep yours if you wish. If this is the case, I will ask to make a scanned digital copy for my own records. If there is any portion of the journal you do not wish to share or have scanned, you may choose not to do so.

No one but myself will have access to the written journal, digital copies, or to the audio recording and transcripts of the interviews. Audio recordings and digital copies will be kept on a password-protected computer, and will be deleted after five years, and the journal will be shredded after five years. Both computer and journal will be kept in a locked filing cabinet when not in use. Journal and interviews will be transcribed for analysis purposes. During transcription, participants will be assigned a pseudonym and identifying details will be omitted. If the results of the study are published, your name will not be used. The document that links your identity to your transcribed interviews will be saved with a unique password on a computer that is itself password protected. Aggregate data (information from all the interviews combined) will be shared with PASSOP, but I will ensure that any identifying details have been removed. You will not benefit directly from participating in this study but information gathered may help PASSOP and other organizations provide better services.

I am asking you to share with me some very personal and confidential information, and you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the discussion/interview if you don't wish to do so. You do not have to give me any reason for not responding to any question, or for refusing to take part in an interview, or withdrawing from the study. If at any point during the study you feel distressed or upset, you may contact any of the following free services:

<u>LifeLine Western Cape</u>
            - Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
Or in person at: (Monday to Friday from 9am to 16:30pm)

<u>Rape Crisis Cape Town</u>
                – Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
Or in person at: (Monday to Thursday from 9:00 – 16:30, Friday from 9:00 – 15:30)

<u>OUT Counselling Helpline</u>
                    (   ) – Available Monday – Friday, 8:30 – 16:30. Reverse charge calls are accepted.

Cape Town Refugee Centre
In person at:
(Monday and Tuesday from 9:00 – 12:00)

You will not be compensated for your participation, but I will reimburse you for travel and lunch expenses. Should we conduct some of the interviews electronically, I will reimburse you for the data.

If you have any further questions or concerns about the study, you can contact me, Kayla Baumgartner, by email (   ) or phone (   ), or my supervisor, Dr. Belinda Dodson, at   .

Your signature on this form indicates that you understand what it means to participate in this research project and that you agree to participate. Your signature does not waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. A copy of this consent form will be given to you to keep.

Please ask now if you have any questions or concerns about participating in this study.

_____   _____   _____

Participant Name   Participant Signature   Date

_____   _____

Signature of person obtaining consent   Date

I agree to be audio -recorded in this research

☐ **YES** ☐ **NO**

I consent to the use of de-identified quotes obtained during the study in the dissemination of this research

☐ **YES** ☐ **NO**

I consent to having my phone number saved to Kayla's phone under a pseudonym.

☐ **YES** ☐ **NO**

Appendix D: PASSOP Staff Information Letter

This information and consent form briefly explains this research project and what your participation will involve, should you choose to participate. Please take the time to read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have. You and the researcher will each keep one copy of this information & consent form.

The purpose behind this project is to better understand the experiences of migrant women in South Africa who do not identify as heterosexual. There is very little research that focuses on how non-heterosexual migrant women fare after moving to South Africa. My hope is to learn more about these experiences as a way to help individuals inside and outside South Africa understand these experiences as well as to provide appropriate recommendations for groups who assist non-heterosexual and/or migrant women.

You are being asked to share your experiences as someone who works or volunteers in an organization providing service to non-heterosexual female migrants living in South Africa. The interview will likely take between 30 minutes and one hour, and, with your permission, will be audio recorded, though you may choose to participate without recording. You will not be compensated, but I will share the generalized results of my study with PASSOP, in hopes of helping it deliver better, more targeted services.

Interviews will be transcribed for analysis purposes. No one but myself will have access to the audio recordings or transcripts of the interviews. Audio recordings and digital transcripts will be kept on a password-protected computer and flash drive, and will be securely stored in a locked drawer or office when not in use. Electronic audio and text files will be permanently deleted after five years. During transcription, participants will be assigned a pseudonym and identifying details will be omitted. The document that links your identity to your transcribed interviews will be saved with a unique password on a computer that is itself password protected.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide not to be in this study. Even if you consent to participate you have the right to not answer individual questions or to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose not to participate or to leave the study at any time it will have no effect on your standing at PASSOP.

You do not waive any legal right by signing this consent form.

If you have any further questions or concerns about the study, you can contact me, Kayla Baumgartner, by email (   ) or phone (   ), or my PhD supervisor, Dr. Belinda Dodson, at   .

Your signature on this form indicates that you understand what it means to participate in this research project and that you agree to participate. Your signature does not waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. A copy of this consent form will be given to you to keep.

Please ask now if you have any questions or concerns about participating in this study.

_____   _____   _____

Participant Name   Participant Signature   Date

_____   _____

Signature of person obtaining consent   Date

I agree to be audio recorded in this research

☐ **YES** ☐ **NO**

I consent to the use of de-identified quotes obtained during the study in the dissemination of this research

☐ **YES** ☐ **NO**

_____

Appendix E: Queer Migrant Women Initial Questionnaire

<u>Before we get in too deep with things, I just need to ask you a few questions to see if you're eligible to participate and to get a bit of basic information to serve as a starting point.</u>

How old are you? _____

What is your country of origin _____

How comfortable are you with speaking English?

not at all comfortable   *very comfortable*

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

How comfortable are you with writing in English

not at all comfortable   *very comfortable*

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Do you plan on being in South Africa for at least another 6 months?   Y / N

What is your sexual orientation/How do you identify?_____

Thanks.
Either: I really appreciate you getting in touch with me. I'm looking for people who are [18 or over], [from Africa], [comfortable speaking and writing English], so I'm unable to include you.
Or: You are just the type of person I need to talk to for my research. I hope you are still willing to participate.

Appendix F: Question Guide—Queer Migrant Women

These types of questions may be asked earlier on in the journal-keeping process, and could include prompting for more information.

I want to emphasize before we begin that if at any point you start to feel upset or distressed, whether it's now or at any other meeting, we can stop; it's no problem. We can continue on again at a later time or not. That's again no problem, and completely up to you.

1) What country do you originally come from? What other countries have you lived in? Where were you living before you came to South Africa?

2) How long have you been living in South Africa? And in Cape Town?

3) Do you plan on staying in South Africa long-term? And in Cape Town?

4) Why did you decide to come to South Africa?

5) How did you actually get here (i.e., car, bus, plane, etc.)?

6) What area did you first live in?

7) What area do you currently live in?

8) Do you feel safe in your house/apartment? In your neighbourhood?

These types of questions may be asked later on in the journal-keeping process. They may also include prompting for more information.

1) Have you been able to find work?

2) Do you feel that your sexual orientation restricts where you can work or where you're seeking for work?

3) Are you out to other friends and family members back in your home country?

4) Are you out to other friends and family members here in South Africa?

5) Do you know of any (other) support services in the area? Do you use them? Why or why not?

6) Has your experience with coming to South Africa been different from what you imagined? How so?

7) How do you see your life changing over the next 3-6 months?

8) What are your longer-term hopes and ambitions?

Appendix G: Question Guide—PASSOP Staff

1) Can you provide some background about your work with queer women/immigrants in South Africa? What kind of activities and projects does your organization engage in?

2) What do you do in your role in the organization? How did you become involved in this work?

3) What are some of [organization's] longer-term projects that are still in the works?

4) Tell me more about the women you work with. Who's your target demographic?

5) Where do queer black South African women tend to live? Are there enclaves? Is it similar regarding migrant women in general?

6) Are there "stereotypical" jobs that queer black women tend to have? Migrant women in general?

7) How would you describe attitudes towards homosexuality in SA? How have attitudes towards homosexuality changed in the last decade?

8) How would you describe attitudes toward immigrants in SA? How have attitudes towards immigrants changed in the last decade?

9) Are there ways that queer black women try to downplay or hide their sexual orientation? Is there ever a situation where being a queer black woman is an asset rather than a liability?

10) Are there specific places in the city where queer black women generally feel safe in being out? Exceptionally unsafe? I.e., neighbourhoods, public transit, other public venues…

11) What are some of the ways that migrants try to downplay or hide their migrant status? Is there ever a situation where being a migrant is an asset rather than a liability?

12) There is not very much research about queer migrant women in South Africa. What do you think others need to know about these women and the experiences they go through?

13) What do you think the Cape Town government needs to know? South African government? The migrants' country of origin's government?

14) What other local support services are available for queer and/or migrant women?

15) What are some potential barriers to queer and/or migrant women accessing support services?

16) Is there anything else you think it would be useful for me to know about queer migrant women, or migrant women, in SA?

17) Is there anyone else you think would be useful for me to speak to?

Appendix H: Solicited Journal Instructions

You are being asked to keep a personal journal for the next three months, and to meet with me again every month or so. The purpose of this is to help me understand your life in South Africa, and how you're doing overall in this new environment. As a reminder, if there is any portion of the journal you do not wish to share or have scanned, you are under no obligation to do so, and no one but myself will have access to the journal, digital copies, or to the audio recording of the interviews.

I ask that you try to update your journal once or twice a week (or more), if possible. In general, I'd like to learn more about where you went, whether you went alone or with friends, what you did, and how you felt at these various places. In particular, I'm interested in learning about the places that make you feel comfortable or uncomfortable, and what it is about these places that make you feel this way. If you are feeling unsure of what to write about, I'd suggest thinking about things in terms of work, home, and leisure. You can ask yourself the "5 W's (and an H)" about each of these places- *Who* were you with? *What* did you do? *When* did you do it? *Where* were you? *Why* did you do it? *How* did you do it and how did it make you feel?

These are just suggested guidelines to get you going; ultimately, this is *your* journal, and you have the final say in what and how much you write, and what you choose to share.

Appendix I: Research Ethics Board Approval

Western Research

Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board
NMREB Full Board Initial Approval Notice

Principal Investigator: Dr. Belinda Dodson
Department & Institution: Social Science\Geography, Western University

NMREB File Number: 108440
Study Title: Places, Performances, and Identities: An Exploration into the Lives of Queer Migrant Women in South Africa

NMREB Initial Approval Date: November 17, 2016
NMREB Expiry Date: November 17, 2017

Documents Approved and/or Received for Information:

Document Name	Comments	Version Date
Western University Protocol	Received October 24, 2016	
Recruitment Items	Recruitment Letter for Queer Migrant Women	2016/10/23
Recruitment Items	Recruitment Letter for PASSOP Staff/Volunteers - Received August 31, 2016	
Instruments	Question Guide - PASSOP - Received August 31, 2016	
Instruments	Question Guide - Queer Migrant Women - Received August 31, 2016	
Instruments	Initial Questionnaire for Queer Migrant Women	2016/10/23
Instruments	Solicited Journal Instructions - Received August 31, 2016	
Letter of Information & Consent	Queer Migrant Women	2016/11/11
Letter of Information & Consent	PASSOP Staff	2016/11/11

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the above named study, as of the NMREB Initial Approval Date noted above.

NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the NMREB Expiry Date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario.

Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB.

The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Ethics Officer, on behalf of Dr. Riley Hinson, NMREB Chair

Ethics Officer: Erika Basile ___ Nicole Kaniki ___ Grace Kelly ___ Katelyn Harris ✓ Vikki Tran ___ Karen Gopaul ___

Curriculum Vitae

Name: Kayla Baumgartner

Post-secondary   Indiana University
Education and   Bloomington, Indiana, USA
Degrees: 2005-2009 B.A.

                     The University of Western Ontario
                     London, Ontario, Canada
                     2009-2011 M.A.

                     The University of Western Ontario
                     London, Ontario, Canada
                     2013-2020 Ph.D.

Honours and   Global Opportunities – McMullin Arnold Award
Awards: 2016

                     Allen K. Philbrick Scholarship in Cultural Geography
                     2017

Related Work   Teaching Assistant
Experience   The University of Western Ontario
                     2015-2019

                     Instructor
                     King's University College
                     2012-2020

Publications:

Lozanski, K. & K. Baumgartner (in press). Local gastronomy, transnational labour: Farm-to-table tourism and migrant agricultural workers in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Canada. *Tourism Geographies*.