

Safely queer on the Urban Peripheries of Cape Town

A comparative study exploring how 'class' mediates the possibilities and opportunities to reinvent identities for gender non-conforming youth on the urban peripheries of Cape Town in South Africa.

Research report submitted by

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Foreword

This study set out to conduct a comparative analysis of self-identifying gender non-conforming¹ youth residing on the urban peripheries of Cape Town², against the realities of gender non-conforming youth in more affluent, resourced communities in the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town, South Africa. The intention of this study was to explore the dynamics that make for different possibilities to express gender non-conformity amongst youth, as well as the opportunities available for these young people to recreate their identities in ways that make sense to themselves, and allow for a more fulfilling sense of self in contemporary South Africa.

There has been little research conducted on the possibilities of expressing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersexed, and queer identities in peripheral and predominantly ‘coloured’³ suburbs in the Western Cape of South Africa. Most research in recent years (see ActionAid 2009; Gqola 2007; Mkhize, et al 2010; Nel & Judge 2008, Sanger 2010) has focused on discrimination and gender violence against gender non-conforming persons in South Africa’s townships. In short, the studies cited above have centralised the ways that heteronormative⁴ values give rise to, and sustain, violence against black African lesbian women residing in South Africa’s townships. Even though similarities can arguably be drawn between the experiences of the women in the studies cited, and those residing on the Cape Flats (see Sanger’s 2010 article on how heteronormativity in South Africa operates in ways that maintain violence against black lesbians in townships), these studies have essentially excluded the specific experiences of ‘coloured’ persons living on the peripheral suburbs of Cape Town. We can merely speculate, for instance, that under-resourced and marginalised communities such as those on the Cape Flats of Cape Town would be ‘ideal’ spaces for the expression of various kinds of violence against gender non-conforming persons. My study therefore specifically explored how various socio-economic stratifications, or class distinctions, within 10 predominantly ‘coloured’ communities across the Cape Flats and the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town, impact on the expression of, and opportunities for, gender non-normative youth.

In general, the paucity of research focused on ‘coloured’ communities suggests that there are many realities which remain unexplored, and undocumented in research. Additionally, the marginalisation of gender non-conforming persons means that the lives of this population in predominantly ‘coloured’ areas remain mostly invisible in research. Elaine Salo’s work on gendered personhood in the peripheral

¹ In this study, ‘gender non-conforming’ will refer to persons who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersexed, and queer.

² ‘Cape Flats’ is used as a term to describe communities such as Bellville-South, Bridgetown, Delft, Elsies River, Grassy Park, Kuils River, and Mitchell’s Plain, among others. At points, I will use this term to describe these communities.

³ The contentious term ‘coloured’ will refer to the racialised construction that saw people of ‘mixed race’ forced into the peripheral suburbs of Cape Town, as part of the 1950s Group Areas Act in South Africa.

⁴ Norms around gender and sexuality that naturalise and centralise heterosexuality, while pathologising and demonising same-sex desire and homosexual identities.

urban locations of the Western Cape has, in many ways, been fundamental in beginning the conversation on ‘race’, gender, and sexuality in marginalised pre-dominantly ‘coloured’ communities in South Africa. One aspect of her research, which centres on how ‘cultural flows’ from the global north does not necessitate an assimilation of these values by youth in the global south, is significant in understanding how youth on the Cape Flats recreate identities through mediating their local contexts in multiple ways (see Salo 2003; Salo et al 2010). Further, as Salo and Davids (2009) narrate in their study of the meanings of femininity in high school Matric Balls in urban South Africa, ‘few historical studies have reflected upon the manner in which *previously marginalised black communities prior to forced removals* have acquired multiple new meanings since resettlement’ (Salo 2003: 348, my emphasis). I hope that my study proposed here, can contribute to the research gap narrated by Salo.

My intention was to explore the dynamics that make possible the expression of gender non-conformity for youth, and the kinds of opportunities available to these young people to reinvent their identities in current South Africa. In a localized and context-specific study, conducted over 13 months, I engaged 31 participants in 10 communities. On the Cape Flats, these included Bellville-South, Bridgetown, Delft, Elsies River, Grassy Park, Kuils River, and Mitchell’s Plain. For the Southern Suburbs, the communities included Ottery, Rondebosch East, and Wetton.

The two primary questions (see Appendix II for the Information Sheet and Consent Form for Qualitative Individual Interviews) that constitute this study were the following:

- What are the various structural issues that affect gender non-conforming youth in these communities?
- What kinds of opportunities are available for gender non-conforming youth to re-create their identities in contemporary South Africa?

Such research has not yet been conducted in the contemporary South African context. A comparative analysis of this type is useful for two reasons:

- It provides a lens to explore how socio-economic status or ‘class’ (determined by prospects for education and employment, and access to resources, for example) mediates the expression of gender non-normativity⁵ and opportunities for creating new identities, and
- It would provide an opportunity to document the experiences of self-identifying gender non-conforming ‘coloured’ people in various spaces on the Cape Flats and Southern Suburbs in Cape Town, South Africa.

Methodology

An intersectional, social constructionist framework was utilised as a methodology for this study. This approach prioritises the specific intersections of ‘race’, gender, sexuality and class in current South

⁵ This term will be used interchangeably with ‘gender non-conformity’ to illustrate how heterosexuality operates as normative in most societies throughout the world.

Africa, while considering that there are many more identity markers that intersect in people's lived realities. The work of Pattman and Bhana (2004) is particularly useful here, specifically in their approach to young people as 'active agents'. They explain the importance of addressing young people 'both as active agents constructing their identities, and, at the same time, constrained by the cultural resources available to them' (2006: 4). Further, the authors articulate the usefulness of "a participatory methodology that focuses on 'race,' gender and social class as influences constraining group identifications and the sorts of cultural practices associated with these" (2004: 4). I discuss the two methods I will use below: qualitative, one-on-one interviewing, and Photovoice.

Methods

Recruitment and research assistants

Three community research assistants were recruited with the task to identify potential respondents for this study. All research assistants were current or previous students in the Women's and Gender Studies department at the University of the Western Cape. The assistants were recruited on the basis that they were familiar with the communities where they were doing the recruiting, i.e. they had developed networks in order to make the process of finding participants easier. All 3 assistants therefore resided in or around the communities where they were working to find respondents. A snowball sampling method was employed to source the sample. While one assistant focused on Bellville-South, Elsies River and Kuils River, another focused solely on Mitchell's Plain. The third assistant concentrated on Rondebosch-East and Wetton, but also managed to find participants outside the Southern Suburbs, such as in Bridgetown, Ottery and Grassy Park. It proved difficult to find a willing research assistant in Delft. With the assistance of a well-connected resident in Delft, I took on the task of recruiting respondents in the Delft area.

Participants

31 participants were interviewed across the 10 communities in the Western Cape. The participants identified as gender non-conforming, i.e. lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. 23 participants resided on the Cape Flats, while 8 resided in the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town. The sample was biased in terms of respondents from the Cape Flats with the rationale that research that engages these communities is non-existent, particularly research with a focus on sexual identity and class. Initially, the intention was to recruit young female and male participants aged between 18 and 25 years. While 29 participants fell within this age group, 2 participants were 26 and 27 years old. The decision to include them was based on the difficulty of accessing more interested participants in Mitchell's Plain. These two participants were also very eager to participate in the research project, and their interviews were indeed useful in terms of the focus of the project. Of all the participants in this study, 6 identified as male. The bias towards young women in the sample was useful in terms of the project objectives – there is a paucity of research on gender non-conforming women who self identify as lesbian. My aim was to make a special effort to access more women who identify as lesbians in order to contribute to research that documents the lived realities of lesbians of colour in the South African context.

25 participants had completed Matric, while 5 participants had dropped out of school between grades 7 and 11. Of the latter, 4 lived in Mitchell's Plain, and one in Delft. All 4 participants without Matric were

unemployed at the time of the study. Of the total number of participants who had completed Matric, 12 were pursuing under-graduate studies at the University of the Western Cape. These respondents resided in Bellville-South, Elsie's River, Grassy Park, Kuils River, and Ottery.

Interviews

Qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted with 31 participants. The dominant languages spoken by participants were English and Afrikaans (see Appendix I for details about communities). Each interview lasted between 60 and 120 minutes long. Potential interviewees sometimes cancelled interviews at the last minute, or after they agreed to be interviewed, changed their minds.

Photovoice

Photovoice, as a participatory action research method where participants use photographs and storytelling to articulate their experiences, was employed as a second research method, to build on the one-on-one interviews with participants. Photovoice has been 'extensively used to provide vulnerable populations with an outlet to express their stories and perception of the world' (Kuratani & Lai, 2011: 3). The process involves individual participants going into their communities and taking pictures of various scenes/objects reflecting their concerns. Once this is completed, the participants move onto discussions, facilitated by the researchers in this study, sharing with one another what the photographs mean to them. As Wang notes:

The group dialogue allows the individuals to build upon each other's concerns, helping shape the identified needs of the community. As members become more passionate about improving the well-being of their community, the individual's self image will change as well. Residents will then take on the role of community advocates and participate in policy changes (Wang, in Kuratani & Lai, 2011: 3).

Photovoice places the control into the hands of the participants, allowing for a more reciprocal relationship between the researcher and the participants. Participants decide what it is they are willing/not willing to articulate about their experiences through the photographs. This allows them 'to become the decision makers and elect the themes that are represented among the photos' (Kuratani & Lai, 2011: 3). It has also been argued that 'as members of the community, these individuals are more imaginative and observant than even the most experienced photographers and photo journalists' (Wang, 1994).

The objective underlying Photovoice for this study was to create a space where participants could use photography and storytelling to ask their own questions (in light of the research question), and to document and reflect on these stories. While it was hoped that all 31 participants would partake in this aspect of the study, only 5 agreed to partake, and 4 actually partook (one of the participants was involved in a car accident on her way to the venue and was thus unable to be present). These 4 participants brought a friend along, so that 8 people in total participated in the Photovoice exhibition.

There Photovoice component of the study worked as follows:

1. A discussion was held with the participants after the one-on-one interview to explain the rationale behind the Photovoice component. I described the goals of the Photovoice project, and how the photographs and the stories accompanying them would be used in the research. I explained that their narratives (photos and stories) would form the basis of the exhibition, and that they could bring a friend along.
2. When participants agreed to partake, they were given two consent forms, one which explained the project in writing and confirmed their participation, and another which had to be signed by persons who appeared in photographs.
3. Because only five participants agreed to partake in the Photovoice component of the study, we had conversations over the phone in preparation for the exhibition. We discussed ideas they had about what kind of photos to take, and what stories they wanted to accompany the photos.
4. All the participants owned cell phones which had built-in high resolution cameras. They began taking photographs, and we continued discussing their choice of photographs after they emailed them to me, or sent the images via cell phone messaging programmes such as *Blackberry Messaging (bbm)* or *Whatsapp*.
5. Once participants were comfortable with their photographs and narratives, I had all the images printed on glossy photo paper in various sizes.
6. At the exhibition, which took place over lunch in an open area at the Human Sciences Research Council on a Saturday afternoon, participants arranged their photographs on various spaces on the wall, in a manner that enabled a story to be told.
7. Each participant had an opportunity to tell their story through the photos they took, while others in the group asked questions, and participants debated among each other. In many ways, this exhibition allowed for a focus group discussion to occur, and was rich in terms of the conversations that took place between participants.

Research Ethics

All ethical considerations were observed, with the proposal being approved by the Human Sciences Research Council Ethics Committee prior to proceeding. In addition to confidentiality and anonymity, all participants were asked for active informed consent after having the study carefully explained to them, including the benefits and potential discomforts they could experience. All participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identities. Participants were also assured that their identities and that of any third parties mentioned in discussions would be protected to the best of the researchers' ability. As mentioned above, participants signed consent forms for the one-on-one interviews and the Photovoice project. After the exhibition, the printed photographs were given to the participants, and not reproduced in any form. The digital copies of the photographs have been removed from the researcher's

cell phone, and stored electronically, with access being allowed only to the researcher. Although the photographs might be *referred* to in publications, the HSRC may not use these photographs in public exhibits, presentations, publications and/or other purposes. This information was included in the participant informed consent form, as well as the consent forms for persons photographed.

Participants were informed that the researcher would refer them to a community, social, youth, or mental health worker if they required such assistance. Prior arrangement was made with the Triangle Project in Observatory, Cape Town, an organisation which provides support for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered persons. In the event that participants expressed any discomfort during research activities, the researcher was able to advise participants to seek counselling. However, none of the participants required such assistance during the interviews or Photovoice project.

While participants were not paid for their participation, each participant who partook in the Photovoice project was given R100 to cover transport costs to and from the exhibition venue.

Analysis

The analysis presented here is based on 31 interviews, and a Photovoice exhibition discussion, with gender non-conforming young people who live on both the Cape Flats and Southern Suburbs in the Western Cape of South Africa. Three interpreters and transcribers were consulted to transcribe the data – two were contracted, and one was a Masters intern at the HSRC.

A discourse analytic approach was used to analyse the narratives of the participants in the study. Shefer and Foster (2009), in their discussion on heterosex among young South Africans, note the importance of discourse analysis in studies of this type, arguing that

A discourse analysis allows and even encourages an acknowledgement of the location and reflexivity of the researcher in the analysis of the texts. While discomfort and tension can arguably never be avoided in self-reflective qualitative research, it is important to be vigilantly self-critical in the analysis and presentation of the results and ever aware of the presence of such dynamics in the research process (2009: 271).

Due to the relatively small sample, findings in this study are not generalisable. However, these findings do provide in-depth information about the experiences of 31 gender non-conforming young people who live on the urban peripheries on Cape Town, providing a lens into the lived realities of a mostly marginalised group of young people.

As gender non-conforming subjects, the participants in this study reflected on their experiences in multiple ways. My intention was to try to accurately reflect participants' narratives, and to avoid an analytic process that attempts to fit their narratives into pre-existing themes. This meant listening to each participant's story, paying particular attention to the ways in which sexual identity, class, and agency intersect and operate within their specific realities, as this was the focus of the research project. Additionally, allowing the participants to speak for themselves is important in qualitative research (as noted by Shefer and Foster, 2009, above). For this reason, participants' words, in the form of quotations, will be presented in order to accurately reflect the findings in this research study.

As a first step in the analysis, I utilised the *Atlas ti* programme to code themes across the interviews. This programme was useful in its ability to ‘code’ similar themes, but also flexible enough to code components of respondents’ narratives that could not easily fit into any specific theme. As a feminist qualitative researcher, being conscious of narratives that fall outside of themes was an important component of the analysis.

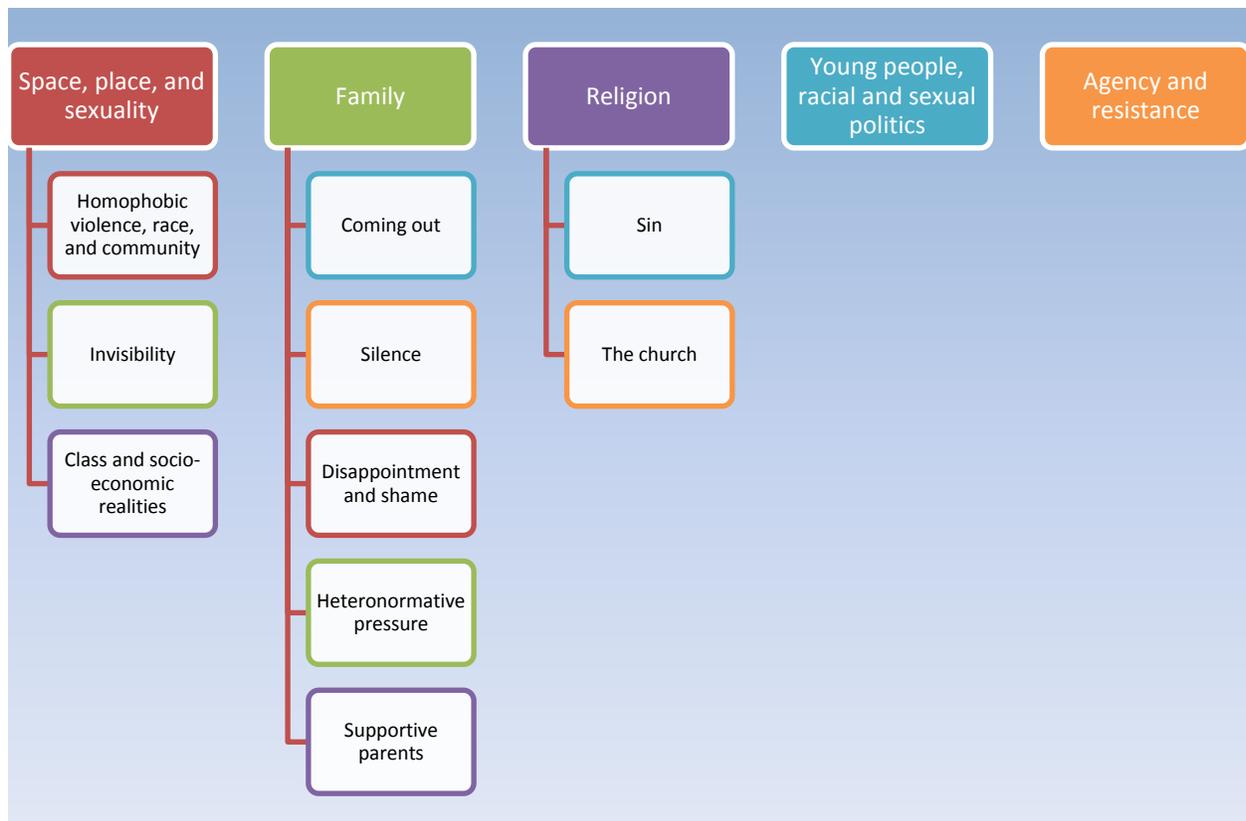
As noted above, two main questions framed the study:

- What are the various structural issues that affect gender non-conforming youth in the communities where they reside?
- What kinds of opportunities are available for gender non-conforming youth to re-create their identities in contemporary South Africa?

Five main themes emerged from the interviews and Photovoice discussion session. These are:

1. Space, place, and sexuality
2. Family
3. Religion
4. Young people, racial and sexual politics
5. Agency and resistance.

Within these themes, are sub-themes that take into account the focus of the study – how ‘class’ mediates the possibilities and opportunities to reinvent identities for gender non-conforming youth on the urban peripheries of Cape Town in South Africa. I discuss these below.



1. Space, place, and sexuality

In speaking about Cape Town as a space where they could live as gender non-conforming persons, participants referred to both the city centre of Cape Town (Cape Town central business district), as well as Cape Town the city, in comparison to other cities in South Africa. Of the participants who grew up in other provinces, all of them felt that Cape Town was more open to gender non-conforming persons.

Cynthia, a 20-year old lesbian, completing her 2nd year in Linguistics at the University of the Western Cape, grew up in the Eastern Cape, and had the following to say about Cape Town as a city:

I find it easier to be open in Cape Town 'cause ...here there's an urban area, you find a lot of different people here so this is a different culture, whereby in the Eastern Cape there's a fixed culture. Sure it's urban but there's more of a fixed culture in the way of thinking, you find very few people who are gay and out, you could see someone is gay obviously, but they gonna [say they are] straight or bi cause it's easier if you say you're bi.

Bevan, a 21-year old gay male from Johannesburg who had recently moved to Cape Town, and was working as a service representative at a television network company, similarly felt that:

Yes, in comparison to Jo'burg, it's so easy to be gay in Cape Town. In Jo'burg I couldn't be true to myself... I was out in Jo'burg, everyone knew I was gay, but at the same time it was 'ha, Bevan is gay' and in Cape Town, I found it so easy [because] gay people are all over.

22-year old Sarah, originally from Oudtshoorn in the Western Cape, and completing her 4th year in Law at the University of the Western Cape, spoke of her experiences in her hometown as an 'out' lesbian:

Cape Town, I must say, has in different ways empowered me seeing that I'm a lesbian and this is the capital of the gays... For me it was easier being around people who are also gay in Cape Town than people who are also gay in Oudtshoorn... You would see gay guys (it's not that much), you would see them okay, they're gay, they would call them 'moffies' or whatever. But for lesbians to come out in Oudtshoorn is still not easy.

Similarly, 25-year old Lana, a 4th year Education student at the University of the Western Cape, felt that Oudtshoorn was a particularly difficult place for her to be openly lesbian. Lana felt comfortable being out in Cape Town, where she was studying for her degree, but not in her hometown. She articulated that this is the reason she does not want to go back home, that Oudtshoorn "is small".

All the participants saw the city centre, Cape Town, as more 'open' to diverse sexualities. Alison, a 21-year old unemployed lesbian who has been open for a many years, from Tafelsig in Mitchell's Plain, noted how:

There are lots of gays, lesbians, gay clubs and stuff like that. It's lekker⁶ there, there you feel at home, you feel comfortable because there's a lot of lesbians and gays like you who treat you equally so you feel 'fitted in' there... At home, it's different; I must look around me if I can kiss Wendy.

Zakaria and Bevan, 24 and 21-years old respectively, are a gay couple living in Rondebosch-East. In a conversation with these two respondents, they detailed how space and safety work in certain suburbs of Cape Town, and how this is linked to class and religion:

- Nadia: Back to resources, you drive a car, you are mobile and you can go where you want to go. So around Rondebosch-East, Wetton, Lansdowne, where would you be able to go as an individual gay man or as a couple? Where you would be able to express yourself freely?
- Zakaria: Everywhere
- Bevan: There are places like...
- Zakaria: Not outside the Mosque
- Bevan: But like in Moslem Wembley
- Zakaria: That's very true but that was never a joke, hey
- Bevan: No, there are places that have strong...
- Zakaria: Masculine and homophobic...
- Bevan: And also religiously, if you go to Lansdowne for instance, where there's a Muslim population and in Islam it's not okay to be gay, it's harder, it's difficult to go to a place that has a strong religious environment, it's difficult to be comfortable. I didn't feel comfortable in holding his hand in front of all Muslims, thinking that a hate crime could happen, they could have ...done something to us, so I was reluctant to be his boyfriend.

Noting that the Cape Town CBD, some parts of the Southern Suburbs, and the Atlantic Seaboard, are 'at least gay-friendly', Zakaria and Bevan spoke of the community where they live, as well as surrounding areas, narrating the following:

- Zakaria: ...I wouldn't hang out here
- Nadia: What do you mean by 'here'?
- Zakaria: Athlone, Lansdowne, Rondebosch-East, I don't hang out here
- Nadia: Where do you hang out?
- Zakaria: Green Point, Town, everywhere.

It became clear across the interviews and Photovoice discussions, that participants did not regard their communities as ideal spaces in which to express their sexual orientation. As will be evident in the next section, across the Cape Flats and the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town, homophobic attitudes and behaviour was very much existent in the family, as well as in the communities in which participants live.

⁶ In this case, "lekker" means "nice" or "good".

1.1 Homophobic violence, race, and community

The notion that homophobia and homophobic violence is centrally located in African communities, i.e. spaces inhabited by 'black Africans' as opposed to communities understood as 'coloured', came up a few times. Leslie, a 20-year old lesbian from Leiden in Delft, had the following to say:

That people is very otherwise... they don't like it.

Alison and Wendy, in Mitchell's Plain, appeared to similarly hold the view that, unlike in their community, homophobic violence is connected to race and culture, so that it is 'black African' communities that are intolerant of homosexuality. Wendy, a 26-year old lesbian stated:

I know the African community is different because there they hit you; they kill you if you are lesbian and stuff because it's not supposed to be like that...everyone says that is wrong, like it's wrong for a woman to be with a woman. I know in the African culture that's not supposed to be and then they do kill you.

However, despite this perception, it became clear across the interviews that abuse of, and discrimination and violence against gender non-conforming persons, were expressed in various ways, both within the home, as well as within the communities where participants lived. Often, when I first posed the question 'Have you ever experienced violence, abuse, and/or discrimination based on your perceived sexual orientation?', they would respond that they hadn't. Only after I offered examples of what this discrimination would look like, would participants reveal that they had indeed experienced some kind of discrimination based on their perceived sexual orientation.

Within the family, two participants who identified as lesbians, and presented themselves as 'tomboys' relayed how their fathers, suspecting their sexual identity, would punish them:

I think my dad was just taking his frustration out on me 'cause I irritated him a lot and it was also a reason for him to escape like that (Maira, 20-years old, lesbian, Rondebosch-East).

Jamie, a 22-year old, also from Rondebosch-East, explained how her father's abuse appeared to be directly linked to his suspicion that she is a lesbian:

Jamie: ...I am just worried about that because he is quite evil and...

Nadia: Evil...how?

Jamie: As in everybody is scared of him and I used to be abused by him...so...

Nadia: What do you mean by 'abuse'?

Jamie: Like beaten and stuff so...

Nadia: Does he abuse your mom?

Jamie: No, it's basically me... it's supposed to be a hiding, but it's not a hiding.... It's more of like hitting you 'till a certain point type of a thing.

Nadia: Did he hit your sister?

Jamie: Not like he hit me. I think that he kinda suspects and now when he does hit me for certain reasons or lashes out it is because he knows I am like that and he is trying to beat it out of me type of thing.

Nadia: What out of you?

Jamie: Like this whole boy thing type of thing.

Within institutions such as schools, Keenan and Seth reported the abuse they were subjected to for not conforming to fixed ideas of masculinity. Keenan related:

I've been ridiculed, I've been mocked, I've been laughed at, I've been bullied.

Seth, who attended an all-boys school in the Eastern Cape, experienced a range of insults as a result of not conforming to typical heterosexual masculine behaviour:

Being in a high school like that, they kind of ...shape you into a man or the way they believe a man should be. So if you're out of the norm, if you're not like everyone else, if you prefer playing hockey than playing rugby with other kids, then they just see something wrong with that. So children at school obviously call you names and stuff like that (19-year old gay male).

Two participants – Maira and Alison, both who identify as lesbian – spoke of being tolerated as 'tomboys' when they were younger. This reveals how parents and school teachers, in particular, saw any indication of a lesbian sexuality as a phase that these young girls would eventually grow out of, to become heterosexual, get married and have children in the future.

I was more of a tomboy before I was a lesbian. I started cutting my hair, wearing boys' clothes. None of the people knew that, okay, I also never knew that I was a lesbian because I was just never interested in girls like that (Alison, Mitchell's Plain).

My mommy thought the tomboy thing was cute, man (Maira, Wetton).

In Jamie's case, her 'phase' continued for longer than others expected:

Since I was small, everybody thought I was just another tomboy, [that] I can't get out of the phase...they forced me to wear dresses and skirts and scarves and everything...it's like 'no' (Rondebosch-East).

Cynthia, originally from the Eastern Cape, explained how, to her knowledge, the term 'lesbian' was often not used to define women who love other women romantically. Instead, 'tomboy' was the term used to explain these women. As she notes, "they knew how to explain gay guys but I don't remember anyone speak about lesbians."

Societal norms around heteronormativity mean that there is often an expectation that all relationships would work according to a script that defines two persons in a romantic or sexual relationship as masculine and feminine. The participants in this study revealed how the people around them often expressed confusion about same-sex relationships and desire:

[They] ask me 'who is the man and who is the girl?' (Delene, 21-year old lesbian, Westridge, Mitchell's Plain).

I've actually being discriminated [against] by other lesbians 'cause I wouldn't call myself 'butch' , so they find it weird - they expect ...if you are a lady per se to date a butch lesbian so I am not butch and I prefer dating [a feminine] girl...that I can see is a *girl* and they've always been like 'no, but why?' and I'm like 'what do you mean why?' 'What if you got attacked?' We both have legs we gonna run, so they like 'who's the man? I'm like 'no one is a man, that's the point.'

Cynthia, Sarah, Lana, and Jason – all residing in the Bellville-South area and its surrounds, spoke of how discriminatory insults, based on their sexualities, were lashed out against them in their communities:

They would comment out loud...they will go as far as being violent but they would be comments, they would be insults (Cynthia).

Even though we're still human we...enjoy the same rights as straight people, we get attacked more (Sarah).

In Oudtshoorn, not that I know of. If they talk about me in Oudtshoorn, I wouldn't know that, but in Cape Town, yes. One of our bus drivers that found out I'm a lesbian...was telling me that if I was his child, he would put a tyre over me and burn me - that was last week. I was so shocked (Lana).

I can't remember- they call me 'moffie', most probably more names (Jason, 23-year old, gay, Bellville-South).

Jackie and Joey, 24 and 23-years old respectively, are a couple who live in Bridgetown. They spoke of insults directed at them in their community:

Nadia: Do you ever get any comments?

Jacky: There was only once when she [Joey] came to fetch me at the bus stop and there was a group of guys...they actually said something. They said "these two lesbians". She [Joey] said "is fokol nie [It's nothing.]" He was rude, said penis in Afrikaans. "Gaan kry vir jou... gaan kry vir jour a 'piel' [*Go get yourself a penis*]."

However, not all participants articulated experiencing any discrimination and abuse based on their perceived sexual orientation. Zoë, a 20-year old lesbian from Wetton, for instance, noted that even though she openly expressed her sexual orientation, she "never had any negative discrimination against [her]self." She stated that: "I don't think I've ever experienced that yet, so I don't know the bad side of being gay...I've never had that."

1.2. Invisibility

Across all the interviews, participants' insinuated that they would rather not be obvious in their communities. In other words, openly identifying as a lesbian, gay man, or transgendered person, would allow for scrutiny, and in some cases, place one at risk. As Jason from Bellville-South stated, for fear of

being ridiculed, he would rather not be intimate with his partner in the community where he lives. Noting that he is “scared of what people think”, and that his “parent’s wouldn’t be ok with it”, Jason preferred not making his homosexuality visible in his community. Coco, a 23-year old transgendered man living in Tafelsig, Mitchell’s Plain, spoke about the violence which becomes possible when gender non-conforming people are ‘too obvious’ in their communities:

In our community we are being judged, being criticised every day and living in fear constantly of what may happen to us - if they [are going to rape or kill us], are we gonna get hurt because of the way we are living?

Lucinda, 24-years old from Kuils River, similarly related how she needed to protect herself: “I’m not holding hands and stuff and doing all those things because I don’t wanna put danger to myself in that sense.” Bevan, residing in Rondebosch-East, had the following to say about being invisible when one’s safety is perceived to be at stake:

I know [when] I open my mouth you can tell I’m gay...If I go to the shop and I see...these blokes, I see these men standing in the queue, I will speak a little bit softer, I’ll try to be invisible just to avoid it.

1.3. Class and socio-economic realities

Physical resources or lack thereof, played some role in how participants’ performed their sexual identities. In what follows, Zakaria and Bevan, Coco, and Alison and Wendy, reveal how having and not having resources affects one’s possibilities of living as an ‘out’ gay, transgendered, and lesbian subject:

Nadia: Do you think it’s different when you are a middle class gay man? Do you think it’s different for you compared to a working class gay man?

Zakaria: It backs up what I was saying earlier. If I felt like I could not be financially independent with my parents, I couldn’t be strong in my identity ‘cause I was dependent on them. How can I assert my identity? My identity is now dependent on them because I’m dependent on their money.

In contexts where participants came from financially struggling families, their ability to live independently, is even harder, and leaves them open to all kinds of abuse. Coco from Mitchell’s Plain echoed Zakaria’s comment above. Living on the street, wherever she can find a place to sleep, and unemployed, Coco related the following:

I can’t be the person that I really wanna be because I don’t have a job and I don’t have a stable place. That is keeping me back in my life.

Alison and Wendy, a couple living in a wendy house in Mitchell’s Plain, explained how they were often subjected to homophobic abuse from Wendy’s brother because they lived on the property of Wendy’s family home. Not having the economic means to live elsewhere, his threats extended to “burning down” their wendy house:

He makes comments like “wat is die van vrou en vrou - die is verkeerd (*what is this about? Woman and woman – this is wrong*)”. [He] is being like this about me being a lesbian because he’s very rude. He’s gonna burn our wendy house down (Wendy).

Overall, participants who resided in Rondebosch-East, Wetton, and Ottery appeared to have more options than participants who lived in Delft, Mitchell’s Plain, Elsie’s River and Bridgetown due to economic resources within their families, and resources accumulated through becoming self-sustainable due to formal education beyond high school. For example, where many of the participants who lived in the Southern Suburbs owned cars, or had access to their parents’ cars, if they were licensed drivers, the majority of the participants I spoke to who resided on the Cape Flats, did not own a car. Very few, however, had access to their parents’ cars. Participants who are economically more resourced, such as Zoë and Maira from Wetton, and Zakaria and Bevan from Rondebosch-East, could afford to move away from home and live openly as lesbian and gay, perhaps not entirely freely within a heteronormative context, but could, at least, be financially independent of their parents, and hence make their own decisions about who they live with, how to spend their time, and who they spend their time with. For participants like Sarah, Lana, Selwyn, Cynthia, and Seth who moved to Cape Town from another city especially to study further, they too were able to recreate their identities as lesbian/gay/transgender subjects outside of the confines of the cultural and religious homophobic value systems of their families and communities. Even though these same value systems exist in Cape Town’s peripheral suburbs, Sarah, Lana, Selwyn and Cynthia are less restricted by the value systems they grew up in – they are able to redefine themselves, and live more freely, outside of the familiarity of their hometowns. For participants who are less economically resourced, which was more than three-quarters of the participants in this study, they were more subjected to the value systems within their families and communities; it is harder for them to make independent decisions about how they want to live, and who they want to spend their time with as gender non-conforming subjects.

2. Family

I want to make myself happy, but I want them to be happy also (Tammy, 21-year old lesbian, Elsie’s River).

Across all the interviews, family played a critical role in the lives of the participants, particularly in terms of their families’ being accepting their sexual identities. Culture and religion mediated respondents’ experiences as gender non-conforming persons within their families, so that parents’ disappointment about and shame at their child’s sexual orientation, silence around their daughter’s/son’s sexual identity, and pressure to conform to heteronormative values, were often tacitly and explicitly mediated by ideas of culture and religion. Although few, there were, however, parents who were accepting of their children’s sexual orientation. This is discussed below.

2.1. Coming out

As previous South African research has reflected (Steyn and van Zyl, 2009; Nel and Shapiro, 2011), coming out is mostly a difficult and complicated experience for gender non-conforming persons and their families. Almost all the participants in this study who were out, stated that they had told their parents (usually their mothers) during, or after, their final year at high school. For Maira from Wetton,

coming out during her Matric year impacted on her studies, resulting in average Matric results and limited opportunities post-Matric:

...it was stressing me out 'cause I was like 'I'm young, I need to do it [come out to my parents] now' but was scared of what they gonna say, understand. So I went into a rebellious trip for like two years, was terrible. I still managed to do well in Matric but not academically though. Like I did everything else well - sport, culture, leadership, I was a prefect, I was like a second head girl. Everything besides my academics 'cause that was like my way of like saying fuck you basically.

Similarly, Jason from Bellville-South, struggled to accept his sexual orientation and this influenced his Matric year:

It influenced my studies, 'cause I was not staying at home, I had bursaries to study IT and messed that one up. I had a bursary to study Business Administration and Management and I missed it... I was suicidal at that time, I went for counseling...so it was too much stuff for me at once, [and a] stalker also there in between... I didn't accept myself as 'moffie', [my] parents did not approve...

For other participants, coming out was not an option at all. 18-year old Natalie from Ottery stated for instance that "I don't think that I could ever [come] out [as a lesbian]." She rationalised that only once she became independent of her parents, "then ja...then I probably [would]...'cause then I am out of the house." Lana similarly stated that her parents would "not see [her] as their child anymore." Consequently, she added that "I don't need to be out. I don't need to hurt my family like that. I'm comfortable being a lesbian in Cape Town and being the child they want to be at home."

Being independent of one's family in order to live as gay, was also articulated by Zakaria from Rondebosch-East:

...the reason I studied so hard in Matric was because I wanted to get away from my parents. No matter what they offered me, it was toxic, I couldn't take it, so I needed to forge my own way. And luckily I did...I had gifts to be able to forge my way in a way that supports me so that I could live a life independent of my parents.

Some participants relayed that their parents were accepting of their sexual identities, although at a cost. Rayda, a 21-year old lesbian from Delft, stated that

I told ...my mom; she like told me [that she] like accepts it and so, so she is fine. She won't push me away, I am her daughter. But my dad, I didn't tell him.

However, despite her mother's acceptance, Rayda often had to hide her sexual orientation; not make it too 'obvious' when attending family functions. Living in a household where Islam is practiced, Rayda explained how she hides her sexuality to protect her family from shame:

My dad's side is more Muslim and they like saalieg⁷...so to respect them I will go and visit them and whatever and they know about me being but I won't be open ...with them.

2.2. Silence

Approximately three-quarters of the respondents in this study spoke of silence around their sexual orientation in the home as a consequence of their parents' either suspecting them as being lesbian/gay, or on finding out that their child is in fact lesbian/gay. Lana explained that her mother "would get a fit really. 'Lesbian' doesn't come up in the house – you don't say that word. It's just taboo for all of us." Similarly, Jason stated that his parents are "still in denial... They don't talk about it, but they know." Tammy noted that even though her parents "know about the situation", they do not talk to her directly about it. Natalie is aware that her parents are ashamed of her, even though they merely suspect that she is a lesbian. Even though her parents do not speak to her directly about her sexuality, they "go around saying and telling people that they don't agree with it... saying it is wrong or whatever." Consequently, Natalie had the following to say:

I also know that I am eventually gonna have to get married... because they would want me to have like a husband and kids and a stable family like it should be... traditionally.

The inability to tell his mother that he is gay, and is in a relationship with a man, has led 19-year old Keenen from Ottery, to live a double life. Stating that he is "living as someone else... against who I am", Keenen speaks specifically of his mother's disappointment should he 'come out' to her, and the pressure he feels to make her proud:

I'm the only son of hers that actually went to high school, matriculated from high school, and who's going into a university institution, like actually will have a degree where I wanna go somewhere [with my life].

Describing himself as a black African, Seth, originally from Queenstown in the Eastern Cape, contemplates the links between religion and culture that impacts on the silence in his home around non-conforming gender and sexual identities:

It's an issue that that doesn't really get spoken about, especially in African black families, it's just taboo so to say, so it's nothing that we discuss... My parents are strong Christians; they always refer to the Bible. Being strong Christians as they are, they also follow their African tradition so they refer to that as well. And being a Xhosa male, there comes a time for circumcision.

2.3. Disappointment and shame

Sarah has always been her family's pride. As the eldest daughter in her family, she plays the role of responsible daughter, who makes decisions, and assists the family in all sorts of family matters. Despite this, Sarah states that "the only way I disappoint them is by being gay, you understand."

⁷ Very religious.

After eventually coming out to her mother, Jamie was told by her mother that she should “change and make mommy happy.” Jamie’s father, whom she had not ‘come out’ to, but who suspected she was a lesbian, threatened her by lying about being told about her sexual identity:

He said someone phoned on the house phone and said I must leave their daughter alone and they are going to put me in *The Voice*⁸ that I am a lesbian.

In desperation, Jamie, similar to Natalie, has thought about heterosexual marriage as a means to please her family:

My one guy friend told me he is not into girls...but I am like...you don’t have to ...sleep with me...We’re just going to get married because your parents are quite holy...my parents don’t know, type of a thing, and then you can still have your boyfriend and I’ll still have my girlfriend. It’s just like you know...to basically let everybody shut-the-fuck up kind of a thing.

For Gabi, a 27-year old who identifies as a bisexual from Portlands, Mitchell’s Plain, her mother’s reputation as a nurse meant that she was particularly concerned about embarrassing her in the community:

My mother...they call her ‘Nurse’. She’s like Florence Nightingale - people come to her about everything. She has an image as well so I think for that part I wouldn’t be able to do something like that if I was a lesbian, to tell her I’m a lesbian.

Parental shame in Lucinda’s case translated into her father attempting to ‘hide’ his daughter from the community:

Because I’m a lesbian he didn’t want me to meet people outside our house, to know that his daughter is gay or lesbian... I moved to Stellenbosch, lived there so for that two years ...I couldn’t stand being around the house because he couldn’t stand being around me.

Coco from Mitchell’s Plain, had been rejected by her family when she came out as a transgendered man. She describes how her family’s embarrassment led to hiding her sexual identity:

Becoming 21, I realised that I’m into men; that was really who I was. I was hiding - I would go out...clubbing with my friends, put things in my bag, my make-up, my bra, my silicon breasts, my high heels, brush, everything would be in the bag. Then tomorrow morning, I would come home and wash off make-up...put on my ‘man-clothes’ again and be normal again.

Consequently living on the street, and attempting to recover from a drug habit, Coco explains her family’s shame at her sexual identity:

If I walk in the road, my one brother will come up and walk past me, he won’t greet me. But in the house we’ll sit and chat normally...if we are in public, it seems they are ashamed of me.

⁸ A South African tabloid newspaper.

2.4. Heteronormative pressure

Reared in a Muslim home by professional parents, Zakaria's parents attempted to make him more acceptable, to 'normalise' him, after he came out as gay. His parents sent him for religious classes and encouraged him to partake in athletics. From an economically privileged family who values education, Zakaria identified how patriarchal and heteronormative notions of the ideal family are rooted in how his parents' responded to knowledge of his sexual orientation:

Money, grandchildren, legacy, those kinds of things. I come from an Indian heritage so pretty much a cliché...It's there in the culture, like how sorted are you in terms of profession, in terms of your family life, in terms of looking after your family and your parents and honoring them? So those were very important things.

Selwyn, a 23-year old gay male, in his final year of Law at the University of the Western Cape, was, however, of a different opinion regarding how to work with his heteronormative parents. The following lengthy narrative reflects the complexity involved in being a non-conforming gendered subject in a heterosexual family:

I think there should be a duty on all LGBTIA⁹ persons to work with their loved ones in the sense of dealing with the whole matter of being LGBTIA because of the fact that we've been dealing with this all our lives before we came out to the public, especially to our loved ones. Once you come out to them, then that's merely the first step for them, then they need to deal with it and then the onus falls on us to help them deal with it or to make the transition...of what it means to be an LGBTI much easier for them to deal with.

I always try to put myself in the position that the other person is in, in the sense that how would I have felt if I was in my mother's position and try to make sense of it. I think if you go that way of thinking there's this ...slightest effort; there will always be effort on their side to try to make the relationship work. And from your side as well, you need to help them, also make an effort from your side in terms of making the relationship work because you can't just put something on them and expect them to deal with it alone because they won't have mechanisms to do that.

2.5. Supportive parents

Not all parents were unsupportive when their children came out to them as lesbian or gay. While 20-year old Leslie from Delft has a particularly close relationship with her father, who is accepting of her lesbian identity, it took some time from the moment when she came out to get to develop the relationship with her father, in particular. Cynthia, too, spoke of her father as 'non-traditional' in comparison to her mother, and more accepting of her sexual identity:

He's not a traditional male; I mean he's not religious like my mom; 'cause he believes in a traditional way of Xhosa, as in going to traditional ceremonies, whereas my mom does not. So they're two different people - she's a Maths teacher, he's a Historian Literature teacher and at some point he was teaching Life Orientation. He's more accepting of stuff, he's more modern.

⁹ The acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Intersexed, A-sexual.

Similarly, Sarah narrated how her father was more accepting:

For him, it was obviously a big thing but he understood me I think more...than my mother did because we are both females but we feel different. Whereas my father, as a male, but the attraction to girls, that is how I spoke to him.

For some participants, there were conditions to coming out. Tammy explained how her father's response was different from that of her mother's:

My father, he told me he accepts it. But I first have to finish my studies and stuff and then I can do what I want to do afterwards. But my mother doesn't. She wants me to like get rid of that like completely.

With non-existent family support, Delene expressed the protection her uncle offered her:

He...told me 'if this is what makes you happy, this is how you are, then go for it. I'm with you all the way.' And he sees I have a nice relationship with Megan...he's basically the only one.

As a transgendered man living in Mitchell's Plain, Yasmeen spoke of being popular in her community, stating that "Everybody loves me...I'm a celebrity here." Yasmeen's father was noted as being protective of her:

Soos my pa vir my gese, as enige een vir jou skree op pad, like 'moffie' or whatever, gaan [dit] hier in, en uit by die ander oor. So lang jy weet jy is my dogter [If *anybody calls you names on the street, like 'moffie', let it go in at the one ear and out at the other. As long as you know that you're my daughter*].

Participants' experiences of coming out, or not, to their families, play a central role in how they are able to express themselves as gender non-conforming subjects, in the home, as well as in the communities where they live. Where parents - or at least one parent - are/is accepting and supportive of their daughter's/son's sexual orientation, participants at least feel protected in a heteronormative society, to a certain extent. Some of the individuals I spoke to in this study articulated fear at revealing their sexual identities to their parents and families; some chose not to tell their parents until they were financially independent, and were able to move out of the family home. Where one or both parents were supportive, there always appeared to be a condition to this acceptance that involved not being 'too visible' or 'too obvious' as a gender non-conforming subject.

3. Religion

God doesn't like gays. He'll throw them straight to hell (Keenen, 19-year old gay male, Ottery).

The participants in this study primarily self-identified as either Muslim or Christian. They had a lot to say about religion and sexuality, specifically how their sexual identities have been, and continue to be, framed through religious discourses. In this section, I reflect on ideas of 'sin', and the church, as central to how participants experience their sexual identities.

3.1. Sin

Maira from Wetton in the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town was on her way to Sweden to live with her partner at the time of this interview. She explained the dominant construction of Islam by Muslims in her family and community:

This is what Muslims believe: in this lifetime it's always a test, man, every hardship it's a test you must overcome to become like the 'best you'. But now, being gay obviously that's not real, it's like being gay is a test, it's like a sin, like a desire, you can overcome that urge, ja. So if you overcome it, if I marry a man and I make him happy and have children, try to live a good life even if I always have that urge, I like subsided and stuck to the book and be a good Muslim, I'll be rewarded in my next life.

The idea of homosexuality as sinful was referred to over and over again by participants who resided in Cape Flats' or Southern Suburbs' communities. Sometimes parents would intervene through prayer, or send their children to counseling with pastors with the aim of 'correcting' their lesbian or gay identities, and converting their children to heterosexuality. Delene and Megan (22-years old) spoke about how Christianity automatically equated homosexuality with sin. Similarly, Zoé spoke about how her mother was devastated when she 'came out' as a lesbian: "I know Christians can't do gay and lesbian people because they think they are not gonna go to heaven, so ja, that's why she [her mother] cried." In Sarah's case, her mother vehemently articulated how "dit kom net van die duiwel af; sy telle begin sing want hulle is so diep, diep gestinge (*It comes from the devil; his talons began to sing because they've sunk so deeply*)" in response to her daughter's proclamation.

Keenen expressed his confusion about God, sin and religion in the following narrative:

It's not a crime but apparently it's a sin... I believe in God but I don't know if he loves me like other people I know. I'm grateful that he made everything but I'm still confused about me and the rest, and people who are like me.

It became clear in the participants' narratives that Ideas of appropriate Godly behaviour meant not being homosexual. As relayed by Cynthia's mother, "God doesn't want that." In a similar vein, Lameez, a 20-year old lesbian from Tafelsig in Mitchell's Plain, narrated her mother's response to her lesbian identity: "In die einde van die dag, hulle sal beantwoord vir wat hulle is vandag (*at the end of the day, they will answer for what they are today*)".

In other words, Lameez is being warned by her mother that because she is a lesbian, she will be punished by God for this 'sin'. The articulation of homosexuality as a sin suggests that there is a conscious choice, that can be changed, on the part of participants in this study to be lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, or gay, and that this behaviour is punishable by God.

In an interview with Saadia, a 20-year old bisexual who lives in Grassy Park, it was highlighted how religion plays a significant role in expressions of sexual identity, in effect, influencing how people make decisions about their lives. Saadia spoke about how "open minded" her family is, but that "when it comes down to religion... we know our place and that would just be like crossing the line":

Nadia: In a different world where you were not Muslim and you lived with a family that was not religious and you were not brought up in that kind of environment...do you think your choices around who you date would be different?

Saadia: I think so.

Nadia: Why?

Saadia: It would just be a lot easier...

Nadia: Yes.

Saadia: Family accepting and like everybody else accepting...so ja...I think it would change a bit.

3.2. The church

The majority of participants in this study identified as Christian, or at least, was reared in Christian families. When asked about their experiences with the church as gender non-conforming persons, participants had mixed responses. Alison and Wendy, from Mitchell's Plain, spoke lengthily of visibility as lesbians in their church, and how this connects to constructions of gender and appropriate behaviour:

Alison: ...In our church it works like this: if you're baptised, maybe you can play an instrument or something...but if you're like a lesbian or gay...you can't sing in the choir, you can't do anything.

Nadia: Why?

Alison: I don't know, it's just their rules in the church and there's this girl ... she lives there by my sister at the back. She is not even baptised, she's a lesbian and her mom is like something in church and her dad, and she plays the drums so it strikes me maybe the church doesn't know.

Nadia: That she's a lesbian?

Alison: Yes.

Nadia: Do you think people know that you are a lesbian in the church?

Alison: Yes, people do know.

Nadia: So how do you know you can't play an instrument or sing?

Alison: 'Cause my aunt attends the church. I asked her so she said 'no' I can't, I must make my life straight to God and then be baptised and then I can maybe play the instrument.

Nadia: So first you must get rid of your sins then you can...

Alison: Yes.

Nadia: How do you feel about that?

Alison: There they appreciate everyone. If you can play something, it's a gift.

Nadia: You can come to the church but you must quietly sit there you mustn't be obvious because if you were to play an instrument or sing then people are going to look at you; they are going to say 'lesbian', she doesn't want that they don't want you to be obvious. You must ... hide in the church...you can come to church, they are not going to tell you not to come but they going to tell you not to be obvious, don't show yourself to be...

Wendy: We don't do that, we don't play instruments and stuff only you're not supposed to have a child if you want to join the choir or be in the youth.

Nadia: Is that true? As a woman you not supposed...

Wendy: Ja.
Nadia: And a guy with a child?
Wendy: I think then you can.
Nadia: Really?
Wendy: Yes.
Nadia: Why? Because you're not married?
Wendy: You're supposed to be married to have a child, to sing in the choir in youth. You're not supposed to have children, I think, but if you were a guy and have a child it's fine, you can join the youth.

Alison and Wendy's description of the practices in their church reveal how gender norms work to discriminate against both lesbians, and unmarried women with children. Any practice, such as playing a musical instrument publically, that visibilises lesbians or unmarried women with children, is disallowed.

Similar to how the participants described religious discourses about acceptable genders and sexualities in this section, Alison and Wendy's discussion of their church's attempt at sustaining an idea of heterosexuality as normative, proper, and Godly, reveals a marginalisation and pathologisation of persons who do not fit into a construction of heterosexuality deemed 'normal'. Although the other respondents in this study did not, in such detail, narrate the same experience, Alison and Wendy's knowledge of how gender and sexuality norms operate in their church, points to the ways in which ideas of acceptable femininities and masculinities are reproduced in this space, affecting how religion is practiced in the home, and outside of it, and consequently impacting on how gender non-conforming subjects are able to express and redefine their identities.

4. Young people, racial and sexual politics in contemporary Cape Town

Access to formal education more often than not impacted on how respondents in this study understood their sexual identities, i.e. as an identity that is personal and private, or as one that is political. In this sample of participants, it became clear that those who were formally educated beyond high school, were more likely to articulate their sexual identities as political, and to note the links between race, class, and sexuality.

Nadia: Do you think that being gay is a political identity?
Zakaria: I think very much, especially in South Africa it should, it must be.
Nadia: Is it political for you?
Zakaria: For me, yes, it must be political. At a class level, I think there's too little politics played in South African homosexual identity. We fought the discrimination against homophobia, it's finished. We have people like Zackie [Achmat]; those are enshrined in our Constitution. They are there, it's finished, no one is gonna take it away from us no matter what Jacob Zuma sings - it's there, they can't take it away. What they can take away is that the laws are different for you and me now as supposed to lesbians in Khayelitsha; those are different things. That's where politics comes in, that is a class thing, that is a political thing...

In the same vein, Sarah spoke about the importance of connecting sexual rights with human rights, more broadly. Sarah was the only participant in the study who articulated this:

Our rights are violated much more. In terms of the remarks, in terms of the rape, the abuse, physical abuse, the way they categorise us, in terms of fighting against this. I would say socially I don't think there's much more we can do. We can try and form more groups but I think forming more [groups] just shows other people or straight people that *we are groups*, we're different. That is wrong - that's why I enjoy being part or supporting any group, whether we're standing for feeding the cats on campus, support just to show that there is no difference. There are no differences between me and the next person, especially when it comes to sexual preference.

In referring to gay and lesbian social spaces in the Cape Town CBD, specifically clubs which are mostly populated by 'white', gender non-conforming persons, Maira from Wetton stated how she found these spaces "limiting in the sense like it's hard for them too, like they only know that world. If I'm mixing with them I'm like in their world. I sound very, very racist." Jamie, too, regarded clubs in Cape Town CBD as "white" spaces that she didn't frequent unless she was out with "white" friends. Asked whether she goes to these clubs frequently, she responded: "No. It's just when I go with my white friends and they like go to all these places."

Lucinda also noted the "racial dynamics" at clubs in central Cape Town: even though she used to go to nightclubs, the "dynamics between racial groups" led to her to stop visiting these spaces. Selwyn explained how race and sexual identity are connected, and revealed in which clubs one visits:

...I will be honest and say it's predominantly white, all of the clubs within the CBD to me are predominantly white, with the exclusion of *Rosies* which is situated a block from other clubs, so race definitely plays a role. There's interplay between the type of clubs and the race [of people] who frequent them.

Gay Pride marches, held in the city centre, were discussed as apolitical spaces by Zakaria and Bevan from Rondebosch-East,

Zakaria: It's easy to celebrate the right you have, it's not always easy to celebrate a right that someone else doesn't have. So Gay Pride is about celebrating the right you have - it's fine, it's happy, it's lekker. But there are people who are not able to exercise those rights even though they have it and that is not brought into Pride

Bevan: No, but at the same time, listen to what you're saying: you as a Moslem man [who is] homosexual is not allowed in Islam but you've made the decision for yourself

Zakaria: I can because I'm wealthy

Bevan: I wasn't brought up in a wealthy family myself - you need to choose...

Zakaria: You're wealthy compared to people in Khayelitsha, Bevan, and you're not permanently threatened with rape.

To the exclusion of the participants quoted above, respondents in this study did not name their sexual identities as political, or necessarily make the links between sexual orientation, as a protected right enshrined in the Constitution which was hard fought for, and their sexual identities as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered. This appeared to be the case for how these young, gender non-conforming persons also understood race, and racialisation in the current South African context. When participants did identify as 'coloured', these are the ways in which they spoke of 'coloured' identities:

I don't have a problem in identifying as 'coloured'. Being black, being white, being Indian, being whatever, it doesn't make you, once you don't wanna be proud of what you are, then there's problems (Sarah).

Lameez accepts her identity as 'coloured', noting that "they raised me to tell me I'm coloured so..." For Yasmeen, accent and place is what determines one's racial identity: "maar ek is nie a wit vrou nie; ek is nog altyd 'n coloured want ek bly in die coloured area (*but I am not a white woman; I am still coloured because I live in a coloured area*)." However, Jamie did not define 'coloured' identities by place. She noted:

Well, nowadays it doesn't actually matter which areas, it's just the whole attitude and perception they [coloured people] give off. So you can get a coloured *gam*¹⁰ person who lives here in Rondebosch...like a boy down my road...

Leslie, too, differentiated between 'coloured' people by stating:

But I am making an example... wherever you go, you know how to behave yourself. Then you get the coloured people wattie weet nie hoe om hulle self te gedra nie....hulle gaan tekere [*they don't know how to behave themselves...they go crazy*]. I don't like that, 'cause I am not like that. That puts me off.

For Sarah, Lameez and Yasmeen, 'coloured' identities have an essentialist value – they are built into who one is. For Jamie and Leslie, 'coloured' identities are heterogeneous and determined by one's behaviour. For most of the participants in this study, sexuality as a political identity, mediated by race and class, was not articulated.

5. Agency and resistance

At the end of the day, I was thinking this is something that's not negotiable and I needed to set boundaries around myself to say you either accept this - not everything, they don't need to completely accept it - but they just need to keep quiet about it (Zakaria, 24-year old gay male, Rondebosch-East).

¹⁰ Refers to a certain kind of 'coloured' person – not 'civilised', crude, ill-mannered.

Despite the heteronormative value systems built within the society in which participants live, within their communities and homes, and the institutions they inhabit, resistance to the norms which delimit gender non-conforming persons' ability to make choices about how they express their identities, and what kinds of decisions they make, was evident. Sarah, in a conversation with her mother who is deeply religious and struggles with her daughter's lesbian sexuality, expressed the following:

I think me persistently saying that I'm still a lesbian, if we're gonna argue now, in three months I'm still gonna be lesbian, nothing's gonna change. The quicker you accept it, the better it's gonna be on yourself 'cause nothing is going [to change] here.

Jamie, a lesbian who presented as a tomboy, narrated her response to a young man wanted to marry her under conditions which meant appearing more feminine:

He said he wants to get married to me...I must grow my hair... So, I was like...firstly, I am not growing my hair for you or anybody...

In a moment of unusual agency and resistance against patriarchy, for a 20-year old, Maira relates the conversation with her apologetic mother after her father had asked her to leave the family home. Maira berated her mother for allowing her father to kick her out of the house because of her sexual orientation:

...you let your husband throw me out but now you wanna bring food to [me]...you should have stood up for me if you feel so bad, you know what I'm saying, not just let him take over 'cause he's like the man. Like a push over type of a thing... remember you shut me out, now you want me in again... it's not that easy...We need to talk about this, talk about the last year and a half ...A lot changed for me and it's not just like okay now you want me back...let's talk about it...We can't just leave it there; it's a sore, put a plaster on it...I just want you to acknowledge the stuff, acknowledge the fact that I look after myself. She's like ja I brought you things. I was 'like your five groceries and your five toiletries saved my life', don't be naïve, like you didn't have to do that; that was for you.

Although most of the participants in this study, across the Southern Suburbs and the Cape Flats, were not as articulate in their resistance as the participants quoted above, throughout the interviews it was clear that being a gender non-conforming subject is not essentially, and only, a position of victimhood within a heteronormative society. Participants regularly negotiate a range of value systems in their families, their communities, institutions, and wider society, in an effort to live out their identities in ways that make sense to themselves. This negotiation is always mediated by multiple factors, central among them being internal and external resources, such as education and socio-economic means.

Recommendations by participants

Participants in this study made a few recommendations around non-conforming gender identities and education. Seth, originally from the Eastern Cape, stated the importance of awareness raising, specifically within the Eastern Cape community where he was raised:

I think that's the general idea in most African families, they don't know about something and it's not okay. So if they know about something, it's also the same like HIV/Aids, if they're not informed about it, then they say AIDS is a death sentence, it's about letting people know that.

Jason, from Bellville-South expressed a similar attitude about educating people around sexual identities. He felt that

there should be more awareness at schools because that's where all the feelings come from, and more acceptance at schools that people need to be accepted the way they are, because I mean if your teachers are...against on what you are, because most of the suicides are coming from schools with teenagers...I think it would be great if they start there as a basis and they move on to Universities and obviously with the adults.

Selwyn, too, narrated that education is needed within the broader community, but also among people who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and intersexed:

...people have been indoctrinated in terms of a specific way of thinking and the LGBTI community will probably slaughter me for this [but] we as LGBTIA, as a community, need to counter that indoctrination, our own indoctrination in terms of ...re-educating people about what the true signs of things are. .. that is what [we] are trying to do: getting people to view things in another way.

Sarah, however, felt differently, and stated that "it's not always our duty as people who are homosexual to educate other people."

Discussion and reflections

As a feminist researcher engaging gender non-conforming young people across the Cape Flats and Southern Suburbs, I was both insider and outsider to their realities of the participants in this study. In keeping with feminist practice of self-reflexivity, I was constantly asking myself questions about how I conversed with respondents, and whether these techniques were useful to them. Developing relationships with the participants was significant in enabling trust in our relationship, and impacted on what participants felt safe relaying to me. My perception, based on conversations with some of the participants after the interviews and Photovoice discussion, is that participants felt the interviews to be a useful space for working through issues related to their gender and sexual identities, and a place where they could work through concerns they were unable to articulate elsewhere.

This study set out to comparatively analyse the experiences of self-identifying gender non-conforming youth residing on the urban peripheries of Cape Town, against the realities of gender non-conforming youth in more affluent, resourced communities in the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town, South Africa. The intention was to explore the dynamics that make for different possibilities to express gender non-conformity amongst youth, as well as the opportunities available for these young people to recreate their identities in ways that make sense to themselves, and allow for a more fulfilling sense of self in contemporary South Africa.

The five themes that emanated from the interviews and Photovoice discussion were space, place, and sexuality; Family; Religion; Young people, racial and sexual politics, and Agency and Resistance. An analysis of these themes revealed the multiple ways in which participants' experiences are shaped by heteronormative value systems within the family, in their communities, and in multiple social spaces and institutions. What was common across all the narratives is that heteronormative ways of being-in-the-world impact on how participants' experience being gender non-conforming subjects, and how they are able to recreate their identities, whether they lived in Mitchell's Plain, Delft, Rondebosch-East or Wetton.

In terms of 'Space, place, and sexuality', overall, participants who resided in Rondebosch-East, Wetton, and Ottery appeared to have more options than participants who lived in Delft, Mitchell's Plain, Elsies River and Bridgetown due to economic resources within their families, and resources accumulated through becoming self-sustainable due to formal education beyond high school. For participants who are less economically resourced, which was more than three-quarters of the participants in this study, they were more subjected to the value systems within their families and communities; it is harder for them to make independent decisions about how they want to live, and who they want to spend their time with as gender non-conforming subjects.

Family played a central role in participants' experiences of living as gender non-conforming subjects. Often, silence was the way in which families dealt with their child's non-conforming gender and sexual orientation. Where parents - or at least one parent - are/is accepting and supportive of their daughter's/son's sexual orientation, participants at least felt protected in a heteronormative society, to a certain extent. Some of the individuals I spoke to in this study articulated fear at revealing their sexual identities to their parents and families; some chose not to tell their parents until they were financially independent, and were able to move out of the family home. Where one or both parents were supportive, there always appeared to be a condition to this acceptance that involved not being 'too visible' or 'too obvious' as a gender non-conforming subject.

Another significant theme which arose from discussions with respondents was religion. Notions of homosexuality as 'sin' came up frequently across the interviews. Connecting to ideas of sin, was the role of the church in sustaining heteronormative ideas of gender and sexual orientation, and consequently, impacted on how some respondents in this study felt about their own sexual orientation. Ideas of acceptable and normal gendered and sexual subjectivity in the family was very much tied to hegemonic religious discourse that defines heterosexuality as the only desirable way of being-in-the-world. Shame and guilt, as a result of the power of such discourses, were expressed by some of the participants I spoke to.

Although most of the participants across the Southern Suburbs and the Cape Flats were not always expressive about their resistance to heteronormative values and norms within their families or communities, or broader society, it was evident throughout the interviews that being a gender non-conforming subject is not essentially, and only, a position of victimhood within a heteronormative society. Participants regularly negotiate a range of value systems in their families, their communities, institutions, and wider society, in an effort to live out their identities in ways that make sense to

themselves. This negotiation is always mediated by multiple factors, central among them being internal and external resources, such as education and socio-economic means.

Participants' recommendations during interviews centralised awareness-raising and education about non-conforming sexual identities, within families, communities, and schools. This education, they suggested, should serve to work towards accepting that multiple genders and sexualities exist, and are not confined to heterosexual desire and practice. Knowledge, it was mentioned, is pivotal to society's understanding of non-conforming sexual identities.

While some of the findings in this study echo Nell and Shapiro's (2011) case study on queer youth in South Africa today, it also offers a perspective on how place affects the experiences of gender non-conforming subjects. What are significant in this research study are the intersections between place, socio-economic realities, and sexuality, and how this works in communities on the Cape Flats and the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town. This study was not meant to reflect a particular 'truth' – instead, its intention was to bring to the fore the experiences of gender non-conforming young people who live on the urban peripheries of Cape Town. Localised and context-specific research is significant in the production of knowledge. This study has attempted to reveal narratives/stories which otherwise, might not have been told. Such research is necessary in contexts where high levels of marginalisation based on multiple constructions of identities continue to be a reality. The narratives presented by the respondents in this study revealed that living on the urban margins, however, does not necessary equate to a victimhood. Lives are lived in this space, and identities re-invented.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Background to communities

Bellville-South

On the Cape Flats, Bellville-South is approximately 28 km from Cape Town central. 80, 48% of the community are raced as 'coloured', followed by 15, 11% 'Black Africans'. Afrikaans is the dominant language at 68, 16%, followed by English at 18, 64% and isiXhosa at 9, 15%. The unemployment rate stands at 23, 17%.¹¹

Bridgetown

A sub-area within Athlone, Bridgetown is approximately 15km from Cape Town central, for which there are not accurate statistics. Athlone is populated by 69, 66% 'coloured' South Africans, followed by 23, 45% Indian/Asian South Africans, and 3, 69% white, and 3, 21% 'Black African' respectively. The dominant language is English (82, 58%), followed by Afrikaans at 15, 18%. The unemployment rate is 12, 03%.¹²

Delft

Delft is 34 km north east of Cape Town, made up of mostly government housing projects, and is considered one of Cape Town's first 'mixed race' townships that inhabits both 'coloured' and black African residents. The 2001 Population Census¹³ reveals that the community holds 73% and 25% coloured and black African persons respectively, with Afrikaans being the most spoken language (67%), followed by Xhosa (22%) and English spoken mainly as a second language (10%). Unemployment levels are high, with only 56% economically active residents employed.

Elsies Rivier

¹¹ <http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/stats/2001census/Documents/Bellville%20South.htm>

¹² <http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/stats/2001census/Documents/Athlone.htm>

¹³ <http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/stats/2001census/Documents/Delft.htm>

Approximately 18km from Cape Town central, Elsies River is resident to 92% persons raced as 'coloured', 3, 9% Black African, 3, 8% Indian, and 0, 8% white. The dominant language spoken in Elsies River is Afrikaans. The unemployment rate in 2001 was 33, 97%.¹⁴

Grassy Park

With 94% of Grassy Park raced as 'coloured', the suburb is located on the Cape Flats, approximately 24km from central Cape Town. 73, 31% speak English as a first language, and 25, 46% speak Afrikaans. The unemployment rate stands at 12, 8%.¹⁵

Kuils River

On the eastern area of the Cape Flats, Kuils River is about 37km from central Cape Town, and is inhabited by 60, 43% 'coloured' South Afrikaans, followed by 29, 53% white South Africans. Black Africans make up 9, 57% of the population in the area. The dominant languages spoken are Afrikaans and English, at 67, 44% and 24, 44%, respectively. The unemployment rate in Kuils River is estimated at 15, 03%.¹⁶

Mitchell's Plain

Known as the largest 'coloured' township in the Western Cape of South Africa, and 20km from the city of Cape Town, Mitchell's Plain was built in the 70s to provide housing for coloured persons of forced removal. Inhabited by 283,196 persons¹⁷, there are number of sub-sections in the township, reflecting diverse class backgrounds. 90% of Mitchell's Plain residents are raced as coloured, and 9, 4% as black African. Afrikaans is the most spoken language (52, 8%), with English following at 39, 5%, and Xhosa at 7%. The unemployment rate is 26, 5%.

Ottery

Approximately 18km from the city centre, Ottery is home to 72, 2% persons racialised as 'coloured'. The second biggest population in terms of race are white South Africans, at 18, 9%. 82, 39% of the Ottery community speak English, and 14, 64% Afrikaans. The unemployment rate is 92, 34%.¹⁸

Rondebosch-East

About 7km south-west of the City centre, Rondebosch-East is considered a residential suburb. 49% of the suburb self-identifies as coloured, 23% white, 20% Indian/Asian, and 8% as black Africans. English is

¹⁴ <http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/stats/2001census/Documents/Elsiesriver.htm>.

¹⁵ <http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/stats/2001census/Documents/Grassy%20Park.htm>

¹⁶ <http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/stats/2001census/Documents/Kuilsriver.htm>

¹⁷ <http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/stats/2001census/Documents/Mitchells%20Plain.htm>

¹⁸ <http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/stats/2001census/Documents/Ottery.htm>

the dominant language at 86%, with Afrikaans following at 7%, and Xhosa at 3%. The unemployment rate for Rondebosch-East is 8.71%.

Wetton

Wetton is a suburb that falls under the larger Lansdowne area, in the Southern Suburbs. Approximately 17km from Cape Town central, the area is inhabited by 72, 55% persons raced as 'coloured', and followed by 14, 70 white residents. At 85, 77%, English is the most spoken language, followed by Afrikaans at 12, 23%. The unemployment rate is 89, 64%.¹⁹

¹⁹ <http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/stats/2001census/Documents/Lansdowne.htm>

Appendix II: Individual Interview schedule

Personal information:

1. How do you publically identify in terms of sexuality? Would you describe yourself as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersexed? Or any other term?
2. How old are you?
3. When did you finish school?
4. Which grade did you complete?
5. Did you study/are you studying at university/technikon?
6. If you work, what kind of work do you do?
7. Where do you live?
8. Did you grow up in the place where you live now? If no, where did you grow up?
9. Are you religious? How would you describe yourself in terms of religion?

Questions:

1. Do you feel free expressing your gender and sexual identity in your community? Why/why not?
2. Do your parents know how you define yourself in terms of gender and/or sexuality? If yes, how do they feel about this? If no, why?
3. Did you attend primary and high schools in the community where you live? Did your peers and teachers know about your gender and sexual identity?
4. What was your experience like at primary and high school? Did you have friends? How did your friends identify in terms of gender and sexuality?
5. Do you go to church/mosque? Are you open about your gender/sexual identity in these spaces? If yes, why? If no, why not?
6. What kinds of spaces are available in your community where you feel that you can freely express your gender and sexual identity?

7. What kind of spaces in your community would you consider to not be suitable to expressing your gender and sexual identity?
8. What kind of spaces outside your community would you consider to be suitable to expressing your gender and sexual identity?
9. Have you ever experienced discrimination and/or abuse as a result of your gender and/or sexual identity? Do you feel comfortable talking about the incident(s)?
10. Do you know of anyone else in your community who has been a subject of discrimination and/or abuse based on her/his gender and/or sexual identity? Could you talk about their experiences, without naming them?
11. Do you have friends who, in terms of gender and sexual identity, also identify similarly to you? Do they all live in your community? If yes, do you have experiences in common? If you do have friends outside your community, are your experiences similar/different to theirs? Explain.

Appendix III: Information and Consent Form for Qualitative Individual Interviews



GENDER NON-CONFORMING YOUTH AND IDENTITY IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA (Qualitative individual interviews)

INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

Who we are

Hello, I am Nadia. I work for the Human Sciences Research Council.

What we are doing

We are conducting research about young gender non-conforming people who live in the Western Cape, with regard to their experiences living in their particular communities. We are interested in hearing about your experiences as a gender non-conforming person (i.e. lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, intersexed, queer) in your particular community, and to find out in which ways these experiences impact/do not impact on you. The objective is to find out what your experiences are, as a gender non-conforming person, and the kinds of opportunities available to you. We are conducting this study in five communities across the Western Cape.

Your participation

We are asking you whether you will allow us to conduct an individual face-to-face interview with you about your knowledge and opinions, which, with your permission, will be recorded so that we can accurately record what is said. If you agree, we will ask you to participate for approximately 60 to 120 minutes.

Please understand that **your participation is voluntary** and you are not being forced to take part in this study. The choice of whether to participate or not, is yours alone. If you choose not to take part, you will not be affected in any way whatsoever. If you agree to participate, you may stop participating in the research at any time and tell me that you don't want to go continue. If you do this there will also be no penalties and you will not be prejudiced in any way.

Confidentiality

Any study records that identify you will be kept confidential to the extent possible by law, although complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. The records from your participation may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including members of the ethics committee at the Human Sciences Research Council (All of these people are required to keep your identity confidential). Otherwise, records that identify you

will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

The information you provide will not be published unless you give your specific permission in writing at the end of this consent form. All identifying information will be kept in a locked file cabinet and will not be available to others. We will refer to you by a code number or pseudonym (another name) in any publication.

Risks/discomforts

At the present time, we do not see any risks in your participation. However, there are potential risks associated with disclosing, for the first time, your gendered/sexual identity as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, or intersexed, during the interview. You may feel uncomfortable or emotional talking about some issues. If this is the case, you are free to terminate the interview, and/or to express your needs to the interviewer. Prior to the study, arrangements with the Triangle Project have been made should you need to discuss your discomfort/worries. We will put you in contact with a counsellor at the Triangle Project if you need assistance.

The Triangle Project aims to contribute towards eradicating discrimination against and within the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community, and to provide defined services to the LGBT community until they are no longer required. If you choose, you can call the Triangle Project's helpline between 1pm to 9pm at 021 712 6699.

Benefits

There are no immediate benefits to you from participating in this study. However, this study will be extremely helpful to us in finding out more about gender-conforming young people's experiences in particular communities in the Western Cape. If you would like to receive feedback on our study, we will record your phone number on a separate sheet of paper and can send you the results of the study when it is completed.

Who to contact if you have been harmed or have any concerns

This research has been approved by the HSRC Research Ethics Committee. If you any complaints about ethical aspects of the research or feel that you have been harmed in any way by participating in this study, please call the HSRC's tollfree ethics hotline 0800 212 123 (when phoned from a landline from within South Africa) or the REC Administrator at the Human Sciences Research Council on 012 302 2012, e-mail: research.ethics@hsrc.ac.za

If you have concerns or questions about the research you may call the project leader Nadia Sanger at 021 466 7882.

CONSENT

I hereby agree to participate in research on young gender non-conforming people who live in the Western Cape, with regard to their experiences living in their particular communities. I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop participating at any point should I not want to continue and that this decision will not in any way affect me negatively.

I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally in the immediate or short term.

I understand that my participation will remain confidential.

.....
Signature of participant

Date:.....

I hereby agree to the tape-recording of my participation in the study.

.....
Signature of participant

Date:.....

Appendix IV: Information Sheet and Consent Form for Photovoice project



GENDER NON-CONFORMING YOUTH AND IDENTITY IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA (Photovoice participatory action research project)

INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

Who we are

Hello, I am Nadia. I work for the Human Sciences Research Council.

What we are doing

We are conducting research about young gender non-conforming (i.e. lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, intersexed, queer) people who live in the Western Cape, with regard to their experiences living in their particular communities. We are conducting this study in five communities across the Western Cape. For the Photovoice project, which is one component of this study, we are interested in hearing about your perceptions of gender non-conforming persons' experiences in your community through the use of photographs, which you will take yourself.

Your participation

We are asking you whether you would be interested in partaking in the Photovoice project, which is one component of this study. Photovoice is a participatory action research method, where you would take photographs in your community and tell a story to accompany these photographs. The photographs and story need to express your experiences as a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, intersexed, and/or queer person in your community. You can choose what to photograph, as well as whether you want your photos and stories to be exhibited at the community exhibition that will take place. You can choose whether you want your name attached to the photographs and stories, although you will be encouraged to use pseudonyms. You will be given Photovoice consent forms which must be completed by all the persons you photograph. You cannot take photographs without consent from these persons. After the exhibition, the photographs will be collected by the researchers and kept in a safe location at the HSRC. They will not be reproduced in any form. Although the photographs might be *referred* to in publications, the HSRC may not use these photographs in public exhibits, presentations, publications and/or other purposes.

Please understand that **your participation is voluntary** and you are not being forced to take part in this study. The choice of whether to participate or not, is yours alone. If you choose not to take part, you will not be affected in any way whatsoever. If you agree to participate, you may stop participating in the research at any time and tell me that you don't want to go continue. If you do this there will also be no penalties and you will not be prejudiced in any way.

Confidentiality

Any study records that identify you will be kept confidential to the extent possible by law, although complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. The records from your participation may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including members of the ethics committee at the Human Sciences Research Council (All of these people are required to keep your identity confidential). Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

The information you provide will not be published unless you give your specific permission in writing at the end of this consent form. All identifying information will be kept in a locked file cabinet and will not be available to others. We will refer to you by a code number or pseudonym (another name) in any publication.

Risks/discomforts

At the present time, we do not see any risks in your participation. However, you may be discriminated against for some reason. There are potential risks associated with the Photovoice project. Disclosing, for the first time, your gendered/sexual identity as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, or intersexed during the project might make you feel uncomfortable or emotional. Including your story with your photographs might also make you feel uncomfortable. If this is the case, you are free to express your needs to the interviewer, or to terminate your involvement at any time. Prior to the study, arrangements with the Triangle Project has been made should you need to discuss your discomfort/worries. We will put you in contact with a counsellor at the Triangle Project if you need assistance.

The Triangle Project aims to contribute towards eradicating discrimination against and within the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community, and to provide defined services to the LGBT community until they are no longer required. You can call the Triangle Project's helpline between 1pm to 9pm at 021 712 6699.

Benefits

There are no immediate benefits to you from participating in this study. However, this study will be extremely helpful to us in finding out more about gender-conforming young people's experiences in particular communities in the Western Cape. If you would like to receive feedback on our study, we will record your phone number on a separate sheet of paper and can send you the results of the study when it is completed.

Who to contact if you have been harmed or have any concerns

This research has been approved by the HSRC Research Ethics Committee. If you any complaints about ethical aspects of the research or feel that you have been harmed in any way by participating in this study, please call the HSRC's tollfree ethics hotline 0800 212 123 (when phoned from a landline from within South Africa) or the REC Administrator at the Human Sciences Research Council on 012 302 2012, e-mail: research.ethics@hsrc.ac.za

If you have concerns or questions about the research you may call the project leader Nadia Sanger at 021 466 7882.

CONSENT

I hereby agree to participate in research on young gender non-conforming people who live in the Western Cape, with regard to partaking in the Photovoice component of the study. I

understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop participating at any point should I not want to continue and that this decision will not in any way affect me negatively.

I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally in the immediate or short term.

I understand that my participation will remain confidential.

.....
Signature of participant

Date:.....

Appendix V: Information and Consent Form for Photovoice project (people who may appear in photographs)



Photovoice Consent Form for People Who May Appear in Photographs

Who we are

Hello, I am I am a participant in a Photovoice project on gender non-conforming (i.e. lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, intersexed, queer) people who live in the Western Cape, with regard to their experiences of living in their particular communities. This project is being conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council. The goal of the Photovoice project is to empower gender non-conforming youth to use photography and storytelling to ask their own questions and to document and reflect on these stories.

What is Photovoice?

Photovoice provides a way for youth to explore and communicate their perceptions and experiences related to living as a gender non-conforming person in their community. The process involves individual participants going into their communities and taking pictures of their concerns. Youth will take pictures of a specific topic related to their experiences as gender non-conforming persons (for example, images that depict community attitudes/norms). The pictures will be discussed among the youth, who will explain why they took the pictures, what they mean, and common themes that emerge. The pictures will then be shown and discussed in a community exhibit and dialogue facilitated by the youth participants in order to spark interest and raise awareness from the youth perspective.

What is involved?

Your participation will take less than ten (10) minutes. During this time, the photographer may take pictures that contain images of you. Your name or any other identifying information will not be known or listed with the photographs. It is important to remember that there is always the chance someone may recognise you in the photographs and discriminate against you for some reason. **Your willingness to be photographed is voluntary and you may decline.**

What happens to the photographs?

After the exhibition, the photographs will be collected by the researchers and kept in a safe location at the HSRC. They will not be reproduced in any form. Although the photographs might be *referred* to in publications, the HSRC may not use these photographs in public exhibits, presentations, publications and/or other purposes.

CONSENT

By signing this consent form, I agree to voluntarily have my photograph taken. I also understand that the Human Sciences Research Council will not use the photographs for public exhibits, presentations, publications and/or other purposes.

I also understand that I can stop participating at any point should I not want to continue and that this decision will not in any way affect me negatively.

I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally in the immediate or short term.

I understand that my participation will remain confidential.

.....

Signature of participant

Date:.....