

QUEER TRAVEL STORIES FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH: A STUDY OF SOUTH
TO NORTH QUEER TOURISM

by

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Queer Travel Stories from the Global South: A Study of South to North Queer Tourism
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to AJ and Chelsey.

And to Binyavanga Wainaina.

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ABSTRACT

QUEER TRAVEL STORIES FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH: A STUDY OF SOUTH TO NORTH QUEER TOURISM

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Contemporary studies of queer tourism overwhelmingly focus on white upper middle-class gay and lesbian travel experiences (Puar, 2002) and rarely discuss queer tourism emerging from the Global South, and more specifically Africa. At the same time, Africa has gained global notoriety as a homophobic continent (Nyong'o, 2012 & Wahab, 2016) and these two factors reinscribe the image of a rights-stripped queer Africa rendering the continent itself incapacious for queer tourism.

This thesis examines the intersection of race, sexuality and geopolitics that render African queer mobility invisible within contemporary queer tourism studies. I argue that the result of situating the queer consumer and tourist exclusively within the Global North is a perpetuation of colonialist and racist stereotypes of queer Africans as impoverished victims of homophobic states and perpetual asylum seekers. Throughout this thesis, I wrestle with the question of how the queer African subject negotiates his / her / their

identity as queer citizens of the Global South, whose queer Black bodies become the sites upon which Western driven gay rights are negotiated and projected.

Through a qualitative study of their leisure-travels in Europe and the United States, I explore the experiences of queer Africans, and how they navigate their queerness and racial identity in Euro-American queer spaces that are predominantly White populated. I problematize contemporary transnational sexuality studies' erasure of non-Western queer mobility. I also interrogate the Western driven LGBT rights discourses that mark Black queer rights as inconceivable in the Global South. While these discourses posit equality for all queers, I contend that they fail to account for global structures of inequality, such as customs and border control policies and practices that overwhelmingly limit international mobility for queer citizens of the Global South while rendering their governments incapable of the socio-political capital to guarantee protection of human rights for their citizens.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

“There is therefore a degree of congruence between homosexual identity and 'tourism'. The acceptance of a homosexual identity is often dependent upon the act of being 'a tourist', at least in the limited sense of travel, if not stay.”

Hughes, 1997, p.4

In 2016, Hannah Ingber interviewed Isaiah Lopaz, a gay Black man living in Germany, for the *New York Times*. These are some excerpts.

Mr. Lopaz, who is gay, has had a number of part-time jobs working in the gay nightlife scene in Berlin. He has also exhibited his work in galleries owned or run by gay Germans. On a regular basis Germans ask him where he comes from. No, no, where he really comes from. He's a college-educated artist and writer — who is frequently mistaken for a drug dealer.

“I think that what keeps other gay people from recognizing my sexuality is the fact that I am Black. I find that very strange; it's something that only happens in Germany.”

“It happens when I go to a gay club, and they say, “You know this is for gay people, right?” Or I'm chatting with a guy at a bar — at some point, he says, “Oh, you're gay?”

“There are several gay events where they will not play hip-hop music featuring Black men. As one promoter said, “The men are too sexist and too aggressive.”

“How can they make such a blanket statement about hip-hop? I think it’s very strange and racist to say that because some people are sexist and homophobic, all of the artists are. It’s really problematic.”

“There isn’t space for my Blackness. I often have to deal with microaggressions. I often have to deal with racism. I end up not going to these queer, gay spaces anymore.”

Background

Since embarking on transnational sexuality studies three years ago, and in two years out of those in which I have been putting together the research towards this thesis, I have had opportunities at conferences and other academic settings, in different parts of the United States, to share and engage with other scholars on this topic. In these settings, I have shared my research to surprised audiences and the ones bold enough have asked, “There are gay people in Africa? I thought it was so homophobic.” I should not have found this surprising given the content on this subject of current scholarship, activism and news and social media. Naturally, I wanted to find out how my American academic audiences had arrived at the conclusion that Africa is not just homophobic but also that as a result its citizens cannot be gay. However, I quickly realized that the question I should have been seeking an answer to is, when was Africa ever straight?

In the past three decades, queer studies has emerged from the area of gender and sexuality studies into a popular and niche area of scholarship (Butler, 1993 & Jagose,

2009). However, its history and current status as a formal area of study, movement and site for activism is subsumed within the Euro-American Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) discourse (Butler, 1993). Kapyra Kaoma (2009), a globalization and sexuality scholar, contends that this history is framed within the Stonewall model; a linear trajectory of the struggle for LGBT rights whose beginning is marked by the 1969 Stonewall riots that took place in Greenwich Village, New York following a police raid of Stonewall Inn, a popular discotheque frequented by gay men, drag queens, and trans men and trans women. It is worth noting that the protests and riots were led by people of color. Martin F. Manalansan, a scholar of transnational sexualities and diasporic queer lives, argues that out of the historical moment of Stonewall, the term “gay” gained iconic status and became a marker of modern homosexuality that is signified by “social formations....and group identity” (p. 428, 1995). Proponents of the Stonewall model posit that this raid served as a catalyst for LGBT rights’ struggles in subsequent decades culminating in the 2015 Supreme Court ruling for marriage equality. With this, same-sex marriage became legal in all 50 states thus marking arrival to the metaphorical Promised Land for LGBT individuals. Critics of this model (Brandzel, 2005) argue against the assumption that equal rights for all LGBT individuals had been achieved with the attainment of marriage equality. Even before the current Trump administration began to make deliberate efforts to curtail some of the freedoms that had been gained during the Obama years, the struggle for social, political and juridical attainment of LGBT rights and non-discrimination was and remains active in many parts of the United States. This history and subsequent LGBT rights activism are what Kaoma cumulatively terms as the

Stonewall model, and it is what drives 21st century gay liberation discourses around the world led by the United States and other Western nations.

I foreground this introduction with this clarification for purposes of making clear the specificity of the geography, history and socio-political context within which current LGBT (and queer) discourses and activism sprung from in the Global North. As Butler, (1993) contends, the potency of identity politics is both bound by its history and liberated by its future possibility. While underscoring the significance of identity categories in liberatory politics, Butler reminds us of the great risk there is for categories and terms to exclude. At the core of my discussion are the contentious issues that are borne out of the deliberate efforts by the Global North, led by the United States, to use this linear and context-specific model to dominate and drive LGBT discourses and activism in the Global South. Some of the contentious issues I discuss in chapter two include universalization of Euro-American experiences; production of Black queer precarity; and the geopolitical imbalances of power all of which further compound an already complicated human rights issue. What I intend to make clear through my review of literature is that there are far-reaching historical structures of political and economic dominance alongside a history of white supremacist ideology and practice that are at play within international LGBT rights movements. And because queer tourism studies are subsumed within these histories and structures, it is important then, to lay a deep framework for critique.

Problem Statement

In 2002, *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian & Gay Studies* published a special issue on queer tourism titled, “Queer Tourism: Geographies of Globalization.” In the introduction, Jasbir Puar, editor of the special issue, states that one of its objectives is to offer the first repository for queer travel narratives; one that theorizes the emergence of a global queer tourist, and one that highlights the ways in which queer sexualities are not just impacted by “globalization, tourism, and economic systems” (p. 2) but also how they impact the same systems. As an emerging niche market, Puar argues, queer tourism is analyzed for its functional value of spatial disruption. That is, the disruption of heteronormativity through a public performance of queer mobility at home and abroad. However, she contends, rarely is race, gender or class (or all three at once) considered as a factor of spatial disruption. In her essay for the special issue, “Circuits of Queer Mobility: Tourism, Travel, and Globalization,” she argues that contemporary queer tourism studies have produced a third world queer subject whose absence in “these emerging forms of queer global capital and consumption” is marked only as a body that is “most available for consumption as the fetishized queer other” (p.113).

This thesis attempts to answer two questions. The primary one is, what are the travel experiences of queer Black African individuals in geographic locations and social contexts that are predominantly White populated? This question is a direct response to Puar’s assessment about the absence of a queer Black capital mobility within queer tourism studies. I add my own observations about the absence of a very specific Black queer; the Black African queer from the Global South. Towards this, I employ

qualitative research methods. My research methodology is influenced by Linda Tuhiwai Smith, a Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou iwi Maori scholar whose book, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (1999), is a seminal work amongst anti-colonial education scholars and practitioners. The book provides an account of the racist and exploitative history of dominant scientific research methods. It also explores the ways in which dominant research paradigms are rooted in a history of racism and Western domination that burdens research conducted on and among indigenous peoples. Smith proposes a shift towards decolonizing these methodologies such as incorporating indigenous peoples' ontological and epistemological paradigms as valid alternatives to, or complementary to, the dominant Western paradigms. In *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*, Shawn Wilson (2009), an Opaskwayak Cree-Canadian scholar, offers a perspective of indigenous research methods for indigenous scholars and proposes ways to use an indigenous research paradigm to support research on and by indigenous peoples. My methods are also influenced by the thinking of Robert Graham, a doctoral candidate in the Education Policy program at George Mason University, whose passion is not just to conduct his scholarship among people and communities that exist in the peripheries of dominant systems but also to do so while doing right by them by using indigenous methods and strategies. These indigenous methods and strategies begin with an acknowledgement of research as a shared exercise of collective unravelling and meaning-making of various phenomena. This, as Wilson expounds, is the relational transactive nature between the researcher and participants that characterizes an indigenous research paradigm. This is precisely the point of distinction from dominant

research paradigms that place emphasis on distancing the researcher and participant even at the risk of ethical concerns. In dominant paradigms, the researcher is accountable to an academy, not the participant whose life is the subject under study and who risks potential harm from the study. This paradigm dominates traditional scientific methods of inquiry out of which once popular *scientifically proven* racist ideologies emanated. Wilson contends that the research value of indigenous paradigms is to acknowledge that i) reality is specific to the contexts that hold them; ii) the researcher and participant will negotiate and find a shared reality and, iii) the purpose of research is to arrive at a more complete, better informed reality that improves the collective understanding of a phenomenon (p.37). I approach my scholarship through this decolonized, indigenous methodological lens. The queer lives whose travel experiences I analyze in chapter three exist on the marginal periphery of the dominant global structures found in academic studies of queer tourism and LGBT / human rights discourses. This indigenous paradigm is reflected in the design of research tools that center participants as experts of their lived experiences and that acknowledge participants as equal partners in this discovery of knowledge and creation of meaning. The tools also acknowledge the researcher's vulnerable position as seeker-of-knowledge.

In line with decolonizing and indigenous research paradigms is intersectionality, a term that has permeated contemporary social movements and scholarship on marginalized peoples. It is attributed to Kimberlé Crenshaw, a professor of law and a critical race theorist, who used it to differentiate Black women's experiences of racial and gendered structural oppression within the US criminal justice system. In her seminal

paper, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics” published in the University of Chicago Legal Forum, she argues for the expansion of feminist and critical race theories by placing the Black woman’s experience front and center of the feminist discourse (Crenshaw, 1989). Offering historical reflections where the Black woman’s voice has been erased in both anti-racist and feminist rhetoric, Crenshaw underscores the complexity of gender and race within feminist discourses arguing that a singular axis focuses on the privileged majority at the expense and erasure of the minority.

Collins and Bilge (2016) argue that intersectionality existed long before the term was introduced by Crenshaw. Defining intersectionality as, “a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity of the world, in people and in human experience” (p.25) they argue that marginalized people from all over the world have utilized intersectionality as a way of understanding the multiple forms of oppression they suffer. With examples from Brazil, India and the United States, they situate the ordinary-ness of intersectionality by looking at various social phenomena. They situate intersectionality’s value as a tool for critical analysis as well as praxis not just in the US but also globally. Through this global linkage, they expand the scope for intersectionality beyond a “civil rights framework to a human rights framework within a transnational context” (p.97). This underscores the interdependencies between policy, praxis, scholarship and lived experiences on one hand and social, political and economic inequalities other the other hand.

An intersectional framework allows me to contest the “implicit whiteness” (p.102) found in the majority of contemporary queer tourism studies. That is, the power

dynamics between the Global North and Global South that reify White queer travel experiences presuming a homogenous global gay tourist identity that erases the differently raced queer voices. This begins with an acknowledgement of the multiple sites of oppression that exist within a singular body, in this case the queer African body. What I wish to derive from intersectionality is its heuristic value. These multiple sites are always intersecting. As Collins and Bilge discuss, it is not just race by itself that is a problem, it is race as it intersects with class as it intersects with sexuality as it intersects with histories of colonization. Devoid of an intersectional framework, queer tourism studies run the risk of essentializing the dynamic stories of queer travelers from a racial, socio-economic and geopolitical lens.

The secondary question that this thesis poses is what does the liberation of the queer tourist mean if the privilege to travel is not available to all queers equally? Just like the first question, it is also an attempt to expand on Puar's assessment of the place of the non-white queer subject in queer tourism. This secondary question attempts to read contemporary gay liberatory discourses against the prevailing geopolitical structures that ignore historical structures of inequality that make this liberation of certain subjects impossible. I suggest that the Western driven LGBT rights discourses are quick to invoke international conventions on human rights when it serves their own foreign policies while at the same time ignoring the structural issues that support these inequalities. To situate this secondary concern, I review two key instances where the United States mobilized its foreign policy to promote a neoliberal American gay rights agenda that further served to cement its geopolitical influence.

In 2011, Barack Obama issued a presidential memorandum that sought to assert the United States foreign policy position on the rights of LGBT individuals around the world (White House Archives, 2011). The memorandum laid out specific directives to United States agencies abroad to promote and protect the human rights of LGBT individuals by: combating the criminalization of LGBT status or conduct abroad; protecting vulnerable LGBT refugees and asylum seekers; providing foreign assistance to protect human rights and advance non-discrimination; issuing swift and meaningful U.S. responses to human rights abuses of LGBT persons abroad; and engaging international organizations in the fight against LGBT discrimination. Scholars (Puar, 2013 and others) have argued that by situating LGBT rights discourse within its foreign policy mandate, the United States becomes part of the Western human rights surveillance mechanism that is aimed at assessing the “right to and capacity for national sovereignty” (p. 336) in the Global South and has ushered in neo-colonial practices that pit developing countries in a play for sovereignty against wealthy Western states. Subsequently, then U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton rallied the world around this singular message at the 2011 United Nations Human Rights Day meeting in Geneva, echoing her 1995 speech to the United Nations Fourth Congress on Women, by declaring, “Like being a woman ... being LGBT does not make you less human. And that is why gay rights are human rights, and human rights are gay rights” (White House Archives, 2011). These statements positioned homosexuality and homophobia as universal concepts. Transnational human rights and sexuality scholars have problematized universalization of LGBT issues because: i) it assumes a similarity in the forms and experiences of oppression of all sexual minorities

ii) it assumes that the fight for LGBT rights around the world will follow a similar trajectory as the United States iii) it fails to account for contextual differences such as culture. Transnational feminist scholars also critique the notion that LGBT rights are squarely a juridical matter. Its proponents make a fatal assumption of the invariable purity of the tools and institutions of the judiciary; that they are devoid of the influence of prevailing mores; and that culture and rights are inherently antagonistic concepts (Tamale, 2008).

In “Neoliberal Geopolitical Order and World Value: Queerness as a Speculative Economy and Anti-Blackness as Terror” (2013) Agatha Agathangelou argues that Clinton’s speech ignores how emerging geopolitical shifts and violence affect what may be considered LGBT human rights. She contends that in rallying for freedom for all queers using the universalized human rights language, Clinton’s speech essentializes LGBT issues in Africa by adjudicating homophobia in African societies as state failure while ignoring the necropolitics that produce the global structures of inequality that pit developing countries against wealthy Western states. Necropolitics is Achille Mbembe’s contemporary take on biopolitics, that is the power that sovereign states hold over the right of citizens to live or die (Mbembe & Meintjes 2003). Essentially, as Wahab (2016) expounds, homophobia in Africa is framed as inherently different from that in the West because it emerges from the failure of African states and not individual or fringe group pathology, evoking “colonial Africanist discourses of alterity.” (Wahab, 2016 p. 698).

In the same speech, Clinton also argued against the idea of gay being a Western invention stating that “... protecting the human rights of all people, gay or straight, is not

something that only Western governments do.” However, after this appeal to universalism, Clinton linked anti-LGBT practices to other controversial practices found on the continent and noted that they are often defended as cultural. Despite her caveat that these practices are criminal not cultural, the incompatibility of African culture and gay rights is to be inferred from the arguments presented by Clinton. The superior position of the West is left intact with the assumption that there is a purity to the practices of human rights in the United States and the West in general, a purity that is not influenced by culture and religion. What also is left unsaid is that the legal precedent for anti-LGBT legislation in Africa was introduced through colonial rule. The rhetoric in Clinton’s speech fuels the stereotype of a homophobic continent and when compounded with foreign policy decisions threatens “... to tilt the balance of decision making even more in favor of exclusion” (Bhabha, 2002 p.181) for citizens of the developing world while privileging citizens of the West. Amy Lind (2009), in “Governing Intimacy, Struggling for Sexual Rights: Challenging heteronormativity in the global development industry”, contends that struggles over cultural representation are situated in an individual’s right to security, intimacy and access to material resources and not tied to “struggles for interpretive power over policy definitions” (p.35). Therefore, claims of what constitutes or does not constitute African sexuality and culture do not preclude the rights of citizens

This layer of discussion provides important context for the sections in chapter three and four where I present my findings and use the evidence gathered from qualitative interviews to analyze current queer tourism studies from a transnational perspective. In

this way, I hope to contribute to alternative theorizations of the queer African subject in a way that deprivileges the United States as a geopolitical referent (Currier & Migraine-George, 2016, p.282) while still calling out the historical and contemporary racist structures that undermine this work. Central to my scholarship is the place for the racially marked queer subject in the Global South whose survival is compounded by global structures of inequality. My ultimate concern is that of the current and future states of the queer African subject as he/she/they negotiates his/her/their history and cultural context in an increasingly globalized world.

If this thesis had just one thing to accomplish, it would be to draw attention to the multidisciplinary works of resistance that refuse to reify the West. Such works are produced in the Global South for the Global South and by citizens of the Global South on their own terms; asserting their right to be their own categorical referent. The Nest Collective, whose film, *Stories of Our Lives*, is cited liberally in this thesis, is one such voice. On their website, they describe their work and positionality as:

The Nest's work—being born in Nairobi—makes strongest reference to African urban and contemporary experiences, establishing this as our primary datum for inquiry on our histories and reflections about possible futures. While our work often responds to and is aware of interconnected issues at a global scale, we primarily address Kenyan young men and women, and are excited when the work speaks to other audiences.

Another voice is that of filmmaker, Wanuri Kahiũ. Kahiũ is an award-winning filmmaker whose latest work, *Rafiki*, is riding the international award wave with an afro-positivist

depiction of queer lives in Kenya. A third voice is that of Denis Nzioka, a journalist and an LGBT rights activist. Nzioka recently published a collection of narratives from LGBT allies who range from friends, families, a Supreme Court justice, academics and religious leaders. In a blogpost titled “#PrideSoWhite – We are tired of those Pride events in your high-walled embassies!” Nzioka writes:

You invite us poor, Black gay Africans to your beautiful residences, we sip on wines we cannot afford, take pictures, and you get to tick a box in your monthly deliverables then continue to deny us refuge, discard our asylum applications and ignore our asks regarding equal partnership and demand flawless audit reports for the past 5 years for us to get a measly 10USD for airtime each month for a whole year.

This captures precisely the contradictions within the global gay rights project this thesis discusses. In order for these non-profit organizations working for the gay rights project to maintain steady funding stream, they must show evidence of need (hence the commodification of suffering) and they must also show progress (accomplished by photos of a gay parade in Nairobi, Lagos or any such ‘homophobic’ city). For Nzioka, one of the longest serving gay rights activists in East Africa, the bone of contention has to do with the disposability of gay Black African suffering. That as long as the non-profit organizations get enough photos and quotes for their annual reports, they are satisfied with the status quo and are not after any tangible change.

Through their work, The Nest Collective, Kahiũ and Nzioka are challenging the narrative of an African identity that is incompatible with a queer identity. For me, my

contribution is this thesis. The more diverse the pool of voices there are in queer tourism studies, the more the opportunities will be to dispel stereotypes and to appreciate the complete humanity of people who look different, sound different, live differently and love differently.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism: Brief Overview

Tourism has existed in one form or another throughout modern history. Exploration, adventure and voyage, are just some of the references that denote travel and tourism in the annals of history. John Urry in “The ‘Consumption’ of Tourism” suggests that when one thinks of tourism, notions of work or rather, non-work, are conjured. “It is one manifestation of how work and leisure are organized as separate and regulated spheres of social practice in modern societies’ (Urry, 1990, p. 26). With the development of ever more efficient and affordable modes of transport aided by technological advancements, modern day forms of tourism have become increasingly commodified and a significant contributor to the world economy as well as a key indicator of socio-economic, cultural and political development. As Baum (1996) notes, industrialization produced a middle class that pursued leisure travel as one of the signifiers of their elevated social class. Thanks to the rapid development in transportation technologies that followed the industrialization era, tourism experienced unprecedented growth in the early to mid-twentieth century and the market has steadily continued to become hyper-segmented to meet the varying demands of present-day tourists.

Tourism Studies

The field of tourism studies draws from traditional disciplines such as anthropology, geography and sociology and more contemporarily includes fields such as hospitality management, cultural studies, and global studies among others (Jamal &

Robinson, 2009). Aitchison (2005) observes a cultural turn in these traditional disciplines in the social sciences that marked significant development in tourism studies. These developments included a shift in focus from the material to include the “symbolism of cultural landscape” (p. 208) opening up tourism studies to challenges from feminist and gender standpoints. These feminist and gender analyses to tourism studies have focused on the multifaceted impact of tourism on society and have led to the rise of tourism sub-fields such as cultural tourism, sex tourism, adventure tourism, queer tourism, medical tourism and development tourism (such as volun-tourism and eco-tourism) all which are reflective of emerging niche tourist markets.

With the rise of organized / packaged travel, motivation plays an important role in analyzing various facets of tourism such as choice and destination. Besides education, work, medical procedures and other non-leisure (strictly speaking) activity, research on people’s motivation for travel utilizes Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (Hughes, 1997, citing Witt & Wright, 1992, also Šimková & Holzner, 2014) as a way of understanding the aesthetic nature of travel. Munt (1994) citing Bordieu (1984) suggests that socio-economic class stratification drives a class “battle” where each level seeks to differentiate itself from the presumed lesser through consumption. This class analysis is closely tied to an analysis of why people travel (motivation). These have an impact on the growth of tourism market to cater for a varied clientele.

Queer Tourism Studies

“Some of the reasons why gay men seek gay holidays are fairly obvious; given that a holiday has become part of the 'good life' it is a form of consumption that most of the population at large aspires to.” Hughes, 1997 p.6

With increased social and legislative freedoms for LGBT persons around the world, more and more queer people are travelling for leisure to local and international destinations. Already a multi-billion dollar industry (Waite, et al., 2008), lesbian and gay travel has captured the attention of hospitality managers as well as city and local governments, who have taken note of the value of the so-called “pink dollar,” a term that connotes the value-spend of a conspicuous consumerist gay / lesbian / queer market. It has led to cities and business owners taking note of the value of being “gay friendly.”

The disruption of heteronormative notions of space through conspicuous performance of queer travel must be celebrated. However, a review of queer tourism literature reveals a racialized creation, consumption, and sustenance of queer spaces locally (as in the United States where this thesis was written) and queer spaces as touristic destinations internationally. Subsequently, there is a presumed absence of Black and other non-White queers from active participation in queer tourism (Puar, 2002).

GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies published a special issue on queer tourism in 2002, and from it, little has been published that represents Black queer mobility. From the very history it presents, queer travel is traced through the lives and experiences of white lesbian and gay men. In “Certain Places Have Different Energy,” Kantsa (2002) traces early lesbian travels to the site of Eresos, Levos, a seaside location

in Greece whose history is contended to be the birthplace of lesbian love and identity. It is a space claimed by lesbians, both foreign and Greek, and also by the local Greek people of Lesbos. Kantsa gives a historical account of the lesbian attachment to the Greek island as tied to the mythologized figure of Sappho, a female poet who is assumed to have had romantic relations with women. She traces as far back as the early 20th century, visits to Eros by feminists and lesbians from different parts of Europe in search of a women's-only haven. Much as Puar describes the founding of queer spaces as drawing out of activism, Kantsa suggests the same of Eros and describes how it gained massive popularity out of the 1970s lesbian and feminist movement. The author also discusses the tensions between the locals and the foreign lesbians (together with Greek lesbians) on the question of who owns the right to Lesbos. While the locals claim financial benefit from the lesbian tourists, some of these tourists end up settling down and setting up businesses to cater to the lesbian tourist market themselves. While outwardly, the tensions might seem to be a result of the locals' unacceptance of lesbians, on closer readings it is with regard to the very public lesbian performance of the foreigners. While the popularity of Lesbos as a lesbian paradise has continued over the decades, noting thousands of visitors every summer, Kantsa observes a lack of representation of lesbians of non-western extraction.

Rushbrook (2002) analyzes spaces within cities whose histories are intertwined with queer identity and visibility. She discusses the histories of these locations before and after the "queer invasion" and considers the implication of the disruption that queerization brings into these spaces along demographic, economic and racial lines. She

introduces interesting concepts that are used to define and measure this queer invasion such as “geography of cool” and the “gay quotient.” She argues that in urban cities, the existence of queer spaces has been used by city governments as a marker of diversity marketed to a liberal capitalist market. Rushbrook discusses the disruption of queer tourism on urban spaces through race and class and argues that local governments, through their pursuit of the “diverse city” status that gay presence offers, have been a catalyst for and complicit in the displacement through variously coded gentrification efforts. Those displaced are often people of color from a low socio-economic class with deep roots in those neighborhoods. With examples from around the United States – Houston, Seattle, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Miami and Chicago amongst others – she demonstrates how “alternative codings of space have generally taken place in racist, sexist and pro-capitalist discourses that structure the public space in which they are articulated” (citing Knopp p. 190). She also references other scholars whose work focuses on the “construction and commodification in the construction of the gay community” (p.190) in cities around the world such as Amsterdam, San Francisco, London and Sydney. While this thesis does not focus on queerization of spaces and its attendant problems, it is important to consider the impact of these aspects on queer tourism from a domestic as well as an international front.

With increasing legal and social freedoms for LGBT people around the world, queer tourism has become a niche market. While statistics are dated, queer tourism occupies a significant share of the global market (Puar, 2002 & Cantú, 2002). Travel companies, the service industry as well as local government agencies have taken note.

However, Puar notes an absence of gender, race and class analyses on the commodification and consumption of queer international travel. For instance, how does globalization impact the relationship between gay / lesbian tourism and local populations and economies? Puar problematizes international queer travel and its attendant urbanization of gay space by contending that even though the visibility of queer spaces is perceived as a cause for celebration and a marker of progress, its consequences have a negative impact on a gender, race and class level. She cites examples of the problematic appropriation of terms such as “gay ghetto” to highlight how race and class, for instance, are ignored and even used derisively. The term gay ghetto is, in fact, a metaphor for “White, upper- and middle- class gay male enclaves (p.936)” quite far removed from the reality of actual contemporary ghettos, which are generally comprised of poor, ethnically marked populations.

Queer tourist literature such as magazines and advertisements play a large role in shaping attitudes about people and places. Puar contends that queer tourist literature racializes the roles of consumer and service provider by depicting the tourist as white and the service provider as a person of color recalling notions of “imperial nostalgia” (Rosaldo in Puar, p. 939). In the gay cruise industry, Mexico is heavily marketed for a White American gay tourist (Cantú, 2002) with images that play to the stereotype of a Mexican male machismo and the romance of a Latin lover. What is the purpose of such portrayals? Are such images representative of reality? Are they intended to appeal to an aspiration value? What are the underlying assumptions / subliminal messages elicited by

these images? (p.114). Puar offers this as yet another way in which neoliberal queer capital is complicit in the mobilization of racism to sustain a global capitalist market.

Even more than traditional forms of marketing, websites play a big role in the tourism market. The International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA) website provides various resources for tourists ranging from a list of queer friendly partners such as airlines, hotels, and pro-gay rights organizations. A dive into the events and tours section allows guests to preview upcoming events and potential destinations around the world and a search of destinations by continents indicates that North America has the highest number of listed gay friendly destinations (denoted by availability of cities and gay friendly businesses), followed by Europe. The least gay friendly destinations are, unsurprisingly, Africa and the Middle East. This list of gay friendly destinations by continent and country is comparable to the latest world map of "sexual orientation laws" published by the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA), which serves as the global barometer for gay friendly countries. It marks the Middle East as the region with the least legal protection for queers, followed closely by Africa. North America and northern Europe (including France and Italy) have the best protection laws. While these websites serve as key resources for queer tourists, what role do they play in sustaining / fueling the Western imaginaries of homophobia in the Global South?

Drawing back on the 2002 GLQ special issue on queer tourism, few essays center on the experiences of queers of color as the owners of tourism capital. While Fountain-Stokes, a Puerto Rican, writes about his own travels as queer person to Havana, Cuba, he analyzes the queer economy in Havana as sustained by the dollars coming from the white

gay Americans. Is this absence material or imagined? I hypothesize that the answer to this question lays in an analysis that centers race and prevailing geopolitics that ignores the structures that render Black / non-White queer mobility invisible.

Lionel Cantú, a pioneer in sexuality and migration research, examines how gay tourism from the United States has impacted local Mexican economies and Mexican male sexualities. In his paper, “De Ambiente: Queer Tourism and the Shifting Boundaries of Mexican Male Sexualities,” he contends that gay and lesbian tourism in Mexico thrives on a “sexual colonization and liberation” dynamic that projects Mexico as uncharted territory for gay tourism. Relating Mexico’s political history, socio-economic aspirations as well as its relationship with the United States to the rise of a neoliberal gay identity, he confronts the commodification of an exotic, unexplored Mexico whose ambiente (covert homosexual subculture p.139) is marketed for a discerning American gay market. He ponders over the tensions between a queer tourist economy that while presenting opportunity to the local economy, brings with it racial and economic exploitation and suggests transnational linkages between the los otros (the marginalized) of Mexico and those of other nations recalling Mohanty’s call for a feminist solidarity movement that speaks more to commonality than difference.

Transnational Studies

Transnational feminist studies, where transnational sexuality studies and queer tourism are situated, was born out of the desire to internationalize the US curriculum whose foundations privilege the West as the “primary referent in theory and praxis” (Mohanty, 1984). Soto (2005) offers a generous critique of transnational studies and how

it has resulted in *other-ization* that produces inequality in the academy either through i) the invisibilization of non-White scholars or ii) by universalization of forms of oppression on the basis of dominant (White) experiences. Hemmings (2007), defines transnational sexuality studies “as an interdisciplinary field engaging both the role sexuality plays in transnational relations and formations in an era of globalization, and the complex discourses of nation, gender, sexuality and ethnicity” (p. 16). Through a postcolonial lens, she contends that it is impossible to theorize “sexuality transnationally” citing Amanda Lock Swarr and Richa Nagar “without diminishing the centrality of neo-colonial histories and geographies and ... everyday struggles over access to material resources” (p. 16). These factors are essential to understanding problems of “universal gay rights” that not only assumes a universal queer identity and experience but primes this universality on a Western standard.

Chandra Mohanty (1984) maps postcolonial theory onto second wave feminist studies in her essay “Under Western Eyes.” The essay, which remains a foundational site for transnational feminist scholars, argues against the construction of a homogenized “Third World Woman” (p.61) by Western feminists who saw themselves as the referent point for scholarship and activism. Over a decade later, she revisits her position in the aptly titled “Under Western Eyes Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles” in which she makes a rallying call for feminist action against multinational organizations who in the modern day are the new patriarchy. While noting the point of departure from her 1980’s argument that centered on difference, she posits that transnational studies remains a powerful site for feminist solidarity action against

universal forms of oppression. “Our minds must be as ready to move as capital is, to trace its paths and to imagine alternative destinations” (p. 530) she concludes.

While Mohanty’s concern is primarily on transnational women’s issues, Manalansan’s focus is on transnational sexualities, specifically gay immigrant men. In his article “In the Shadows of Stonewall: Exploring Gay Transnational Politics and the Diasporic Dilemma,” he argues that “all same-sex phenomena” are homogenized into the Western gay category characterized by similar experiences. Those that do not fit in are “seen as archaeological artefacts to be reckoned with only when excavating the origin of pan-cultural/pan-global homosexuality” (p. 428). This, to Mohanty’s 1984 point, produces a universal identity and experience excluding all others. Additionally, it presumes the West as the referent point. Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan (2001), in “Global Identities: Theorizing Transnational Studies of Sexuality”, argue that even though the term transnational seems to have lost its power to disrupt Western hegemony over global phenomena, it remains relevant and useful in its various permutations to signal a departure from global and international, terms that reproduce Western hegemony in scholarship and activism. Like Mohanty, they argue that transnational sexuality studies require a re-thinking of the “primary locus of difference and inequality” (p.667) in a way that allows intersectionality to be a point of coalition, not difference.

Western Imaginaries of Queer Africa

“If the literature on the social construction of a Western gay identity is correct in linking sexual identities to capitalist development, then why should our

understanding of sexual identities in the "developing world" give primacy to culture and divorce it from political economy?" Lionel Cantú, 2002, p.141

In *New African Histories: Heterosexual Africa?: The History of an Idea from the Age of Exploration to the Age of AIDS* (2008), Epprecht links the creation of a heteronormative Africa to the 19th and 20th century hodgepodge of European anthropologists comprised of Christian missionaries, adventurers and imperial emissaries who attempted to codify African culture, including gender and sexuality, to align with the popular own racist tropes of the time that were devoid of any interest in the unique histories and contexts of the multitude of Black African peoples. These pre-20th century anthropological undertakings were keen on "reshaping African sexuality toward their ideal of the civilized" (2008, p. 41). The nature of this civilizing mission was founded in European racist attitudes towards the dark-skinned peoples of Africa that deemed entire cultures barbaric at best and demonic at worst. The cure for the former lay in European education and governance while the cure for latter resided in Christian conversion. The question of what constituted "civilized" African sexuality was framed within the Victorian sensibilities of the time and justified by a Christian morality whose interpretation and enforcement was entrusted to churches and public schools. Evidences of the systematic and deliberate erasure of Black Africa peoples' culture, including religions and systems of education, are well documented (Smith et al.). In the publishing of first-generation dictionaries of African languages by European adventurers, for instance, publishers at worst censored words considered obscene and at best "imposed crude and judgmental translations of words that erased nuance in the indigenous usage"

(p. 41). While there were works by other researchers that cited evidence of same sex contact, these studies were largely silenced in the face of the overwhelmingly popular trope of the simple, primitive, heterosexual African that reinforced the homophobic and racist European sensibilities of the time (Murray & Roscoe, 1998; Morgan & Wieringa, 2005).

When the wind of independence blew through the mid-20th century, African countries began to gain their independence from European colonizers. Former British colonies such as Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda, adapted British constitutions, including their penal codes that outlawed homosexuality, and remained heavily influenced by prude Victorian-era sensibilities (Nyanzi, 2015). It is important to note here that these Western derived constitutions, and subsequent enforcements, sought to bind disparate nations of Black African peoples and disrupted centuries old legal and cultural frameworks that served respective indigenous nations. This disruption is the confounding complexity that follows all of the post-colonial world of which Africa is a part. Where there had been no laws criminalizing same sex relationships, there now were British-derived definitions and laws as to what constituted moral or immoral, legal or illegal. These laws remained largely unenforced and uncontroversial throughout the last half of the 20th century (Nyanzi, 2015, Kaoma, 2009 et al.) until the Western-led gay rights efforts came knocking. It is worth noting that as the United States moved closer to the Marriage Equality Act, non- Western countries, specifically Africa and the Middle East, increasingly became the hotbed for gay rights activism with far-reaching consequences both positive and negative.

The tragic consequences of hypervisibility and anticipatory homophobia are well documented in international and local press coverage that resulted in the sensationalization of Africa as a homophobic continent. In the period following Uganda's infamous parliament driven anti-homosexuality rhetoric, international, local and social media were awash with messages and calls for petition signatures galvanizing the international community to pressure the Ugandan government against the passing of the bill. Alongside these were sensationalist headlines that ran across the international media. In the U.S., for example, the *Advocate*, a national magazine ran a story titled, "Get Out of Africa" while a headline of the U.K.'s Guardian asserted, "Why Africa is the Most Homophobic Continent." Nyong'o (2012) argues that such sensational outcry is organized as "single issue exposés" without fully investing in the complexity of the events the world is called to react upon.

Similarly, Uganda's homophobia became a popular theme in Western produced documentaries. *Call Me Kuchu*, is a documentary by Katherine Fairfax Wright and Malika Zouhali-Worrall that was released in Germany in 2012 that followed David Kato's fight against the passing of Bahati Bill. It exposed the deadly ideo-cultural war discussed by Kaoma. *God Loves Uganda*, directed by Roger Ross Williams and released in the U.S. in 2013, is another film that captures the damaging role of American evangelical movement partnership with Ugandan politicians and fundamentalist Christian bishops in the promotion of dangerous, inflammatory, incendiary rhetoric that led up to the introduction of the Bahati Bill.

As the international media backlash occurred, Western governments joined in the condemnation. The U.S., and some European governments threatened the cessation of all aid and cancellation of bilateral trade ties if the bill were to be passed into law. For example, U.S. Senator Ron Wyden recommended disqualifying Uganda from bilateral trade benefits. These had the combined potential of stalling Uganda's economy and whose effects would exacerbate the already precarious lives of LGBT citizens most of whom exist in the economic margins of society.

Is a transnational feminist framework the best site for African (non-normative) sexuality studies? This is a question that contemporary transnational sexuality scholars continue to contest. While scholars theorize over appropriate frameworks and political actors clamor for power, human lives remain in peril. Africa, with Uganda as a case in point, remains overwhelmingly projected as anti-gay by the Western dominated international human rights discourse. Both international and local political apparati are mobilized to counter opposing discourses adversely affecting the very rights under contestation. As argued by scholars, political or state-sponsored homophobia is often mobilized as "a political resource, targeting nonconforming sexualities as scapegoats or ruses to deflect and divert national panics and anxieties about other complex socioeconomic issues," (Wahab, 2016, p. 703). As I have laid out in the preceding sections, both Western and African leaders are culpable in mobilizing homophobia in Africa as a bargaining tool that unfavorably tilts political, economic and social precarity for LGBT individuals. Nyanzi and Karamagi (2015) argue that it has been used in Uganda by both religious and political elite to avert attention from the failures of

government. The misrepresentation of homophobia in Africa is rarely seen through these complexities nor is the West ever held culpable for sustaining it as it does through punitive foreign policies that contradict the universality of the gay rights gospel.

Even though queer tourism has existed long before constitutions acknowledged the legitimacy of LGBT persons, the capacity for LGBT travel to disrupt the inherent heteronormativity of space has grown exponentially within recent times (Puar, Rushbrook and others). At the same time, much of what informs travel freedom for LGBT persons is the notion that freedom within (as in the US and the West) and across borders (the Global South and elsewhere) exists for all. At the same time, this notion is contradictory in that, some parts of the world (read: Africa) are projected as inherently homophobic than others (read: the West) and this has the consequence of producing a hierarchy that racially primes some LGBT tourists over others.

Culture, Rights, Language

There was nothing queer at all about many of the African women living with women ... in places like Uganda, Tanzania, and rural Namibia. The women there expressed their sexuality in line with existing gender categories and as such were perfectly normal in the cultural context.

Epprecht, 2008, p. 14

In “Each Night I Dream,” the fifth story in *Stories of our Lives* (Chuchu et al., 2014), the award-winning anthology that centers the experiences of queer persons in Kenya, Liz and Achi are same-sex partners whose ability to live together is in peril because of rising anti-LGBT tensions in their neighborhood. In one of the opening

scenes, Liz is lying awake next to a sleeping Achi wondering what they will do in the event that they are evicted from their flat. Will they run away? But where to when the areas around them will be worse off, she wonders. Then she ponders over one very viable solution. The next scene is set up as if in a dream. Liz is standing before a very large tree, she is looking up regarding its might, and then she is going around and around this large tree but backwards. In the next scene, footsteps are rushing up a flight of stairs. There is urgent knocking on their front door. With Achi behind her, Liz opens the door and a man, with an agitated crowd behind him, demands an explanation of the nature of their cohabitation. Presently, Liz fumbles with a belt that is holding up her trousers, she makes as if to unbuckle it. The camera shifts to the man's perplexed gaze, and then back to Liz and Achi who are smirking. Liz asks rhetorically, "mnathadani mi ni dame?" (Do you think I'm a girl?) The mob gasps. Necks are craning to see. It quickly dawns on everyone that there will be no forced eviction from this flat. The conclusion, which is left to the audience's imagination, is that because of whatever it is that Liz unveils, she and Achi are left to be.

This scene is a study in Kenya's dynamic, rich and complex contemporary social-scape that at once recalls centuries' old oral traditions that rightfully exist alongside the 21st century realities of a country 56 years old in the making. The dream recalled by Liz is an oral legend of the Gĩkũyũ, one of 47 indigenous nations in Kenya. It goes like this: if one, starting as a girl, goes backwards around and around the largest, oldest Mũgumo tree, one would, at the last turn, be a boy. And if one, starting as a boy, goes backwards around and around the largest, oldest Mũgumo tree, one would, at the last turn, be a girl.

I preface this section with this analogy to make the following point: non-binary, non-heteronormative, queer lives have existed for centuries all over the world. I will use two examples to put this in perspective. Among the Akamba, one of the many nations indigenous to East Africa, women have married women long before the United States Supreme Court granted the same right to Americans in 2015. Morgan & Wierenga (2006) while acknowledging the gaps in the documented history of women's same-sex relationships in Africa dedicate their book, *Tommy Boys, Lesbian Men, and Ancestral Wives: Female Same-Sex Practices in Africa*, to provide evidence of these relationships throughout Western, Southern and, Eastern Africa, the latter region which the Akamba presently occupy. It would be easy, even convenient, to conflate the Akamba's woman-to-woman marriages with a lesbian marriage. It would be easy to assume that the two are similar, but it would be lazy to conclude that they are so. It is a distinction that Wierenga, in her chapter about historical perspectives of African women's same-sex relationships, underscores stating, "For this reason I won't use the term 'lesbian' in this chapter to refer to traditional practices in Africa although I will use the term for women who define themselves as such" (p. 281-282).

The second example lies in the concept of coming out. Amadiume (1987) contends that same-sex women's relationships in Accra, Ghana, do not privilege the public performance of gender and coming out that is characteristic of Western same-sex relationships. It is important to appreciate the following: the concept of coming out, that is, priming one's sexual orientation and gender identity as the referent identity category is an American obsession that, thanks to globalization, has become for better or worse, part

of the 21st century world of which the Global South is very much a part. Globalization and the neo-liberal capitalist market go hand-in-hand and Decena (2008) argues that coming out has more to do with producing a normative gay category for the neoliberal consumer market than substantive gay liberation. From his research on Dominican immigrant gay and bisexual men in New York, Decena discusses how the gay subject as a neoliberal project excludes immigrant populations of color by ignoring how race and class affect lives that are already on the margins of dominant society. From his analysis, the Dominican gay and bisexual men occupy *sujeto tácito*; a simultaneously in- yet still out- of the closet existence that values ambiguity, not overt declarations of one's sexual orientation. This can be seen as a form of resistance towards a universalizing category as well as an exercise in agency that protects the precarious lives of these queer immigrant men of color.

What is at the core of my argument is a matter that has been the contention of transnational sexuality scholars like Sylvia Tamale, Njoki Ngumi, Serena Dankwa, Amar Wahab, Lionel Cantú, Carlos Decena, Elizabeth Povinelli, George Chauncey, Jasbir Puar, Martin Manalansan, Joseph Massad, and Saskia Wierenga and many others, who continue to argue this point *ad nauseum*. And the matter is that, the majority of contemporary scholarship and activism around sexual orientation and gender minorities erases non-White peoples' histories and their contemporary experiences. The most obvious way in which this erasure takes place is based on the dominance of English as the main language of scholarship and activism for sexual orientation and gender minorities. This erasure also, and more problematically, occurs due to the domination of

the English-speaking Euro-American model (Stonewall model) of LGBT scholarship and LGBT rights movements. When Western and non-Western sexual orientation and gender categories are analyzed, whether through scholarship, experience and or activism, conflation, simplification, confusion and all manner of complexities emerge. While there is collective agreement amongst scholars, and evidence that proves, that globalization is not a phenomenon reserved for the developed world, its relationship to the Global South is seen as passive (Nyabola, 2018 & Grewal & Kaplan 2001). That is, globalization (its cultural and technological products including the means through which these products are accessed) flows from the North to the South. This attitude is transposed into scholarship and activism around sexual orientation and gender minorities and that is where international LGBT activism and scholarship finds itself today, following the infamous North to South route that assumes experiences of the Global North can be universalized to resolve issues in the Global South. It is my hope that the preceding discussion makes it clear that this is at best a lazy argument and at worst a disastrous model for activism. This is not groundbreaking revelation; it is not a revelation at all. One only needs to sample any work by a transnational scholar.

Theoretical Framework

The expectation of self-determination that self-naming arouses is paradoxically contested by the historicity of the name itself: by the history of the usages that one never controlled, but that constrain the very usage that now emblemizes autonomy; by the future efforts to deploy the term against the grain of the current

ones, efforts that will exceed the control of those who seek to set to set the course of the term in the present. (Butler, 1993, p. 19)

The categories lesbian, gay, and bisexual borne out of the English-speaking section of the Global North are the primary lens through which sexual and gender rights are analyzed globally today. However, in other parts of the world such as Africa, Asia, and others that include sections of the United States itself where English is not the primary language of social and political analyses, their usage first as words in the English language and second, as words potent with American culture and context, buoy claims that homosexuality is foreign. Kaoma (2009) contends that sexual rights advocates, in addition to using the Stonewall model, “define their struggles in a Western human rights language” (p. 239). In response to the use of Western language of humanitarian intervention and sensationalization by international media of the LGBT issues that gripped Uganda at the onset of this decade, Nyong'o (2012) argues for a more pragmatic inquiry of “single-issue exposes of African homophobia”. And Wahab (2016) notes the production of “national vulnerabilities by globalizing Western neoliberal arrangements” (p. 703) that result in anticipatory homophobia and popularization of anti-gay rhetoric.

In the introduction to this thesis, I began by discussing the Stonewall model and how it shapes current scholarship and activism internationally. I alluded to problems associated with this dominant model, rooted as it is within a specific place and time, and culture. With the example of the United States, I discussed how Western states mobilize international human rights institutions to advance their foreign policy often to disastrous and longstanding consequences. At the beginning of this section, I looked at the

criticisms advanced by transnational scholars against the dominant, Western-centered, paradigms that plague feminist and sexuality studies. In the same spirit, in this section I will discuss scholars' criticisms regarding the use of this dominant model as the only framework for LGBT rights discourses globally. I will offer my understanding of the frameworks used by other scholars that I found useful to explain the extent to which i) such a framework negatively impacts these discourses ii) how policy, theory and praxis are implicated by this framework and iii) how this produces various forms of alterity. These frameworks include precarity / vulnerability, hypervisibility, political homophobia / anticipatory homophobia, homonationalism and universalization. In addition, I will clarify my own usage of terms in this thesis.

Anticipatory Homophobia / Political Homophobia

Anticipatory homophobia is a socio-political phenomenon that occurs in reaction to heightened and concerted efforts to advance sex and gender rights. Characteristics of anticipatory homophobia include socio-political action that frustrates or thwarts efforts to advance the rights of sexual orientation and gender minorities such as sudden enforcement of latent penal codes; legislative efforts to create new laws to criminalize various categories within sexual orientation and gender minorities, and the mobilization of populist politics against sexual orientation and gender minorities that robs people of the ability to pursue their lives. One of the ways in which anticipatory homophobia manifests itself is through what Weiss and Bosia (2013) term as political homophobia. That is, strategic political rhetoric deployed by state actors for the purpose of mobilizing citizen action against civil rights activism for sexual orientation and gender minorities.

Deployment of political homophobia is contingent on the complicated history of imperialism between the West and the Global South that codes Western-led efforts as modern-day imperialism. A case in point is Uganda where in 2009, Member of Parliament David Bahati tabled The Anti-Homosexuality Bill (also referred to as Bahati Bill) in the Ugandan parliament. The draft bill intended to extend the criminalization of homosexual activity to include punishment by death for “aggravated homosexuality”. At the time, homosexuality, described within Ugandan law as “carnal knowledge against the order of nature,” was punishable by life imprisonment (Nyanzi, 2013). While it had long been criminalized under a penal code drawn from the British colonial era, the law remained largely unenforced. Following a period of global condemnation that included threats to withhold aid by some Western governments, the bill was passed with some amendments in February 2014 as the Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA) and annulled in August 2014 after a successful petition to the Constitutional Court (Nyanzi & Karamagi, 2015). Nyanzi argues that in the run up to the 2011 election, the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, and members of his National Resistance Movement (NRM) political party used stereotypical homophobic rhetoric as a populist campaign tool to win the presidency. She states, “The mantra of safeguarding Uganda’s sovereignty from neo-imperialism symbolized by the imposed Western decadence of homosexuality was rampantly echoed by local anti-gay leaders,” (2015, p. 33). During the period following the introduction of the bill, a number of domestic tabloid newspapers and magazines, among them Rolling Stone (not to be confused for the US publication with the same name), published a list of “suspected gays” that heightened public persecution for LGBT

individuals and activists. David Kato, a well-known LGBT rights activist was part of those outed in the tabloid and was ultimately murdered during this period. This, and the scene in the film, *Stories of our Lives* that I described in the introduction, are examples of how anticipatory homophobia and political homophobia produces an unequal distribution of precarity in the lives of sexual and gender minorities.

Precarity / Vulnerability

Within the past five years alone, the world has witnessed some of the worst humanitarian crises in modern history. These include immigration crises such as the ongoing US-Mexico border crisis and the one between continental Africa and Europe via the Mediterranean; geopolitical / military crises such as the wars in Syria, Yemen, South Sudan and the Congo that have displaced millions of people, resulting in horrific deaths at an imaginable scale and destabilized entire regions; and natural disasters such as Puerto Rico's Hurricane Maria in 2017, the 2018 earthquake in Papua New Guinea, the 2018 tsunami in Indonesia, and Cyclone Idai that, just two months into 2019, swept through Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe affecting hundreds of thousands of people (according to a 2019 report by UN OCHA). International humanitarian organizations are grappling with finite resources and shifting political will to resolve these crises. The underlying question of what lives are worth saving is one that transnational human rights scholars are grappling with.

Drawing from the US media coverage of the Syrian refugee crisis in 2015, Hesford & Lewis (2016) ponder over the use of children's images to engender suffering and evoke apolitical notions of victimhood that minimizes the state's (domestic or

imperial) culpability from the source of such human suffering (in this case the war). In their article, “Mobilizing Vulnerability: New Directions in Transnational Feminist Studies and Human Rights,” they wrestle with the question of out of the 12,000 children killed in the Syrian war, “Why this boy?” (p. vii) (meaning Aylan Kurdi whose lifeless body is seen being carried out of a beach by a Turkish policeman) citing the image and article published by Charles Homans in the *New York Times*. Their main contention lays on the construction of vulnerability on some populations (marked by gender, race, class and ability) and not others. Plainly put, vulnerability refers to the potential for physical harm / bodily injury / wounding that people experience by virtue of their mortality.

Oliviero (2016) notes that the potential for wounding implies external culpability. That is, someone or something is causing the injury. This, she argues, points to the interconnectedness of the body with other bodies or institutions that result in the production of vulnerability. Transnational human rights scholars have extended vulnerability as an analytical framework to understand these “human interdependencies, obligations and ethical responsibilities,” (Berlant et al. in Hesford & Lewis, 2016) that the state bears to its citizens.

Judith Butler (2012), in “Precarious Life, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Cohabitation” argues that vulnerability is linked to “a politics of the body” (p. 147). That is, the socio-economic institutions, relationships and infrastructure that are set up to aid in the organization of society. That which holds all these together is what she terms as precarity and so in this way, she explains, everyone and all societies experience some level of precarity that obligates the state to safeguard. Reading Butler’s theorization of

precarity into the humanitarian crises I mentioned earlier, the ethical obligation to rescuing and protecting lives largely befalls on international humanitarian organizations that are mainly funded by wealthy nations in the Global North. Compounded by geopolitical imbalances, the concept of vulnerability becomes inscribed by subjective definitions of which bodies are constituted as vulnerable and which are not. As Butler states, "... dominant norms regarding whose life is grievable and worth protecting and whose life is ungrievable, or marginally or episodically grievable and so, in that sense, already lost in part or in whole, and thus less worthy of protection and sustenance" (p.148). Reflecting back on LGBT issues, the question of what constitutes human rights then becomes a contested ground upon which the Global North, through its tools of geopolitical dominance such as foreign policy, development aid, international humanitarianism subjectively assess vulnerability and adjudicate on what constitutes rights and what does not. In this way, the Global North is seen to take up the ethical mantle by leading efforts towards LGBT freedoms in the Global South yet by the very same token redistributes precarity to adversely affect sexual orientation and gender minorities in the Global South.

Homonationalism

"The metaphor of coming out is striking, part of a broader trend of appropriating the language of progressive movements in the service of empire."

Amy Kaplan, 2003, p.3

In *Terrorist Assemblages: homonationalism in queer times*, Jasbir Puar begins her introduction with this quote from Amy Kaplan's "Violent Belongings and the Question of

Empire Today”. That quote sets the stage for her book that explores the contradictory human rights narratives driven by a country whose influence on the 21st century world cannot be ignored. Puar’s book, explores the post-9/11 configuration of the United States as the progressive site for LGBT rights against countries in the Global South. Coining the term homonationalism, she explores the linkages and points of divergence between “homosexuality and the nation, national identity, and nationalism” (p. 49).

Homonationalism is a “form of sexual exceptionalism” which, by adopting various “universally” appealing strategies such as human rights interventionism and more sinister ones such as foreign policy, creates a national homosexual identity that performs a regulatory function not just within the boundaries of the nation-state but also globally (p.2). Puar argues that regulating the normative aspects of an LGBT identity is very much entangled with regulating race. This results in the production of “sexual-racial” othering of the Middle Eastern society (p. 2). While Puar’s book focuses on the impact of the emergence of a US sexual exceptionalism narrative in post-9/11 on the Middle East region, my thesis focuses on the otherization of Africa (and the Global South in general). I suggest that the sexual-racial othering, as discussed by Puar, that has surged in the almost two decades since 9/11 has historically existed in one form of othering or another (for example colonialism, that othered non-white populations and marked them as barbaric and in need of was aimed at ‘civilizing’).

Universalization

The tendency for dominant societies and cultures to presume to speak for all others is what is referred to as universalization. Joseph Massad (2002), a professor of modern Arab politics and intellectual history at Columbia University, argues that by adopting a missionary / liberatory agenda for the rest of the world, the Western gay rights movement follows in the same footsteps as the Western feminist movement in a way that presumes universality of experiences and forms of oppression. In “Orienting Desire: The Gay International and the Arab World,” he argues that the Western driven gay rights discourse actually results in a “forced heterosexualization” of societies whose same-sex practices do not align to the Western ones.

Massad argues that:

[the discourse] assumes prediscursively that homosexuals, gays, and lesbians are universal categories that exist everywhere in the world, and based on this prediscursive axiom, the Gay International sets itself the mission of defending them by demanding that their rights as “homosexuals” be granted where they are denied and be respected where they are violated. In doing so, however, the Gay International produces an effect that is less than liberatory. (p. 363)

At the root of Massad’s contention is Western domination of gay identity politics that confines non-gender conforming behaviors and non-heteronormative sexual orientations to a narrow Western understanding. Blackwood (2005) argues against the tendency of global queer discourse to impose definitions and labels derived from the West in analyzing sexualities in non-Western contexts. She problematizes the use of the

term “queer” since it is rooted in a very specific Western culture that does not necessarily correspond in other cultures. While acknowledging that what constitutes as local, or indigenous, is contentious in transnational sexuality studies, language remains an important locus from where to “disrupt universalizing tendencies of queer academic and activist discourses” (p. 221). In a study of same sex relationships in Padang and West Sumatra, Indonesia, Blackwood observes that the terms lesbi and tomboi are used as identifiers of female-to-female relationships each with different connotations that are dependent on the location and speaker within Indonesia. Lesbi and tomboi are not to be confused for their English cognates, lesbian and tomboy: “Tombois do not see themselves as women; they consider themselves masculine, like men, and not like women at all.... Tombois' girlfriends see themselves as normative women who happen to be lesbi at this point because their boyfriends are female bodied” (p. 226). As evidence of the complexity of local identities, Blackwood (1998) explains that in West Sumatra, lesbi refers to both tombois and their girlfriends but is generally related with tomboy, whereas in Padang, those who identify as lesbi prefer to refer to themselves as tomboi because the term lesbi is associated with deviance.

Dankwa (2013) argues that Western terms and labels do not directly correspond to the West African context and in fact “lose their power” when implanted in the West African context. Similarly, Amadiume (1987) contends that "Anatomical sex is not a foundational category of West Africa – contra biological determinism" (p. 197). In her study of same-sex relationships between women in Accra, Ghana, Amadiuma discusses performance of same-sex relations in Ghana that takes place through a “language of

allusion” which does not privilege the Western discourse of coming out. She concludes that unlike the West where gender and sex performance take center stage, “the primacy of relational power that is generated by seniority curtailed the relevance of physical gender display” (p.187). In her book, *Male Daughters-Female Husbands*, Ifi Amadiume, a scholar of African women’s histories of gender and sexuality, distinguishes the Yoruba as lacking the gendered markers of identity that are found in the English-speaking world. Igbo, for example, has a flexible subjective pronoun with few markers of male or female “making it possible to conceptualize certain roles as separate from sex and gender hence the possibility of either gender to fulfil the role” (p. 90). As such, the current US practice of marking pronouns in introductions, while well intentioned, would fall flat if the audience is comprised of Igbo, Gikūyū, or Kiswahili speakers for example. In “Male Homosexuality in Bamako: A Cross-Cultural and Cross-Historical Comparative Perspective”, Christopher Broqua (2013) juxtaposes the demand for rights to have and raise children among Western gays and lesbians with Mali where men who have sex with men (read this as sexual behavior not sexual orientation) exercise fatherhood within the traditional heteronormative family unit. As is the case in Ghana where same sex expressions and identities are performed in silence, Mali, too, does not privilege coming-out and it is not for lack of a contextual opportunity. All these issues; of terms, rights, meaning, frameworks of analyses, and histories reveal some of the ways in which the Western English-speaking world universalizes LGBT issues.

This is not a denial of the existence of non-Westerners who identify as gay, queer, lesbian, amongst other categories derived from the West, far from it. It is the use of these

terms as the only analytical tool that is problematic because they are wrought with political and cultural nuances born of the West and which must not be blindly imposed on experiences that have, and have always had, their own culturally distinct terms and meanings. Given these complexities, I would like to clarify my own use of language. Generally, I use the acronym LGBT as an umbrella term for non-binary and non-heteronormative categories, which is to be understood as inclusive of the derivatives LGBTI, LGBTQ, LGBTIQ+. I use it fully cognizant of its roots in Euro-American history and cultural nuance via the English language, and despite the limitation and translative attempts. I use "gay rights" as an umbrella term for activism around all sexual minorities, cognizant of the fact that the term itself is wrought with a problematic history (Sherry, 2009) which is not the subject of my current discussion. I also use this term to denote the international human rights campaign for LGBT rights that focuses on non-Western societies but is driven primarily by the West. I use Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans to refer specifically to those who identify as such. I use queer to describe sexuality as an identity and a behavior that exists within the broad spectrum of non-heteronormative identities and experiences. I also use it for its value as an analytical tool that decenters, disrupts and challenges not only heteronormativity but also Eurocentrism and other forms of hegemony. As Spurlin (2006) argues, "...queer ... while influenced by and not entirely removed from western queer identity politics and cultural practices, is not reducible to them" (p. 20). In some cases, I will specifically use the terms gay and lesbian to highlight arguments made by scholars cited within this thesis. In such instances, these terms are to be understood within the context of the respective citations

and unless specified, to be understood as sexual identities as defined in the Western sense. It is important to underscore that my specific use of the term queer must not be construed to mean sexual identities alone, but I am deliberate about queer being an inclusive term that describes sexuality also as behavior distinct from identity (Hemmings, 2007). I must reiterate that while my use of these terms and categories are generally to be understood as inclusive, my argument is predicated on problematizing “universalization” and as such, there are sections of this paper that specifically highlight the nuances between same-sex desire, gender identity, performance and expression as a critique of universalization. Sometimes, even if we are speaking the same language, we are not speaking the same language. Therefore, it is important for scholars and activists to incorporate exercises where they and their constituents take part in collaborative meaning-making; that is to agree with their constituents about what they are saying, what they mean to say, and to have an agreed conclusion to what has been said.

Finally, with regards to the terms “Global North” and “Global South,” these are terms used in development studies as markers of socio-economic and political development from the dominant standpoint of what constitutes development. Dados & Conwell (2012) trace the usage of these terms to Raul Prebisch, an economist who centered his analysis of underdevelopment by marking a “core and periphery” of global economics (the core denoting wealthy states and periphery denoting poor states). The choice to use North / South within development economics is loosely aligned to the northern and western hemisphere but beyond literal geography, the North / South dichotomy is also understood as the path through which transnational capital flows from

the affluent / dominant to less affluent / marginalized parts of the world. The division of the world's wealth is not simply a matter of GDP calculations and neither is it neatly grouped into opposing hemispheres as the North / South labels would presume (Mohanty, 2003). The use of Global North / South in this thesis is for its explanatory value in delineating the geopolitical organization of the 21st century world.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to discuss the ways in which power is configured and contested, at the local and global context, within queer tourism studies. Drawing mainly from GLQ's 2002 special issue, I demonstrated how an intersectional analysis (that takes into account the interconnected nature of race, gender, sexuality, human rights, culture, politics, geopolitics and socio-economic class) is largely absent. This has resulted in the production of a homogenous third world gay identity. I contextualized the extent to which the White lens dominates contemporary LGBT discourses and highlighted the ways in which transnational sexuality scholars have problematized this dominant paradigm. Through a discussion of universalization, precarity / vulnerability and political / anticipatory homophobia I discussed the ways in which a history of Western imperialism, contemporary forms of racism, geopolitical alignments and the international media have produced a global imaginary of Africa as a continent incompatible with queer rights and queer tourism. I presented evidence of how the United States, through its geopolitical apparatus operationalized a "homosexual sexual exceptionalism" (Puar, 2017) narrative that called for gay rights elsewhere (read: Africa) while ignoring the neo-colonial and racist policies that underpinned these gay liberatory initiatives.

In the next two chapters, I focus on the ways in which I attempted to fill the gap identified in the review of queer tourism literature. To do so, I formulated the following questions: i) What are the travel experiences of Black queer individuals in white dominated spaces? And ii) what does the liberation of the queer tourist mean if the privilege to travel is not available to all queers equally? More specifically, chapter three will focus on the ways in which qualitative methods, via an indigenous research paradigm, were employed to gather rich data whose findings I present in the fourth chapter, drawing upon key themes that the research data revealed. Mapping an intersectional framework on the data, I demonstrate the multiple sites of oppression that compound Black African queer travel experiences and explore the linkages that render them invisible within queer tourism studies. Finally, in chapter five I offer directions for future research and conclusions.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

“For researchers to be accountable to all our relations, we must make careful choices in our selection of topics, methods of data collection, forms of analysis and finally in the way we present information.”

Shawn Wilson, 2009

The research methods were informed by a decolonized and indigenous research paradigm that acknowledges the significant difference between dominant methods as employed in research on indigenous peoples and as such, centers participants as experts of their lived experiences.

The question I set out to answer in this thesis was, what are the travel experiences of Black queer individuals in White spaces? Towards this, I employed qualitative means to capture the experiences of queer Black Africans in their leisure travels abroad. In order to maintain a respectful regard for individuals’ lived experience, I chose to use the referent “participant” instead of “subject”. The term subject is used by its proponents to achieve distance or objectivity from the object under study. When analyzed from the history of anthropology, this term is imperializing and dehumanizing (Smith, 1997). On the other hand, the term participant, by definition, evokes choice and collaboration. I was not under any illusions that I was an expert; I envisioned the relationship between the participant and myself as collaborators in meaning-making and I made efforts to situate the participant as the expert of his or her or their lived experience.

Instrument Design

I prepared two sets of interview questions: the first set comprised of seven yes or no questions that served to qualify participants. For example, question one asked “Are you a citizen and passport holder of a country in the Global South and or Africa?” and question five asked “During your travels, did you participate in activities that can be said to be leisurely, and, or touristy? For example, go sightseeing; check out the nightlife; restaurants; shopping; beach etc.” The second set of question were open ended and sought detailed and descriptive answers. For example, question six asked, “Please describe how the customs clearance process was for you upon your arrival to your destination.” Question seven asked, “Once you arrived at your destination, how did you seek a queer community?” Question 11 asked, “How did your experience in that country / city change or shape your sense of identity?” To formulate these questions, I focused on three critical elements that were informed by my review of literature. These were; logistics, identity, and freedom. Examples of questions grouped under logistics include “Did you require a visa?” and “What was the visa application process like.” Questions grouped under identity include “Did you have any having any thoughts about being an African and Black while in these queer spaces?” and “How has your ability to travel internationally affected your sense of self, where you come from, how you identify?” Questions grouped under freedom include “If you attended any specific public events that were themed for LGBTIQ+, what were your motivations for attending these events?” Some questions presented both elements of freedom and identity and were analyzed for both such as, “How would you describe your social interactions in those spaces?”

Recruitment

In terms of qualifying research participants, the research instrument was designed to evaluate volunteers based on the following criteria: be Black, identify as queer, be a citizen and passport holder of a country in the Global South and to have travelled to locations in North America, Europe and other countries whose populations are majority White. In addition, participants had to have participated in a “queer lifestyle” during their travels. I operationalized queer lifestyle as socialization within the queer community, going to queer clubs, attending pride events, dating in the queer community as well participation in the more commodified aspect of a queer cosmopolitan lifestyle that recognizes gays and lesbians as a niche market (Rushbrook, 2002) for tourism. Cohen, cited in Rushbrook, notes, “couples, heterosexual and homosexual, admire each other over some of the best martinis and whiskey sours in the city” (p.183), referencing the visible consumerism that is characteristic of the queer cosmopolitan market. To recruit participants, I sent emails to the following LGBT / human rights organizations: the National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, the Forum for Liberation and Acceptance of Genders and Sexualities, and the Washington D.C. Mayor’s Office of LGBT Affairs. I also sent volunteer requests through social media networks that organize around issues for Black and African queers; academic and professional networks, and the George Mason University’s LGBT Resources and Women and Gender Studies listservs. I interviewed six participants and selected three narratives for this discussion.

Data Collection

Being geographically removed from the participants and lacking the funds to travel for in-person interviews with the participants, I relied on a combination of phone interviews, email and text correspondence. While email provided me with the next best opportunity for an open-ended interview short of a face-to-face meeting, I purposed to speak to each one of the participants as a way to metaphorically bridge the distance between scholarship and lived experience and, more practically, to allow an opportunity to ask questions, seek clarity and form a human connection.

The length of the interviews, the number of emails and text messages that I exchanged with the participants varied. This variance was based on comprehension of questions and responses for both myself and the participants. Some questions needed more clarification while some responses invited follow up questions. I endeavored to provide a self-revelatory environment for the participants that supported their agency and right to tell their story in their own way, using as much or as little time as they needed.

Once the interview phase was completed, I utilized open coding to group the data into broad categories. Some data were easier to group into themes than others. For example, race was a big part of participants' experiences and so all references to participant's physical appearance and direct reference to being Black, or African were coded as "race" while reflexive description of emotional or mental sense of self, I coded as identity. I went through the data several times to refine the categories and to satisfy the constant comparative method of grounded theory (Charmaz & Henwood, 2008) and from this process emerged some key themes that I discuss in the findings section.

Participant Backgrounds

John, a working professional in his twenties, identifies as cis male and queer. I emailed him to introduce and share my research background, and sent him the set of questions that I had prepared in advance. While I had set questions, I endeavored to allow the interview to be self-revelatory. John had lived in the United Kingdom as he pursued a graduate degree and during that time, he travelled around Europe. And later as a professional, he travelled back to Europe and elsewhere. His motivations for travel were varied, some were for vacations, summer breaks from graduate school and other trips were work related. Over a mix of email correspondence and WhatsApp, John shared with me his experiences at a gay parade in London, gay clubs in Birmingham, Athens and Thessaloniki and experiences on gay dating apps.

Alex is a sexual and gender minority rights activist working in an island city along the African coast of the Indian Ocean. He identifies as cis male and gay. I established contact with Alex through a call for participants that I had sent out to human rights advocacy networks. His motivations for travel were vacations, visiting friends and some professional engagements. With the exception of one phone call, our correspondence was entirely via email over a period of three weeks during which Alex shared his travel experiences in the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, the United States, France, Switzerland, among others.

Ker identifies as a cis female and bisexual. A writer and activist located in Southern Africa, she travels internationally for work and leisure. Ker and I got in touch through my academic networks, we communicated primarily via email, and occasionally,

when I needed a quick clarification, via WhatsApp messages. Ker frequented the party scenes and clubs in multiple cities in Greece, Holland and the United States.

For the purposes of upholding their privacy, the names used to identify participants are pseudonyms.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

This chapter engages with the participant data and discusses findings drawn from five emerging themes: class, passport privilege, queering borders, queering freedom and Black (African) queer impossibility. By presenting quotes directly from the data, the findings allow the research participants to voice their own narratives and be experts of their own experiences.

This thesis sought to answer two questions. The primary question was, what are the travel experiences of queer Black citizens of the Global South? This question was motivated by a marked absence of queer tourism studies emerging from the Global South as revealed in the review of queer tourism studies literature. The secondary question was, what does the liberation of the queer tourist mean if the privilege to travel is not available to all queers equally? This question attempts to situate race and geopolitics within the global gay rights project that claims freedom for all sexual orientations and gender minorities, and which informs the freedom for LGBT travel locally and internationally.

Consistent with Jasbir Puar's assertion that contemporary queer tourism discourses project a homogenous global gay tourist who is White and from the West, this section examines the issues that mark the absence of queer Black / African mobility within queer tourism discourses. Mapping an intersectional framework on the findings, I take into account the multiple forms of oppression that are present in a singular body (in this case the queer Black tourist) that limit this freedom to travel. Utilizing Agatha Agathangelou's Black queer impossibility as a framework, I suggest that at the

confluence of race, geopolitics and the gay rights project, is the construct of a third world gay identity that presumes the incompatibility of Blackness and LGBT rights and as a result cannot conceive of a queer Black African tourist.

Class

The participants in this research are all college educated, with two having multiple post-graduate qualifications. All are mid-career professionals and occupy a middle socio-economic class. Their motivations for travel were work, education, vacation, and family visits. As indicated by all participants, travel plans for work, education and family visits often included elements of leisure. Ker's visits to Greece were purely to vacation while her visit to the US was to see family members. John, who was a graduate student in the UK, spent his summers vacationing in various European cities. And John, who in addition to travelling for education, to visit friends and vacation, his job requires regular international travel and he, too, often carves out personal / leisure time before or after his professional engagements. All these elements connote access to disposable income.

While the participants perceived themselves as middle class and savvy travelers, this perception was often challenged in their public interactions. Alex noted:

In public transport[ation] they rarely check tickets but when I travelled, in most cases, they singled me out to check if I had paid my tickets...Going shopping in the supermarket, I realized that I wasn't trusted and always was followed in a suspicious manner.

LGBT rights discourses position inclusivity and diversity as a core characteristic by promoting all sexualities, all races, and all nationalities. Waitt et al. (2008) argue that the

gay and lesbian tourist industry uses diversity as a marketing tool to tap into the pink travel economy. This “exemplifies contemporary queer theorizations of how the neo-liberal state sustains particular acceptable, non-threatening ideas of gayness... and in so doing creates hierarchies of homosexualities” (p. 782). At the zenith of these “hierarchies of homosexualities” is the White queer tourist for whom marketing material is specifically targeted and whose experiences are featured extensively in queer tourism studies. On the other, extreme, hand, the Black African queer is often featured in human rights and asylum studies. And as Alex demonstrates, his presence abroad is treated with suspicion despite his socio-economic standing. This is a product of xenophobic forms of racism in the Global North that mark Black Africans as emblematic of failed states, and poverty amongst other stereotypes.

Passport Privilege

Interviewer: What was the purpose of your trip?

Ker: Visiting family.

Interviewer: If you required a visa, how would you describe the application process?

Ker: Tenuous.

Interviewer: Please describe your thoughts and feelings leading up to the interview and during the interview.

Ker: Panic and general discontent; awareness that my passport was weak and not good enough and generally regarded with suspicion, leading up to, of course, a lot of unnecessary documents being needed to prove that I

wasn't going to run away; an acute awareness that people coming into my country from the countries I was trying to go to would never ever have to jump through these ridiculous hoops.

The difficulty of international travel for holders of most passports from the Global South is unimaginable to most citizens of the United States and Europe, regardless of their economic status. The process of applying for a US visa, for example, is not only expensive (currently at a non-refundable fee of \$160 for non-immigrant visa such as B1 / B2 that allows visits of a touristic or business nature). It also involves a lengthy online application process and requires physical travel to a US Embassy for a face-to-face visa interview. To obtain this interview, one must select from available slots on the Embassy's online calendar. To view the online calendar, one must pay the non-refundable visa fee and receive a payment confirmation code from the visa payment agency (usually, a bank or proxy). This code is what provides access to the online calendar. At best, appointments may be available as soon as two months in advance and at worst, one must wait up to a year for an available appointment. This process obviously requires months of advance planning that is fraught with anxiety and uncertainty for the visa applicant. This anxiety, even for those who are best prepared, is mainly due to the unclear guidelines that determine the issuance or denial of a visa.

According to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services website, nonimmigrant visa denials are based on an applicant's inability to demonstrate significant ties to one's home country as described by section 214 B of the immigration and nationality act. This policy assumes that ties to one's home country can be demonstrated

by class through display of wealth or through biology by proffering marriage certificates and birth certificates of spouses and children that one ostensibly will return to. The ambiguity of such policies enables embassy officials to deny visa applications at will and without accountability.

Here is an example that while unrelated to LGBT issues directly, offers an indication of the dubious nature of the visa adjudication process: The African Global Economic and Development Summit, an organization that promotes investment opportunities between the US and Africa held its 2017 meeting without any of the 60 invited delegates from Africa in attendance. According to an NPR news report of the event, none of its delegates from 12 African countries could obtain a US visa to travel to the conference held at the University of Southern California. This is despite the fact that the organization has held annual summits since its foundation in 2013 and that invited guests are typically high-level business stakeholders drawn from the private sector and government. Contrast this with the ease at which citizens of the European Union, British, Australia, New Zealand among others, can travel to the US and around the world most often visa free (in the US known as a visa waiver) or obtained at the port of entry. According to travel.state.gov, 38 countries qualify for the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). VWP allows citizens of these 38 countries to travel to the United States for business or leisure for up to 90 days without a visa. With the exception of Chile, Japan, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan, these countries have one glaring commonality: their populations are majority European, White. Visa ease is something completely unimaginable to citizens of the Global South, such as those whose stories are shared here.

Their passports hold nominal value at ports of entry around the world and the process of international travel is fraught with anxiety and unwarranted detention.

Queering Borders

Another way in which the participants experienced a heightened level of scrutiny was at ports of entry. Despite being over prepared by having multiple documents to authenticate the nature of their travels, it was often left to the whims of the customs and border officer on duty to either let them through or detain them. Despite being a savvy traveler, Alex reported experiencing high levels of anxiety during customs checks at various ports of entry. In his experience, Italy presented the most unpleasant reception and he was categorical about never returning. He observed being singled out at the Fiumicino International Airport in Rome, Italy.

The officer asked me, what brings me to Italy and if I have ever been out of [my country] before. It seemed that he was not asking to know but to confirm [his assumptions]. He directed me to a room where I saw some tired looking African guys whom I guess had been there for a while. Another officer came in and asked me what my relationship was with my host and how long we had known each other. Upon attempting to explain, he just told me that Italian government has had enough of immigrants and if I am thinking of staying then I had made a mistake. Luckily, my host called the customs. Apparently, he had some connections and since he had come to pick me up, he was worried that the flight had landed long ago and [wondered] why I was taking long to come out. That is when I was let out to go.

Prior to the current anti-immigrant rhetoric that has gripped the US, UK, Australia and other countries, there were general assumptions of guaranteed protection of queer (and other categories) asylum seekers as stipulated within international law and observed by the United Nations. However, this may have been far from the truth. In *Entry Denied: Controlling Sexuality at the Border* Luibhéid (2002) interrogates how the immigration laws in the United States were set up to regulate sexuality and exclude the non-White. While Luibhéid specifically focuses on women's experiences, "since women's bodies historically serve as the iconic sites for sexual intervention by state and nation-making projects" (p. xii), Lewis (2014) provides an assessment of LGBT asylum seekers in the UK. In "Gay? Prove it: The Politics of Queer Anti-Deportation Activism" she calls to question the "credibility requirements" for LGBT asylum seekers. In order to correctly identify legitimate applicants, an asylum seeker bears the burden of proof. That is, it is up to the applicant to convince the asylum adjudicator of the peril they face. Lewis argues "While the claim to refugee protection is based on sexual orientation, the imperative to be openly gay—to be a sexual citizen—is the product of neoliberal ideologies of sexual citizenship that are racialized, classed, and gendered" (p.966). For LGBT applicants it very quickly becomes a question of substantiating their sexuality.

Lewis' and Luibhéid's work allows me to juxtapose contradictions within Western policies and practices that on the surface clamor to offer asylum to citizens of the *other worlds* whose persecutions are a result of *failed states*, but, these protections are afforded only when applicants fit a specific image. I suggest that underlying these

qualifiers is a racist ideological empire (Kaplan 2004) that codes western societies as progressive sites for human rights and African cultures as primitive and lacking in human rights. Puar implicates feminism citing Grewal who contends that, “the United States routinely positions itself as the ‘as the site for authoritative condemnation’ of human rights abuses elsewhere, ignoring such abuses within its borders” (p.5). While this thesis does not focus on LGBT asylum, I extend Lewis’ and Luibhéid’s premise to queer travel in the following way: stemming from the presumption of a global gay identity, queer tourism studies contend that the freedom to travel has been gained by all queers. Yet the travel experiences characterized are not only unidirectional (Global North to Global South and Global North to Global North), but also overwhelmingly project the queer tourist as White. This is line with the homonationalist ideology which Puar argues creates a “sexual-racial” qualification that invariably favors whiteness over all else (p.2).

Queering Freedom

Within recent decades, gay rights discourses have promoted a notion of LGBT freedom that is readily available in western societies. These freedoms range from social interactions such as LGBT events and LGBT friendly businesses, to access to citizenship benefits such as civil marriages and the adoption of children. Political action and media campaigns are some of the most effective ways of causing social change. Western governments have done their share of promoting this by conceiving and driving an international gay rights paradigm that seeks to enshrine similar forms of LGBT freedoms in legal doctrines and society of other countries. It is important to note that emerging populist regimes in the West are quickly rolling back some of the hard-won

advancements for LGBT persons. A vivid example being the 2019 US government ban on transgender people openly serving in the military. It is yet to be seen what the long-term effects of regression on LGBT rights in the US is going to have on the international gay / human rights scene.

In addition to government policy and constitutional interventions, the media, including Hollywood movies, television shows, social media and magazines, have too played a big part in conceiving what these freedoms look like in lived experience. A legal precedent might criminalize discrimination of sexual and gender minorities but a television show like *Will and Grace* will show society how to live and thrive as gay man. I highlight these aspects in this simple form in order to contrast them with the harsh reality that awaits those like John, Alex, and Ker who attempt to navigate these idealized notions of queer freedom.

LGBT migrants, whether temporary as tourists (as my research participants are) or long term as residents (as discussed by Manalansan, Decena, and others)), are drawn to this idealized West where they envision the possibility of convergence of their public and private lives in a way that is not readily accessible in their home countries. Well aware of the constraints at home, they venture to the West in search of these freedoms only to find themselves under White scrutiny that is often, not always, racist. Ker, on how her experiences abroad shaped her sense of self and home said, “It has made me long for the casualness with which gayness is experienced in the Global North. It has made me appreciate my own home more, and want more for it. It has made my mind open to

wonder, and wander.” As Hughes (1997) notes, a pressing desire for travel is the social freedom that aids in the formation of a gay (I add, and queer) identity.

One of the highlights for travel to the west among all my interviewees was this: to escape that societal gaze into their romantic lives. Quite simply, to hold hands without looking over their shoulder; to explore romantic connections with a same-sex / queer partner away from societal gaze; and generally, to go about their day without hiding their queer status. And they do find this, as Alex shared,

My highlights ... you can get many gay places with different fetishes, preferences and expressions and the unmatched freedom that queer community out there have (*sic*).

Urry (1990) articulates this sense of personal privacy and an elevated sense of identity that one achieves through distance from home: “There is then the ‘romantic’ form of the tourist gaze in which the emphasis is upon solitude, privacy and a personal, semi-spiritual relationship with the object of the gaze” (p.31). The object for John, Ker and Alex being public performance / display of queer romance.

John, while attending a gay parade in London, recalled a conversation with another Black African man at the event, both relishing the anonymity that London afforded them. John explained,

Spaces in the west are more open than [his city] for people who know what they’re looking for... You would not be in your element in [his city] because you’re always looking over your shoulder.

The downside to this freedom to be conspicuously queer is the inability to escape a conspicuous racial identity. Without exception, everyone interviewed expressed awareness of a contradiction to this freedom in that, while it freed their *hidden* queer selves it was also limiting due to their *visible* racial identity. As John recalled on his Grindr date, whose interest he could not tell was romantic, fetishization, curiosity or all three. For Alex, his experiences revealed a chasm of difference of this freedom. Reflecting on his experiences of the destinations he ventured to from a queer perspective he said, “It was kind of a relief ... a space to be fully my [gay] self.” A point of departure for these sentiments were noted in the set of questions focused on his racial identity. He recalled a low moment in Italy:

My low moments was the suspicions that was obvious [from] people just for me being Black, around them and the feeling of being watched everywhere [he went].

Queer migration scholars (Anzaldúa, Falcón, Cantú, Decena, Acosta and others) have theorized that for migrants to navigate these contradictory aspects of borders, cultures and economies that are part of their pursuit of love, self-actualization or livelihood outside of home, they adopt specific survival strategies such as states of in-between-ness, tacit languages and others. Decena, for instance, suggests that *sujeto tacito* is the state of being “out-yet-closeted” through which Dominican gay men navigate their sexual orientation in New York (where they have the social freedom to be out) while still maintaining a closeted state to their families and relations back home or in New York. Similarly, Cantú offers *de ambiente* as code for men who have sex with men in Mexico but who are not necessarily gay, they maybe bisexual, but certainly not in the same sense

that those terms hold in the United States. Anzaldua's *Borderland / La Frontera* explores, even deeper, the aspect of belonging (in the sense of identity and home). Using her life's experiences as a Chicana lesbian, with roots in both the United States (by birth) and Mexico (by culture), she first identifies *La Frontera*, and later *La Neplantlera*, as a concept to understand the multiple dualities that exist within her (Ortega, 2016). These dualities are not to be understood only in terms of the tangible aspects of geographical dislocation, but as encompassing the whole sense of *being*. The most comprehensive way of looking at these dual states-of-being that affect most marginalized and formerly colonized peoples is through W.E.B. Du Bois' concept of Double Consciousness (Du Bois, 1903). He contends,

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One feels his two-ness, — an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

As he defines it, double consciousness is “this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others” and “two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals.” At the center of these dualities is the question of rights. Is the formerly enslaved human enough for equal rights under the (US) Constitution? A Constitution that did not consider them fully human to begin with? I suggest that these are the very questions that preoccupy scholars and activists who are involved in decolonization and, or, indigenous research

and praxis. While Du Bois' contention has to do with the legacy of slavery and the question of citizenship for African Americans, the "sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others" (the white lens) too afflicts the Global South. And more specifically to this thesis, it applies to the question of global gay citizenship that queer tourism studies presume exists.

While my research did not focus on the ways in which these survival strategies played out within the lives of John, Alex and Ker, findings indicate that they adapt in more or less similar ways by utilizing similar dual states-of-being. For transitory migrants, as the tourists captured in this research were, it involves a re-negotiation of the closeted queer self for an "out" racial identity when in the West and a re-negotiation of "closeted" racial identity for an "out" queer identity when back home.

The point I wish to make here is that this desire for the freedom that travel to the west affords John, Alex, Ker and Kay must be understood as the geographical / physical distance from home that aids in identity formation. This is the necessary component to the development of a gay identity that Hughes (1997) refers to as a "a degree of congruence" (p.4). However, as the narratives indicate, when queer Black Africans travel for *travel's sake*, they find that they are often presumed to be i) seeking asylum or ii) escaping some terrible condition / injustice / disease or any other deadly suffering *typical* of Africa. Alex, after explaining the touristic nature of his visit to Italy at Fiumicino airport, recalled the following reaction from the customs officer:

He just told me that [the] Italian government has had enough of immigrants and if I am thinking of staying then I had made a mistake.

Much too often, queer Black African tourists find themselves questioned, detained, suspected and ultimately in peril while on voyages in the West.

This contradiction is captured in the concept of queer necropolitics coined by Jasbir Puar. Murray (2016), citing Puar, explains that queer necropolitics is “ the expansion of liberal politics into diverse forms of governance, surveillance ... that folds certain queer subjects into life while simultaneously naming and rejecting other, often racialized queer bodies” (p. 6). Taking a similar route within queer tourism, the Western LGBT liberal politics purport to grant the freedom to travel (amongst other freedoms) for all queers yet *simultaneously* police the same freedom for non-White LGBT persons.

Black (African) Queer Impossibility

The question of how race affected their travel experiences and social interactions elicited the strongest reactions from Alex and John. Alex expressed that it was a double-edged sword; depending on the location, he noted receiving a lot of romantic attention as well as suspicion. He reflected that:

As an African man, I think I was sexually appealing to most gay men in most places we went to socialize... At the same time in the general spaces, I was always suspected to be up to no good. For example, I would pass some places and you see people keeping their bags safely in a manner to show that someone who could steal from them was around.

In other interactions, the compatibility of his race and queer identity was called into question.

In Antwerp, they wondered how I had survived as an open gay man with all the threats on the gay people in [my country].

And the trope of African asylum seekers was never far behind. Alex recalled:

Some thought that I plan[ed] to settle in Europe since I would feel free and perhaps get married to a man and avoid going back home.

John, too, recalled race becoming a fixture in most of his interactions. In Athens, for example, he described being the only Black person in the gay clubs he visited and about the curiosity with which the White club goers approached him. There was the implicit assumption of his being a Black American but which, upon speaking, the revelation of a non-American accent led to:

They would immediately ask me if I am a student with the assumption being that those are the only Africans they meet in clubs like these — Eighty or ninety per cent of them have not interacted with Black men, they can't believe that I am on vacation.

Having lived in a predominantly Black population his whole life, the focus on his race was alien to him. And just like Alex, he quickly had to learn when this was an attraction or a curiosity and when it was treated with suspicion.

I met this guy on Grindr and I could tell he was very curious about me. It wasn't in a weird way... I guess coz there just weren't Black people just hanging out in clubs in Thessaloniki and all. At first, I couldn't say if it's coz I'm Black that he's into me or it's ... I didn't know. Anyway, he was cool and we just chilled when I was there.

Perhaps the curiosity can be explained by just the absence of racial diversity in some of these cities. It can also be read as the fetishization of Black sexuality that is rooted in the racist history of White anthropologists that rendered Africans as hypersexualized, an idea that has shockingly remained fixated in people's imaginations even in the 21st century.

In "Duet," the fourth story in the film, *Stories of our Lives*, Jeff is visiting the UK from Kenya and has hired Roman, an escort, to fulfil his fantasy of having sex with a White man. After an awkward introduction, Jeff, who is visibly nervous, invites Roman to sit and chat for a minute and their encounter takes on a telling turn.

"I've never been with a White guy before," Jeff confesses.

"I've never been with a Black guy either. Not many Black guys around here who would hire me," admits Roman. "Where are you from? You have an interesting accent," Roman asks.

"Kenya," says Jeff.

"Oh, Africa?"

Jeff visibly irritated, answers, "I'm from Kenya. Africa is the continent. We don't like it very much when people group us together like that - Africa is huge."

After a brief awkward silence, Roman asks, "So, what are you doing here? I mean, in the UK?"

"I'm attending a conference," Jeff says. "Yeah, it's a thing where I come from [wanting to have sex with White men]. I mean, I've watched lots of porn with white guys and I've wondered if it's any different."

Cued Roman adds, "I've watched a lot of porn with Black guys in it. Big cocks!" he chuckles.

"No, it's not true what they say," Jeff says his eyes moving away from Roman. "Some guys are pretty average."

This scene contradicts the notion that the presence of queer Africans in the West is by default through the asylum process and it offers audiences an unlikely perspective; it is Jeff, the "queer African," who holds the access to capital and international mobility while Roman, the White escort, is the "exoticized other." When viewed from existing studies on queer tourism, the image of a queer Black African tourist in the UK who has material access to paid escort simply does not exist. As noted by Puar (2002), while gay tourism is celebrated for its disruption of heteronormative spaces, it is not nearly as analyzed "as a disruption of racialized, gendered, and classed spaces. Nor are such disruptions understood in tandem with a claiming of class, gender, and racial privilege as well" (p.936). It is my argument that underpinning all of these analyses is a racialized global capitalist political economy that is dependent on the commodification of queer rights. This is what Agathangelou (2013) terms as queer speculative economy. To sustain this queer speculative economy, Africa's value, and its Blackness, is only as a raw material from which queer / human value is extracted and reconfigured.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Limitations

The main limitation to this thesis pertains to the number of research participants. Although interviews were conducted on six volunteers, only three narratives were used. Due to emerging reasons related to the participants, three were no longer viable for inclusion. The second limitation is related to the extent to which participant narratives could be analyzed for their intersectional value. Two of the participants discussed identify as cis male and gay. Findings from these two narratives indicated race, class, and citizenship as sites for an intersectional analysis. One participant identified as cis female and bisexual and her experiences centered on citizenship and class. While it was a deliberate decision to not require participants to self-identify within a specific queer category for reasons discussed in chapter two, they all did.

Despite these limitations, this thesis lays a viable background for future studies that would seek a wider pool of participants in order to incorporate the breadth and depth of intersectionality for queer tourism studies. Moreover, it contributes to the field by extending Puar's concept of homonationalism that centers the ways in which gay rights discourses are impacted by a US sexual exceptionalism narrative that, driven by prevailing geopolitics, produces sexual others. While Puar's focus is on the Middle East specifically as affected by the post 9/11 American foreign policy and human / gay rights interventions, this thesis extends her discussion by focusing on the otherization of Africa and its Global South diasporas.

Directions for Future Research

As discussed in chapter two, queer tourism studies largely focus on White gay and lesbian experiences (Puar 2002) and not those of Black, and as I note African, LGBT experiences. The literature on transnational sexuality studies (Acosta, Decena and others) revealed an overlap between the experiences of non-White immigrant experiences and those of Black non-immigrants (tourists) as they navigate the LGBT freedoms they find in the West alongside the racism they experience. My discussion revealed that the contemporary geopolitical organization of the world reproduces a hierarchy (Waitt et al., 2008) that primes some (White & Western) LGBT tourists while largely ignoring others (Black and from the Global South). While there is need for scholarship that highlights Black African queer tourism narratives, there is need for emphasis on how the gay rights project (and I emphasize the inclusion of geopolitics in this discussion) impacts LGBT mobility for citizens from the Global South.

In addition, there is need to unpack LGBT / queer tourism scholarship that appears to adhere to a hierarchy that primes White Western LGBT subjects as more desirable for tourism than others. Such an analysis would, I believe, get to the core of the racist and colonialist attitudes that plague LGBT rights discourses in general, and queer tourism specifically.

Conclusion

Beginning in 1947, delegates from six continents devoted themselves to drafting a declaration that would enshrine the fundamental rights and freedoms of people everywhere.

Clinton, 2011, Speech to the United Nations

If we begin our analysis from, and limit it to, the space of privileged communities, our visions of justice are more likely to be exclusionary because privilege nurtures blindness to those without the same privileges.

Mohanty, 2003, p. 510

This thesis sought to unpack the structures that erase Black African experiences within contemporary queer tourism studies centering race, citizenship, class and geopolitics in the discussion of the travel experiences of Black African / Afro identifying citizens of the Global South. It contextualized the racist structures that Black queer tourists experience against the privileges of a White queer traveler. My discussion of the Black African queer experience is markedly separate from a discussion of a Black citizen of the West primarily, and perhaps only, due to the question of citizenship. I argue that the global gay project led by the Global North is complicit in creating and sustaining the conditions that produce the unequal terrain for queer citizens of the Global South, one from which it purports to liberate queer subjects, evoking colonialist discourses of the *white savior*.

As I draw this thesis to a conclusion, the outlook is a pessimistic one. It has been disheartening to arrive at this conclusion when the roots of the North / South divide are deeper than ever. This is particularly so considering the growth of xenophobic racism and the emergence of a global right movement in Australia, Europe and the United States, that is resulting in even harsher immigration policies which impact travel and tourism.

The research I have undertaken for this thesis has allowed me to review a wide range of literature: from W.E.B. Du Bois, Franz Fanon, Charles Mills, Stuart Hall, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, James Baldwin, Molefi Asante, Achille Mbembe, Gloria Anzaldua, Chandra Mohanty, Patricia Collins, Agatha Agathangelou and many others and it has left me uncomfortable about the larger question of the value of the African (queer) body.

Recalling Hesford and Lewis' assessment of vulnerability and Agathangelou's reading of Black queer impossibility, I am disenchanted that transnational studies is a useful site for analyzing Black African experiences. There is a foundational problem / original sin with transnational studies, similar to the so called *area* studies and *ethnic* studies, and it is that these areas of scholarship were created in response to a Western / White hegemony and are therefore clouded with a need to theorize off the backdrop of the dominant paradigm. This in itself is still reflective of the Western referent. This is the White lens in academia. The irony between my own identity as an African, and positionality within a Western academy does not escape me. Nonetheless, I would like to suggest, in the same vein of the anti-colonial and indigenous scholars such as Linda Smith and Shawn Wilson, a radical rethinking that moves away from this White academic lens. What this thesis hopes to have accomplished is to underscore the following: the global gay rights project is not simply a matter of having the "right" legislations in place, far from it, *it is a contestation for the very souls of Black folks*. It is my conclusion that as long as scholarship is created for, and inspired by a need to cater to a white and western audience it remains complicit.

APPENDIX A

Recruitment Tool

Hello,

My name is Wanjiku Wainaina and I am a graduate student at George Mason University. I am working on my thesis research that focuses on the travel experiences of queer individuals of Black / African ethnicity.

The research question I am seeking to answer is, what are the travel experiences of queer Black individuals in spaces / communities that are white dominated?

I would like to request for volunteers to participate in a one-on-one interview. Depending on the preference of the volunteer, the interview can be done in-person or via email and telephone.

Participants must be 18 years and over, of Black / African ethnicity; identify as queer, non-heteronormative, or LGBT+; have traveled for leisure or as tourists in the US, Europe or other majority white dominated queer spaces, and have interacted with queer communities during their leisure travels.

This research has been approved by GMU IRB project number 1196357-1.

It is not paid, and participants can withdraw at any time before or during the interview process.

Please contact me through mwainai2@gmu.edu before July 30, 2018 if you would like to participate or have any questions.

Thank you!

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent Form

Research Procedures

This research is being conducted to collect the travel experiences of Black queer individuals of African ethnicity. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in an interview with the researcher. The interview will be audio-recorded and is expected to last between 30 – 60 minutes.

Risks

There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research.

Benefits

There are no benefits to you as a participant other than to further research in queer tourism studies.

Confidentiality

The data in this study will be confidential. Your name and primary identifying information will NOT be collected nor placed on any research data. The voice recording of the interview will be deleted after it is transcribed. The transcribed data will be referenced using pseudonyms and will be accessible only to the student researcher.

Participation

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you or any other party.

Contact

This research is being conducted Wanjiku Wainaina, Women and Gender Studies program at George Mason University. She may be reached at [REDACTED] for questions or to report a research-related problem. The faculty advisor for this research is Dr. Rachel Lewis. She can be reached at [REDACTED] for questions or to report a research-related problem. You may contact the George Mason University Institutional Review Board office at 703-993-4121 if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research.

This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research.

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

Section 1: (Yes / No)

1. Are you a citizen and passport holder of a country in the Global South and or Africa?
2. Do you identify within LGBTIQ+ other non-heteronormative categories?
3. Have you travelled to a Western country (US, Europe, Australia, New Zealand etc.)?
4. Did you apply for a visa / visas in order to travel to those destinations?
5. Did you participate in activities that can be said to be leisure and or touristy?
6. Did you seek out LGBTIQ+ communities? In other words, did you socialize within LGBTIQ+ circles like clubs, events etc.?
7. Do you agree with this statement: White people were the largest population in the cities / countries I visited?
8. Do you agree with this statement: I often found myself as the only Black person in the places I visited?

Section 2: Open ended questions

Logistics

1. Where did you travel?
2. What was the purpose of your trip?
3. If you required a visa, how would you describe the application process?
 - a) Did you go for a visa interview?
 - b) Please describe your thoughts and feelings leading up to and during the interview.
4. Please describe how the customs clearance process was for you?
 - a) What was going on in your mind as you lined up to get your passport stamped?
 - b) How did you feel as the customs officer went through your passport?

Identity

5. How did you seek a queer community?
 - a) Did you already know some folks from there?
 - b) Did you establish new connections?
 - c) Where did you find a queer community?
 - d) What type of connection did you seek? Socialization? Dating? Career?
6. How would you describe your experience as a queer person in your travel destination?

7. Has your ability to travel internationally affected your sense of self, where you come from, how you identify? How?

Freedom

8. If you attended any specific public events that were themed for LGBTIQ+, what were your motivations for attending these events?
 - a) How would you describe the people you interacted with in those places?
 - b) How would you describe your social interactions in those spaces?
 - c) Did you have any thoughts about being an African / Black while in these queer spaces?
9. Tell me about some highlights / low moments of your trip.
 - a) Would you visit that country / city again?
 - b) Did your experience in that country / city change or shape your sense of identity? How?

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