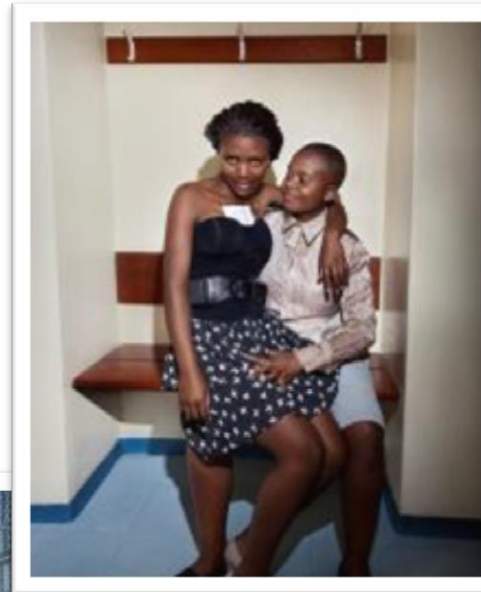


Beyond sex, disease & violence: A systematic review of research about sexual minority women in Africa



Sexual & gender diversity in research

- Diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity:
 - Social determinants of health
 - Sexual and gender-based violence
 - Full citizenship, belonging, social cohesion
- Informed by **broad** (LGBTI) & **narrow** (MSM) research
- “More data are needed on the demographics of these populations, particularly in low-income and middle-income countries” (WHO, 2013)
- “Scientists in Africa should engage in research to reduce stigma, [...] and promote access to health care for LGBTI communities” (Academy of Science of SA, 2015)

Sexual minority women in African contexts?

- Invisibilised (sexual minority women & HIV)
- NIH grants: 0.1% SM health; 13.5% SMW
- Muller & Hughes (2016)
 - Southern Africa
 - 'Significant health disparities'
 - (Sexual) health issues / risks
- Expanded focus?
 - Beyond health disparities
 - Entire continent



Who and what is made visible about sexual minority women?

Research questions:

- I. **Main characteristics** of scholarship in African contexts about sexual minority (i.e., lesbian, bisexual) women?
- II. **Implications** for research, policy and practice relevant to sexual minority women in the region?

Systematic literature review

“Sanctioned” knowledge: social science, humanities, public health databases + Google Scholar search

Inclusion criteria:

- ✓ Key words: ‘lesbian’; ‘bisexual’; ‘queer’; ‘female same-sex sexuality’; ‘women who have sex with women’; Africa’
- ✓ Substantive relevance
- ✓ Peer-reviewed articles

Exclusion criteria:

- ≠ Languages other than English
- ≠ Homosexual, homosexuality, LGBTI
- ≠ Gay or bisexual men
- ≠ Editorials, opinion pieces, etc.

- Dataset: 77 articles
- Period: 2001 – 2016
- Codebook
- Independent coding

Findings

1. About what?

- Main research topics
- Methodology?

2. Where?

- Country location
- Urban / rural areas

3. About whom?

Participants' sexuality, age, "race", SES



About what? Main topics

Topic	%	
Hate crime & violence	22%	
Same sex identities	19%	
Stigma & discrimination	10%	
SRHR, HIV	12%	
Mental health & wellbeing	6.5%	
Parenthood	6.5%	
Photographic representations	4%	
Indigenous same-sex sexualities	4%	
Same-sex marriage	4%	
Bisexual identities	<3%	
Intimate partner violence	<3%	
Sexual & gender rights activism	<3%	

About what? Main topics

Topic	%	Empirical?
Hate crime & violence	22%	35%
Same sex identities	19%	53%
Stigma & discrimination	10%	88%
SRHR, HIV	12%	100%
Mental health & wellbeing	6.5%	100%
Parenthood	6.5%	80%
Photographic representations	4%	
Indigenous same-sex sexualities	4%	
Same-sex marriage	4%	
Bisexual identities	<3%	
Intimate partner violence	<3%	
Sexual & gender rights activism	<3%	

Location of empirical studies



Country focus?

- South Africa: 85%
- Southern Africa: 6%
- Lesotho: 4%
- Botswana, Kenya, Namibia: 2%

Rural or urban?

- Urban: 63%
- Peri-urban: 4%
- Rural: 4%
- Across contexts: 4%
- Not stated: 24%

About whom? Participants' demographics

Sexuality

Lesbian:	44%
WSW (& LB):	22%
LB women:	11%
Bisexual women:	2%
LGBT and/or hetero:	17%
Range (population):	4%

Age

Adol. / youth (< 25):	23%
Young adults (26-35):	9%
Middle adults (36-65):	2%
Range:	45%
Not stated:	21%

Race

'Black':	38%
'White':	9%
Range:	32%
Not stated:	21%

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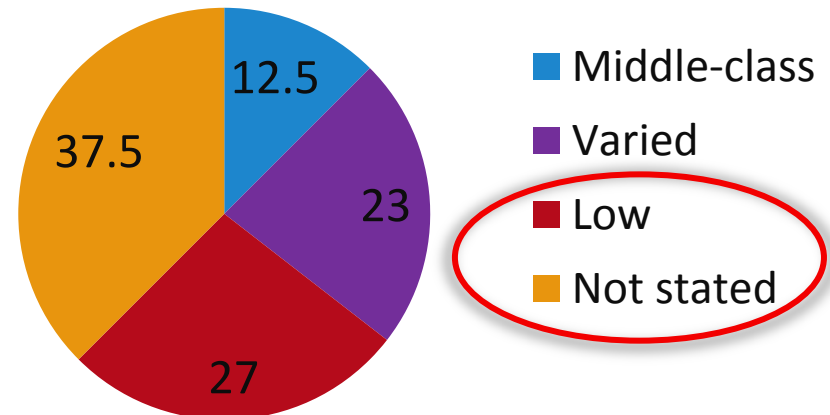
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Socio-economic status (SES)



Implications

Who & which topics are made visible?

- S African, urban, low SES, young, black, lesbian women
- Mainly lens of violence, public health concerns

Who & which topics remain invisible?

- Overall a lack of research
 - Beyond Southern Africa
 - Across age categories, in rural areas

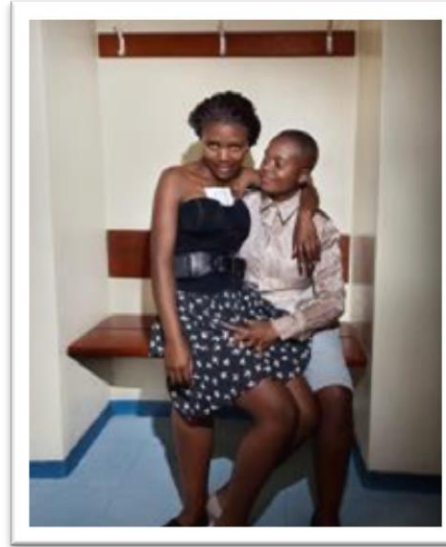


Increase empirical data on key areas

‘Unstated’ race, class & age – context, intersectionality?

Expand beyond violence & public health

Thank you



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