CHAPTER 12

'Living two lives' and 'blending in': Reproductive citizenship and belonging in the parenthood narratives of gay men

Introduction

Queer[i] persons enjoy constitutional protection of their rights in South Africa, yet still encounter a great deal of persistent stigma and discrimination (Human Rights Watch 2011; Msibi 2009). Much of this negativity relates to how those from gender and sexual minority groups ostensibly disrupt the procreative imperative. For the most part, having and raising children remains highly valued, contributing to the positive social identity of capable, selfless and responsible adult, and shaping assumptions of what constitutes full social citizenship. Accordingly, queer persons—widely assumed to be 'childless' or incapable of parenthood—are positioned as flouting an important normative expectation of gendered personhood: that of being a (biological) parent (Morison & Macleod 2015). Nevertheless, when those other than heterosexual *do* take up the rights that commonly designate citizenship by becoming parents, they are often maligned and marginalised (Lynch & Morison 2016; Rothmann, 2011) or more generally constructed as a threat to traditional, hetero-patriarchal families (Bernstein & Reiman 2002). This is especially true for gay men, on whom we focus in this chapter.

There is little South African research on this subject, but international literature documents the challenges faced by gay men who wish to become parents. These studies demonstrate that gay men's paths to parenthood involve navigating 'a range of challenging and difficult options—foster care, diverse forms of domestic and international adoption, hired or volunteered forms of surrogacy whether "traditional" or gestational, sperm provision in order to co-parent with women, or even resorting to an instrumental approach to heterosexual procreation' (Stacey 2006:30). These pathways to parenthood are impacted on by financial and social constraints, such as prohibitive costs associated with reproductive technologies and continuing heterosexist prejudice in child welfare systems involved in decisions around fostering and adoption of children (Stacey 2006; Tuazon-McCheyne 2010). Furthermore, gay men who wish to be parents also face gendered barriers around the presumed inability of men to be nurturing (Schacher, Auerbach, & Silverstein 2005) as well as heterosexist assumptions about the exclusive superiority of heterosexual parenting (Clarke & Kitzinger 2004). Thus, the procreative imperative, rather than being universally relevant, is narrowly defined around a heteronormative, classed and raced construction of reproduction occurring through heterosex, with negative repercussions for gay men's reproductive decision-making and pathways to parenthood.

Our South African qualitative study, which we present in this chapter, was initiated to explore how particular socio-cultural spaces impact upon queer men's decisions to have children or not, and the transition to parenthood for those who are parents. We discursively analyse talk about disclosure and management of discrimination in relation to parenthood, showing how participants highlighted the various intersecting identity positions that came into play. Our aim is to highlight the power relations

that come to bear on particular gay men's reproductive decision-making and freedom in the South African context.

The work is conducted within a framework of critical sexual and reproductive citizenship, with a focus on reproductive justice, which emphasises the contextual location of people's reproductive rights and the limitations on these. Such a framework, as outlined in Macleod and Vincent (2014:13), draws off feminist, queer, and disability theorists' re-conceptualisation of citizenship from an inclusive and process-based understanding. The framework helps researchers to question the 'patriarchal, heterosexist, and able-ist premises of citizenship' as theorised in a traditional Marshallian conceptualisation of citizen's rights[ii]. It explores how a status as reproductive citizen may be taken up or challenged in social, material and interpersonal power relations and rearticulates the notion of 'rights' as social and communal, rather than individual (Macleod & Vincent 2014; Richardson 2000 a & b).

As we shall detail later in the chapter, this framework allows for an intersectional approach to identity that attends to the multiple and ineluctable influences of social identity positions (such as sexuality, gender, race, space and class) on the positioning of gay men. In the sections that follow, we first review how reproduction and parenthood have been theorised in relation to citizenship, before considering current debates around reproductive justice as it relates to LGBTI persons in South Africa. Thereafter we outline our research study and present our findings. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of our findings for research and activism in support of reproductive justice. Our overarching interest in this chapter is in exploring how, and under what conditions, gay men claim citizenship when narrating their expectations and experiences of becoming parents or remaining childfree.

Citizenship, reproduction and vulnerability

The concept of citizenship has emerged in recent years as a key concept in social theory (Richardson 2000b). The past decade has seen the burgeoning of research concerned with how parenthood status and care work position persons differentially as credible or socially valued citizens (Ryan-Flood 2009; Sevenhuijsen 1998; Williams 2004; Tronto 2005). This recognition, based largely on work by feminist theorists, has required that 'the quotidian, gendered and increasingly globalised and racialised work of caring for children, and elderly and disabled people, that is central to the reproduction of the social, be understood as practices of citizenship' (Roseneil, Crowhurst, Santos, & Stoilova 2013:902). Similarly, theories of citizenship have been rearticulated to make visible the connection between reproduction and the entitlements this affords subjects (Roseneil et al. 2013; Turner 2001).

Participation in reproduction, parenting, and care work does not, however, necessarily grant full and equal citizenship to everyone. Instead, what is equally significant is *how* people become parents and in what relational contexts. Reproductive heterosex (or 'natural' conception), occurring in the context of heterosexual marriage and the formation of a nuclear-family household, remains privileged as a dominant means of attaining comprehensive entitlements of citizenship (Turner 2001) and associated social capital (Riggs & Due 2013). In this manner modern citizenship advances 'parenthood in "normal" families…. as the defining characteristic of the normal citizen and as the basis of social entitlement' (Turner 2001:198). Thus, queer persons would not become 'good citizens' simply by fulfilling a societal obligation to be re/productive and take up the burden of childrearing.

Accordingly, Riggs and Due (2013) extend the notion of reproductive citizenship to consider how failures to reproduce via heterosex may compromise citizenship claims. These authors point out that reproductive vulnerability arises not simply due to the impossibility of reproduction (that is, due to infertility or involuntary childlessness) 'but rather because infertility is measured against the approximation of a norm', rendering the reproductive pathways of those who are childless or have children outside of reproductive heterosex, as compromising their claims to full reproductive citizenship (Riggs & Due 2013:957). Assuming a lens of reproductive citizenship therefore allows one to consider 'how those positioned in a compromised relationship to the norm of reproductive heterosex—those positioned as vulnerable—negotiate their positionality, and in so doing make a claim to the cultural capital attached to reproductive citizenship' (Riggs & Due 2014:957).

The use of the concept of citizenship as it pertains to intimate associations, such as marriage and parenthood, has been criticised on the basis of presupposing a 'particular kind of self, a particular kind of subject entitled to claim rights' (Richardson 2015:9), with an overemphasis on individual rights and choice (Richardson 2015). Following these critiques, feminist theorists have pointed to the importance of conceptualising rights as relational, that is, as embedded within relationships, and the notion of choice as 'contingent on social, economic and cultural capital' (Richardson 2015:10). This requires, as Richardson (2015:10) argues, an acknowledgement of 'the socially and culturally constructed spaces for individual autonomy and decision making'.

In exploring citizenship and reproductive vulnerability, therefore, it is important to consider the ways that other social positions, such as class, race, and gender, for instance, may afford gay men different ways of renegotiating their compromised claims to citizenship—as we explore in our analysis. As Riggs (2007:para. 22) has also argued, analyses should 'move beyond the notion of discrimination [solely] on the basis of sexuality, and to instead develop a more nuanced account of how power relations circulate simultaneously through discourses of race, gender, sexuality, and class to name but a few.' This requires an intersectional approach to identity, that considers 'the ways in which individuals occupy multiple [social] positions and therefore have a range of identities, with different ones acquiring salience in different contexts' (Rattansi & Phoenix 2005:104), and, importantly, how they are related to power. Adopting such an intersectional view of identity, we can consider how gay men are always-already positioned through simultaneous discourses of gender, sexuality and class (among others), that may have paradoxical effects, in some instances allowing for viable positions (e.g. 'fit' parent) and at others times discrediting these.

In this chapter we wish to apply a similar lens to the South African context and to investigate the conditions under which queer men take up reproductive citizenship, foregrounding how different axes of identity might influence reproductive vulnerability. We focus in particular on the ways that sexuality intersects with race and class-based identity positions (which are closely mapped onto one another in the South African context) and the ways that this may have paradoxical effects *vis-à-vis* reproductive vulnerability and the ability to position oneself as a respectable (reproductive) citizen. We argue that an awareness of the complex nexus of power relations that surround gay men's reproductive decision-making—including the differences among men—is important for our conceptualisation of the politics around reproductive justice.

Reproductive justice and sexual minorities in the South African context
The notion of reproductive justice encompasses the right not to have children or to have and to raise them within safe, healthy environments, as well as the state's obligation to ensure suitable conditions for exercising these rights (Richie, Davis & Traylor 2012). The obvious focus of the reproductive

justice approach is on women in disadvantaged circumstances, highlighting barriers to their full realisation of their reproductive rights (e.g. forced sterilisation, avoidable maternal mortality, access to abortion and other services) (Roberts 2015). While there are clear historical reasons for such a focus on marginalised women, feminists have argued for an inclusion of men in sexual and reproductive health more broadly, and the focus of a reproductive justice approach more specifically. Morison and Macleod (2015:164) contend that 'it is important to recognise men as reproductive beings who are invested in particular understandings of sexualities, reproduction and parenting, who form an integral part of the gendered matrix that coheres around reproduction, and whose lives are enacted within the spaces, gaps and silences enabled by the grid of intelligibility of procreative heteronormativity'.

In South Africa, there is an explicit call to include men in policy and programming (e.g. Department of Health 2012) and formal provisions are made to allow for the realisation of reproductive justice. The Department of Health (2011:1) defines sexual and reproductive health rights, as 'the extent to which people feel comfortable about their sexuality and gender identity and are able to make decisions about their sexual and reproductive lives, including if, when, and how to engage in sexual relationships and if, when, and how to have children in a social, cultural, and interpersonal context free of coercion, discrimination, and violence'. All citizens are thus accorded reproductive and family rights, including sexual minorities. In addition, South African family policy explicitly contains the notion of 'family diversity' as a guiding principle (Department of Social Development 2012).

Yet, as several commentators have pointed out the extension of *de jure* rights to queer citizens, and formal rejection of religious and other arguments against these, has not always translated into reality. Rather, research indicates that services related to sexual and reproductive health (Graziano 2004; Muller 2014; Rispel, Metcalf, Cloete, Moorman, & Reddy 2011) and families (Hochfeld 2008; Vetten 2014) retain a strong heteronormative bias and that progressive changes in reproductive and family law exist in tension with widespread conservative, religious, and traditional discourses. These discourses work together to create an intensely homophobic and heterosexist context, despite the highly progressive rights-based legislation (Distiller 2013; Stacey & Meadow 2009; Swain & Frizelle 2013).

Significantly, the heterosexual nuclear family remains the gold standard in the country, as evidenced in South African policy which has generally been developed within a 'normative framework for thinking about family' (Vetten 2014:54). This dominant construction of the family is characterised by 'companionate marriage and a particular type of child-centred, emotionally intense, privacy seeking, nuclear family household with an acute division of labour between a husband/father and a mother/wife' (Jamieson 1998, cited in Hochfeld 2008:95). The privileging of a particular *form* as ideal results in many of the moral panics we witness in contemporary South Africa regarding absentee fathers and single mothers, so-called 'female-headed' households, and cohabitation rates (Morison & Macleod 2015). (See chapter 10 for a current review of family policy and a nuanced discussion of the implications of heteronormative policy-making.) It is also a reason for widespread animosity toward queer parents and their children (Swain & Frizelle 2013). Thus, it can be argued that the reproductive freedom of sexual minorities is compromised by the privileging of reproductive heterosex, and concurrently, the status accorded to the Western, middle-class ideal of the heterosexual nuclear family.

Experiences of discrimination and intersection of gender, race and class

Following an intersectionality approach, it is possible to see how discrimination against non-normative families occurs within 'the multiple, complex dimensions of inequality and power structures that create roles of domination and subordination under the rubric of race, class, gender and sexuality' (Rogers & Kelly 2011:399). The discrimination that queer parents and families encounter, therefore, is not uniform, as several international studies indicate (Bauermeister 2013; Vinjamuri 2015; Lubbe 2007; Riggs & Due 2014), but is shaped by gender, race, and class positionings, in particular. Research has highlighted how gay fathers experience 'role stress', not only in relation to heterosexism, but also in relation to their gender identity (Bos 2010). Several international studies highlight the longstanding assumption that being gay is synonymous with childlessness or non-reproduction, to the extent that many gay men initially disqualify themselves from being parents (Murphy 2013). Studies with gay fathers also indicate a common tendency for men's parenting abilities to be called into question (e.g. Bos 2010; Mallon 2004). Such responses originate in the strong association of maternity and childcare with female gender roles and beliefs of 'natural motherhood'. Not only is gay men's ability to provide care *as men* called into question, but they are also frequently constructed as a potential threat to children's wellbeing. This view is perpetuated by stereotypes of gay men as hyper-sexed, promiscuous, unable to commit, or sexual predators (Stacey 2006; Mallon 2004).

Thus, the intersection of gender and sexual identities becomes the basis for excluding gay men from parenthood. Nevertheless, at the same time, it is important to remember that gender identity can also grant gay men certain privileges, since they 'always already parent *as men living in a patriarchal society*' (Riggs & Due 2013:para 1; emphasis in original). Thus, while their sexuality and gender positionings may disadvantage them in some ways, it is also a potential source of privilege and power, which potentially counters disadvantage in various ways; so too with socio-economic status and racial privilege, as alluded to earlier.

Less attention, however, has been paid to the ways that gender and sexuality intersect with other identity positions. With respect to socio-economic positionings, Richardson (2015:11) argues that there has been a 'lack of attention to economic inequality in sexual citizenship literature and the implications that this has for how citizenship is constituted'. Boggis (2001), writing in the US context, has highlighted how class-based inequalities, which coincide with race, pose practical constraints for queer men's reproductive decision-making and family formation in terms of their ability to access particular reproductive health services and/or pathways to parenthood that offer greater control or privacy, as well as the means to access legal services if necessary. Commenting on the Australian context, Riggs (2007) points to more fundamental ways in which race and class positionings may affect privilege and disadvantage. His work shows how the exclusion of queer people from the category of parent is also based upon deeply racialised and class-based norms and assumptions that privilege 'richer, predominantly white' gay men (Riggs 2007:para 8).

Picking up on this argument from a South African perspective, Distiller (2013) discusses the ways that gender, race, and class intersect, to shape the experiences of sexual minorities in relation to parenthood context in a conceptual piece on lesbian motherhood. She contends: 'Because of the association of femaleness with maternity, middle-class lesbian parents have somewhat of an easier path than their gay, trans-, or otherwise queer counterparts, especially of family units that are not comprised of a pair, and/or are not monogamous' (221). Distiller (2013) points out that the race/class nexus shapes experiences of discrimination, with middle-class status providing protections to some White and some Coloured[iii] lesbian parents, while many working-class and Black queers often face more severe social sanction, sometimes in the form of violence. This has been demonstrated in South

African research on a range of other aspects of queer people's experiences, such as the navigation of township queer identities in relation to forceful community assertions of heterosexism (Salo, Ribas, & Lopes 2010); hate crimes against black lesbian women (Mkhize, Bennett, Reddy, & Moletsane 2010); learner- as well as teacher-perpetrated violence and discrimination against queer township youth (Msibi 2012); and queer people's frequent experiences of discrimination when seeking healthcare services from state facilities (Muller 2014). Distiller (2013) also points out how those who approximate the norm of the respectable middle-class nuclear family are able 'to claim access to the right to be recognized and respected' (221). In other words, they are able to make claims to the cultural capital that accrues to reproductive citizenship (Riggs & Due 2014).

The research presented in this chapter attempts to address the dearth of empirical work on reproductive decision-making or family formation that explicitly focuses on gay men in South Africa in such a way that is sensitive to the ways that various social positionings, especially race and class, shape the ways in which individuals can press their citizenship claims. Distiller (2013) has argued that in South Africa, where the race-class nexus profoundly shapes people's experiences of privilege and discrimination, such an analysis is imperative. In the following section we outline the processes and procedures that we followed in our study. We discuss some of the implications that our findings have for a conceptualisation of the politics around reproductive justice, after presenting our analysis.

About our study

In our study we set out to explore how 24 self-identified gay men thought and felt about parenthood. We asked them about their parenthood-making: for instance, what motivated them to want to be fathers or to remain childless and what did fatherhood mean to them. For those men who had children, we asked about their parenthood choices, including their experiences of the paths they took to parenthood (e.g. adoption, fostering, surrogacy, step- or co-parenting) or their decision not to have children. We recruited the participants through social networks, a workshop that formed part of the study, and word of mouth (one participant referring us to another person they thought might be willing to speak to us). Since we used this snowball recruitment method, several of the participants were partners or married to one another. Our final group of participants included six couples (12 of the participants).

The bulk of the interviews (21) were one-on-one, semi-structured in-depth interviews, regardless of whether the partner was participating in the study or not. The remaining three interviews were, at the request of participants, joint interviews, with both partners present. Joint interviews were conducted because it was more convenient or comfortable for the participants to be interviewed together than separately. Many of the participants chose a pseudonym by which they wanted to be identified, while for others pseudonyms were assigned (because they did not choose one themselves). The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

After obtaining informed consent, all of the interviews were conducted in English by a female researcher at a location of the participants' choosing and lasted between 45 minutes to just over an hour. All three of the interviewers currently occupy a middle-class social position. Tracy and Ingrid are classified as White and Benita as Coloured[iii]. We did not disclose our own sexual identifications or any other personal details, prior to the interviews. However, we did so during the interviews if asked or if it was relevant to the conversation. For instance, Ingrid in some cases disclosed that she had a child that she co-parents with another woman, and Tracy that she does not intend to have children. In general, the rapport between interviewers and participants was good and the participants spoke easily about themselves.

Participants

All the participants in the study identified as male and were openly gay, with the exception of two foreign nationals. These participants had not disclosed their sexuality to their families who were still living at home in neighbouring African countries. The age of the participants ranged from 24 to 62 years old, with an average age of 39 years. As the table below indicates, our focus in recruitment was on diversity, particularly in relation to reproductive status and the men's pathways to parenthood. We wished to include both gay men with children, as well as those without, in order to give equal weight and legitimacy to both the choice to become a parent or remain childfree. While other studies do consider both the choice to have or not to have children among gay men, there is decidedly less research that concentrates specifically on voluntary childlessness among queer people. This is most likely due to gendered and hetero-centric assumptions that make 'childless' gay men appear as non-noteworthy.

<Insert table 1>

The majority of the participants (17) had had children or become parents through various means. Most were what is referred to in the literature as 'new' gay fathers, that is, men with planned families, who had become parents as openly gay men. Ten of these participants, all either White or Coloured, had adopted their children, either through public or private adoption, and all of the adoptions are 'inter-racial'. Other new gay fathers included: Joe and Conner, White foster parents of Black children. Queen, is a White co-parent to the two biological children of his Black partner, King. Four of the participants had had children in heterosexual unions. King's two children were born in two different previous relationships with women before he had disclosed his sexuality publicly. Andrew, a Black foreign national living in South Africa, has children who live with his ex-wife in his home country. He has not disclosed his sexual identity to any of his family members. Geoffrey, a White father of three biological children, disclosed his sexuality to his family in the 1990s, got divorced under amicable circumstances, and took primary custody of his then-teenage sons. Ray, also White, had his first child when married to a woman. He is now divorced and co-parenting with her. He has another child through a co-parenting arrangement. He and his current (male) partner agreed to donate sperm and share parenting with that child's biological mother.

There were also seven participants who did not have children, mostly somewhat younger than the rest of the group. Only one of these participants, Dane, a Coloured man, expressed a definite wish not to have children. Likewise, only one person, Baxter, an older White participant, stated a clear wish to have children. He was involved in a surrogacy arrangement at the time of the interview. The rest were all unsure or ambivalent about whether to have children. Milton, another Black foreign national living in the country and married to a woman residing in a neighbouring country, was planning on having children within this relationship. He felt that he ought to have children for his partner's and family's sake, but ultimately expressed some uncertainty as to whether this was really something he wanted for himself or not.

Further demographics of the participants are summarised in the table below. Reflective of the broader South African context, there was a noticeable overlap between class and race in this group. Most of the White and Coloured participants were middle class, while all of the Black participants were working class. It is possible to see that the middle-class participants tended to be 'new' fathers, while the working-class participants tended to have had children in heterosexual relationships. We discuss this trend in more detail in the analysis. It must be noted, however that there were considerably fewer

Black participants (4) than White (12) or Coloured/Mixed-race (8) participants, and of the four Black participants, two are not citizens and immigrant status makes their situation somewhat more complex than the Black South African participants. Interestingly though, their accounts of 'hiding' or 'passing' as heterosexual resonated with those of local Black participants.

<Insert table 2>

Data analysis

We focus on the ways that participants positioned themselves and others within their talk by means of positioning analysis. This kind of analysis is based on a fundamental premise of discursive psychology that talk is constitutive. That is, people draw on available discursive resources—culturally intelligible sets of meanings (which contain familiar metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements, and so forth)—in order to produce a particular conception of an event, person, or experience (Smith & Sparkes 2008; Taylor 2006; Taylor & Littleton 2006).

The analytical concept of positioning allows discursive analysts to explore the ways that identities are performed in people's talk. The concept refers to the 'fluid semantic spaces' (Riessman 2002:177) within people's talk that allow them to construct who they are, as well as who others are. Accordingly, as narrators recount their stories they

> can position themselves, for example, as victims of one circumstance or another in their tales, giving over to other characters the power to initiate action, not themselves. Alternatively, narrators can position themselves as agentic beings that assume control over events and actions: they purposefully initiate and cause action. They can shift among positions, giving themselves agentic roles in certain scenes, and passive roles in others (Riessman 2002:177).

Accordingly, identity construction is understood as an ongoing process that is situated and accomplished locally in and though social interactions as people perform a desirable self, and manage undesirable or 'spoiled' identities (Riessman 2002; Watson 2007). Thus, rather than seeing identity as inherent, fixed, and unchanging, the process of identification is viewed as contingent and relational (Watson 2007). This process is analysed as 'identity work' in which speakers position themselves and others within their talk (Bamberg 2004).

According to positioning theory, in order to perform identity work, speakers employ established and intelligible discursive resources available to them within a culture, as alluded to above (Smith & Sparkes 2008; Taylor 2006). Identity work is therefore constrained by available discursive resources: that is to say, it is enabled and restricted by what is intelligible within a socio-cultural setting. Speakers can draw on and adapt existing resources according to the specific context in which they are located as particular discursive resources make particular positions available for speakers to take up, resist, or renegotiate. For example, certain discourses around parenthood and gender make positions of 'good' and 'bad' parent available. Positioning analysis thus 'connects wider notions of discourses and dominant cultural storylines to the social construction of particular selves' (Reynolds, Wetherell, & Taylor 2007:336).

The notion of identity work does not imply that identities are inauthentic, but rather foregrounds how they are constantly and actively maintained in relation to specific situations, contexts, and audiences (Riessman 2002). Moreover, speakers are not free to construct wholly novel renditions of self, but are also constrained by previous tellings, the facts of their lives, and their own biographic details, such gender, race, age, or sexuality, for example (Taylor 2006). These are thought of as prior positionings, which also have to be negotiated in one's talk. So, by virtue of being a gay man, a participant may already be positioned within a particular discourse (e.g. as an inferior or unfit parent).

In the interview setting, identity work implies that participants negotiate how they want to be known in relation to the interviewer and the implied broader audience to whom the research will be recounted. Identity work therefore has a political dimension. This involves the micro-politics of particular interactions as interlocutors negotiate already existing social identities (e.g. gender, sexuality, class etc.) in relation to one another and the world 'out there' and as they work to avoid occupying a maligned social position (e.g., bad parent). It also involves the broader political context. People's accounts, including those told in the interview, can thus be understood as 'a site where the social is articulated, structured, and struggled over' (Langellier 1999:128). These accounts therefore hold both normalising and transgressive potential (Langellier & Peterson 2006).

Analysis

In the analysis we concentrate on talk about disclosure and managing discrimination in relation to parenthood, because it was within these instances of talk that participants highlighted the various intersecting identity positions that came into play in relation to reproductive vulnerability and claims to citizenship. As we shall show, this talk differed noticeably according to race and socio-economic status, which as discussed earlier tended to overlap. In the sections that follow we discuss four discursive resources drawn on by participants as they narrate their positionality as gay men and their reflections on parenthood. These discursive resources cohere around constructions of race, location and the discursive intelligibility of gay parenthood. We first describe this notion of raced and classed geographical space as a central construction that participants oriented to in their talk, before discussing the four discursive resources employed in claiming positioning as credible reproductive citizens. We use (anonymised) quoted material from interviews with participants that are illustrative of common patterns that we identified in the data, with portions that hold particular interest in bold font. (We used common transcription conventions for discursive analyses; see Morison & Macleod (2015:171) for details.)

Race, space and the im/possibility of gay parenthood

In participants' accounts, ideas of disclosure, visibility and safety from discrimination were often connected to particular geographical spaces, not just families and communities. Rural and township settings, as well as neighbouring African countries, were most often described as conservative, 'traditional' (King), and unsafe spaces, while urban and middle-class settings were depicted as offering safer spaces. For instance, when explaining why he had not encountered much overt discrimination when he came out as gay Baxter said, 'I think that my journey is probably different, because I come from a privileged background, because I think (.) you know, homophobia, discrimination are less (.) prolific in major city centres, and then as you go out into the rural areas…'

Given the history of South Africa, geography was inevitably tied to race. Hence, participants spoke about 'Black areas' (King) and 'previously White areas' (Karl), referencing the 'the historical racial and socio-economic divides that have marked urban landscape' (Salo et al. 2010:298) as a result of apartheid racial policies. While suburbs formerly reserved for White inhabitants have in some instances, to a greater or lesser extent, become more integrated, this is not the case with townships and 'informal settlements', which remain socially marginalised and largely occupied by the Black and Coloured working classes (Salo et al. 2010). Salo and colleagues (2010:301) have argued that 'Blackness in [such] township spaces has become overlaid with an increased sense of marginality as residents experience deepening socio-economic impoverishment.' They maintain that an increasing sense of exclusion 'has seen a redoubling of their efforts to assert respectable personhood exclusively associated with heterosexuality' (301). As a result, compulsory heterosexuality is stringently enforced

in township spaces, as other research has documented (e.g. Currier 2011; Mkhize et al. 2010). These spaces were generally described as unsafe—precluding not only the open disclosure of one's sexual identity, but also the possibility of being a gay parent and hence foreclosing the position of good reproductive citizen. This is illustrated in the following extracts.

> **King:** …some [family and community members] are not understanding, because they are so cultural, you know, and what they don't understand is that I have two daughters, and then how come I become gay? Am I crazy? Where is this coming from, you know? …because they are cultural. And then this thing, they think maybe it's a European style. This being gay is for Whites. It's from Europe…

> **Asanda**: … in our communities where we grow up, where we as gay people—which is in a peri-urban (.) like, ghetto—so there'll be a lot of homophobia going on. I never wanted to have a kid while there is so much going on. […] I was like: I don't want to be father. **It's OK for other people to be a father,** but for me, I don't want to be a father [due to] factors that gay people are facing in communities, such as homophobic attacks, hate crimes, you name it. Such factors you know? Like getting (.) being brutally killed for being openly gay, you know? So I thought about those things. Whenever someone is talking about me being a father I'm like, I don't want to [bring] a child in this vile world where there is so much negativity. **I don't want to see my child going through what I went through.**

King's account suggests that the difficulty in disclosing one's sexual identity in a township setting may be compounded by the common association of homosexuality with Whiteness and colonialism. In this excerpt, being 'cultural' means being heterosexual and makes same-sex attraction untenable, the result of being 'crazy'. Here 'culture' stands in opposition to 'European' and 'White' and functions in such a way as to preclude non-normative sexuality for Black subjects. Further to this, it positions fatherhood as within the realm of reproductive heterosex so that having children as a gay man renders King an unintelligible social subject within this particular social space and inhibits access to the cultural capital that accrues to reproductive citizenship (Riggs & Due 2014).

In the extract from Asanda's interview, he explains to the interviewer, an older Coloured woman about 'our communities', speaking as a Black gay man. This extract comes from a point in the interview where Asanda explained at great length why he had not considered having children until participating in the research. He constructed his participation as a turning point in his thinking of first realising that he *could* be a parent and then being initially resistant to the idea. His account is similar to those of the other young 'childless' men in the study, who were all middle-class. Like these other young men, it was also not immediately obvious to him that he, as a gay man, could be a parent. In the above extract, drawing on a discursive resource of children's needs, he attributes his ambivalence or reluctance to have children as related to protecting children from 'this vile world' and societal heterosexism. However, what is different in Asanda's account to those of middle-class participants was that it had not occurred to him that he *could* be a father as an openly gay man *living in his community*. His narrative highlights the untenable nature of even thinking of having children as a gay man within a working-class, 'township' setting. It was characterised by having to negotiate the constraints arising from the potential danger in his social location. Asanda's account highlights 'the interlocking structural domination of race, class, gender, sexual preference, and spatial marginality' (Salo et al. 2010:299) which shapes the reproductive intentions and choices of gay men living in townships, and potentially exacerbates reproductive vulnerability.

In contrast, White and Coloured/Mixed-race participants, who all occupied middle-class social positions, generally described themselves as being able to live as openly gay men and parents. Like

Baxter, quoted above, some middle-class participants acknowledged that they were 'privileged' or conceded that their middle-class location acted as a buffer to discrimination—allowing them to obtain a level of privacy or respect that mitigated against prejudice or exclusion. Significantly, it was not the spaces *per se* in which they found themselves that allowed this, but rather the ability to consciously manoeuvre through un/safe spaces and access private and tolerant spaces within these settings. We discuss this discursive resource next, followed by the remaining three discursive resources identified – that of 'blending in'; a tension between negotiating 'two lives'; and visible family differences (particularly race-based) as contributing to reproductive vulnerability.

(1) Consciously manoeuvring spaces

Middle-class participants, who were White, Coloured, and Mixed-race, positioned themselves as being able to strategically locate themselves in safer spaces. They constructed the conscious manoeuvring of spaces as a central way of avoiding or minimising discrimination, as illustrated by the extracts below.

> **Tim:** …though we could assume that we were part of these spaces anyway before… I'm now manoeuvring these a little bit more consciously I would say, so that I stay away from people who I feel- (.) I don't necessarily stay away, but I make a conscious effort to expose [my child] to a greater diversity.

> **Queen**: And the school is an important issue for us obviously, and the culture of the school […] So that's going to make a huge difference to know that we have Ms P [the principal] and that sort of culture in the school, because we live in [a suburb in Johannesburg] which is already a gay area and we have a daughter going to a school that's already very inclusive and diverse. So that's already a lot of boxes ticked for us in making sure that our daughters are going to be... They're going to feel a sense of belonging.
> **Tracy**: So it's really about finding the right spaces?
> **King**: Ja. Ja.

> **Fernel**: We've had no direct prejudices from anybody, [not] that we can tell. […] I mean we were very (.) I suppose we were strategic. We chose […] the school that he went to, because they are a diverse mix. They promote diversity and there [are] people with same-sex parents there and those kinds of things there. And even we chose [the primary school] because of its diversity as well. And so we've (.) not SHELTERED him (.) maybe we have, which could lead to a bit of entitlement in later years, and I would like to expose him to not to only the nice side of life, but there's people living in shacks and those kinds of things.

As these extracts show, middle-class locations were depicted as providing spaces that were tolerant, 'inclusive' and 'diverse'. Unlike accounts from the working-class Black participants, middle-class participants were more easily able to position themselves as agentic, active choice-makers who, significantly, were able to adopt strategies to deal with discrimination and prejudice, such as 'finding the right spaces', 'manoeuvring' through un/safe spaces, and removing themselves and their children from spaces that they perceived to be intolerant or harmful. Middle-class participants discussed how they strategically chose the neighbourhoods, schools, churches, and other spaces, opting for private and progressive spaces, usually in larger urban centres and formerly White suburban areas. These spaces were seen as protecting children from prejudice, fostering a sense of belonging, and exposing them to diversity, thus moderating their reproductive vulnerability.

A discursive resource of 'children's needs' features prominently in the extracts above. This discursive resource was a significant, sometimes competing, resource. It is underpinned by a contemporary middle-class ideology of childhood and parenthood in which children are depicted as emotionally

priceless and vulnerable and parenting necessitating the investment of intensive energy, time, and money to ensure children's psychological welfare and, to place children's needs above their own (Morison & Macleod 2013). 'Needs talk' is not apolitical or neutral and rests upon varying evaluations about what it is that children 'need'. Thus, it is conceivable, as Fernel's closing comments suggest, that these evaluations can sometimes be at odds and participants were sometimes caught between competing renditions of children's 'needs'. In Fernel's quote we see that protecting children is represented as 'sheltering' children, which could have negative effects for them.

Children's needs also sometimes conflicted with parents' own needs, for instance being open about one's sexuality, challenging the status quo, and so on. This also created troubled positioning for parents, potentially casting them as politically apathetic or as elitist by allowing their children to 'live in a bubble' (Martin) or a 'White world' (Clive). This trouble was repaired by drawing on a discursive resource of 'blending in', which we describe in the following section. As we shall show, the middle-class participants constructed their 'blending in' as consciously chosen and allowing them to strike a compromise between their children's need to be protected and their own need to live openly. This did not necessarily mean passing for straight, but passing for what is considered to be a 'normal' family in that space, in this way becoming socially intelligible within a particular location and potentially staking claims to citizenship.

(2) 'It's very easy to blend in'

Having a child as a gay couple was construed as necessitating 'coming out' in ways that might previously not have been necessary and potentially making gay fathers and their children vulnerable to discrimination or social exclusion. For example, John maintained, '…two men living together and [then] a child comes into the frame … for me it was like telling the world about my life, and I was very private about my sexuality'. Similarly Martin explained that having children meant heightened visibility as a gay man and constantly needing to account for oneself: '…it's almost as if you have to 'come out' all the time and you have to EXPLAIN yourself'. While this might not have been possible for Black working-class participants living in townships, middle-class participants described a strategy of 'blending in' that was facilitated by their social location. As Martin put it: 'it's very easy to live in a bubble, it's very easy to move in an area where you DON'T get questioned and it's very easy to blend in…'

Many of our participants constructed the disclosure of their sexual identities as a strategic and calculated process. This coheres with other research on 'coming out' that shows that 'the contemporary "coming out narrative" which culminates in living an openly gay identity has the effect of positioning LGB [lesbian, gay and bisexual] people's sexual identities as centrally important and places an expectation on people to disclose their sexuality to others' (Gibson & Macleod 2014:31). Instead, as Gibson and Macleod (2014) have argued, the dominant 'coming out' storyline may be an impediment to sexual storytelling in the South African context. Their research with lesbian university students highlighted their participants' discursive and contextually located negotiation and management of their sexuality, showing the ways that participants sometimes rejected practices such as disclosure, because of the potentially othering and dangerous, rather than emancipatory, effects such practices could have on their lives.

Similarly, our participants (both parents and non-parents) described the disclosure of sexual identity as an ongoing process, one that needed to be managed carefully by gay parents in order to avoid other people's prejudice, especially because this might negatively impact upon children. Participants were therefore able to negotiate a positive socially desirable position as 'good parent' by drawing on the

powerful discursive resource of children's needs to justify why minimising one's sexuality might be important in certain instances, as illustrated in the following.

> **Geoffrey:** The reason why they went to a private school was they were terrified of what would happen in a government school if it was discovered they had a gay father and they would be picked on unmercifully. […] it was a very **progressive private** school. [..] And because they were so far away there was a gap between their home and their school and their school friends, which I think made it possible, because the biggest problem boys have […] being brought up by a gay parent is actually peer pressure and it can make their lives an absolute misery. […] bullying and saying 'you're a fag' and that sort of thing. […] I don't think anyone in the college even realised they came from a gay home, including the principal. Just that their father took them to school and signed the forms and paid the fees and that sort of thing. […] we coped (.) and **we kept things very private**.

> **Karl**: But I mean, ja, in terms of having had gay parenting issues? ((Shakes his head)) […] We've never apologised for having kids, so the school forms, when you come in to apply for school, forms, you just cross it [the word 'mother'] out and you fill it in […] You don't make a big deal, you JUST don't apologise. And that is why we just go with the flow. YES, we're not going to any of the events dressed in tiaras and waving gay flags and whatever. We are completely part of the community there. It is so important for the kids to learn that, because it gives them a sense of normalcy too. So we're not standing out. If people LOOK, yes, then we will stand out […] it has allowed both of them to stand on their own without having this target of 'Oh gosh, gay parents!' […] You can't rock the boat all the time because the children will have (.) fall out from it. So you live a life according to that and I think a lot of parents do, you sacrifice for your kids. **We can't make the stand often as we need to make or feel that you want to make** and you can't just do things and scream at teachers and all the rest, because it's not about that, is about your child. (.) And they are very happy.

These extracts illustrate how men positioned themselves as minimising their visibility as gay fathers, as they 'kept things private' or 'don't make a big deal' to prevent children from being seen to be different or 'abnormal' or from being bullied. Participants often highlighted the potential negative consequences for the children of queer parents in the form of heterosexist responses and homophobic bullying. Such talk must be understood in the broader context in which 'the inevitability and severe psychological consequences of homophobic bullying is a prevalent theme in discussions of lesbian and gay parenting in contexts ranging from custody cases to television talk shows, and is used to implicate lesbians and gay men as unfit to parent' (Clarke, Kitzinger & Potter 2004:531). It is also not uncommon for people to accuse gay parents of being selfish, because of the potential discrimination directed at their children. This draws on the discursive resource of children's needs, which creates a tension between children's and parents' interests, and potentially positions parents who do not place their children's needs above their own as selfish or bad parents. Karl orients to this in his account where he depicts children's needs as more important than parents' and the necessity of sacrificing for one's children. In this way he manages to negotiate a position of good parent, as well as being a 'good' openly gay subject and reproductive citizen.

Notably, these extracts illustrate how 'blending in' did not mean passing for straight, as in the case of Black, working-class participants. (Although, there were a few instances where middle-class participants did allow people to think they were straight in order to evade prejudice, as we pick up on later.) Karl positions himself as unapologetically gay and a parent, and thus able to be recognised in the community despite being a gay parent. Rather, the ability to blend in, as the quotations above show, was linked to being 'part of the community' and seen as 'an almost normal family'. This is further illustrated in the extracts below.

Charles: We've got a very open family life, people can come around, friends can come around and we sort of tried to be, to live it as a normal couple would live. **But I'm very-very open**, there's a very strong bond between the two of us. […] my Minister came to me and said, 'Nothing has changed, you're completely, it's normal, you've got a child, you've got a soul, we need to do baptism, and we need to do whatever needs to be done.' And it's great actually; it looks like a normal, heterosexual family.' [Laughs]

Martin: So my family right now obviously is a (.) ground-breaking in many aspects. I think that we create a norm, a new normal. I think it's, it's very, sometimes the choice is, do you move into suburbia, do you move into somewhere more, more private, how do you live your life? But I think that thankfully we've, we've chosen to live in an area where you CHALLENGE heteronormativity, we challenge heterosexism. […] we live in a typically conservative, previously White area in [this suburb]. Our neighbours are older, because it's one of the oldest neighbourhoods in, in [this suburb]. So we've got a 70 old year-old woman staying next to us, but we can see how she's embraced having us next to her and grown with us. […] **at first we were the token moffiesiv in the area. 'Have you seen?** *Het jy gesien wie bly hier***?' [Have you seen who lives here?] And how that sort of shifted, how we've come accepted being there, where it's not frowned upon anymore, where people know us by name, they know us as a family, 'where's Elizabeth' if we're alone 'how's Elizabeth', you know that type of thing.** […] So it's those types of things that you need to negotiate, on an ongoing basis EVERY day. On the other hand we just as boring as the family down the road….

In explaining the acceptance that Charles and his family have experienced, he highlights the perception of them as normal, and in particular, resembling a 'normal, heterosexual family', this allows for self-positioning as a 'normal' citizen subject. In Martin's narrative he interestingly deviates from the tendency to associate suburbia with safety and instead constructs this space as undesirably 'conservative' and heteronormative. Nevertheless, he positions himself as actively having chosen this space, which contrasts with the ways that working-class Black participants described conservative settings. This choice is related to a political agenda of needing to 'challenge heteronormativity', which further suggests agency, not simply in avoiding discrimination, but actively working against it. This challenge is described as 'creating a new normal' and Martin describes at length how the presence of a different family has shifted perceptions as people come to 'know us as a family'. The family is rendered as one that is socially recognisable in this setting and, ironically, allows for modified constructions of 'family' to accommodate a gay-parented family. By positioning themselves within 'normal' families, these participants approximate the defining characteristic of the 'normal' citizen; they are able to alleviate reproductive vulnerability and claim citizenship (Turner 2001).

This points to 'the public politics of respectability' (Rosenfeld 2009:6) in which the crafting of a respectable homosexuality is enabled through the discursive resource of 'new homonormativity' as Duggan (2003) terms it. This neoliberal script of sexuality privileges consumption, privacy, and domesticity over fundamental social change or challenges to heteronormativity (Rosenfeld 2009). Nevertheless, this positioning can still be read as precarious, because 'blending in' through approximating the norm comes with particular restrictions, such as Karl's claims that one cannot 'stand out' or 'rock the boat' too much. In addition, as Rosenfeld (2009:16) argues, 'the passing project is a delicate one … because it must be continuously reproduced within interaction'.

Such positions were not taken up by Black working-class participants. For these participants claims to citizenship were not made as a gay parent, but rather, recognisability (and thus being afforded citizenship status) within township communities was seen as solely possible through reproductive heterosex. This harkens to an older script of homonormativity, which Rosenfeld (2009:5) describes as

being 'centred on the construction of an acceptable homosexuality based on its adherence to heteronormativity, specifically, gender conformity and a public privileging of heterosexuality that demands that homosexuals pass as heterosexual'. Based on this script, participants spoke about 'living two lives', as we discuss in the following section.

(3) 'Living two lives'

Unlike the middle-class participants who could position themselves as belonging, *despite* being gay and parents, Black working-class participants described being gay as negating a sense of belonging. The Black participants described high stakes related to disclosure within their families and communities, the consequences of which were potentially more severe than those of the middle-class participants. Fear of social exclusion of themselves or their children was constructed as a major obstacle to disclosing one's sexuality, and in turn to the possibility of having children as an openly gay man, as was illustrated earlier in the quote from the interview with Asanda.

Consequently, hiding one's sexuality was deemed not to be a choice, as in the case of middle-class participants, but a necessity. This is illustrated in the following exchange between Tracy (interviewer) and Andrew in which Andrew positions himself here as unable, but not unwilling, to tell people about his sexuality because of his particular context: where his family live in a country where homosexuality is illegal, and other community and familial constraints.

Tracy: So did you 'come out' to your family or do they still not know?

Andrew: ((apologetically)) Not yet.

Tracy: Oh OK, that's fine.

Andrew: I'm still afraid Tracy because, *eish*, my dad, my dad will give me problems! [laugh]

Tracy: Yes OK, so your kind of thinking was that you needed to do this what everybody does this kind of normal thing= [Participant: Yes.] =so that maybe that could change the way you think and feel in your heart= [Participant: Exactly, exactly!] and it didn't work?

Andrew: And you, know, in [country of origin], you know like there it's not accepted this thing of=

Tracy: =yes, it's illegal, ja.

Andrew: It's illegal. So ja. […]! I can't even tell my brothers because, 'cause *eish*, that will be…

Tracy: Would they like kind of push you out of the family or=

Andrew: =*Ja*, *joh*! My brothers! *Joh*! They can do that, they can do that. And my father is a Bishop you know, to know that his other son is gay… I mean *eish*! […] And because, Tracy, because most people don't accept that people, they think maybe people train themselves to be gay or something, they think like that, you know. We're not the same [as them]. Other people they do know that maybe he was born like that with those kinds of feelings or something.

Tracy: So, I mean, you understand that it's something that you can't change about yourself?

Andrew: *Ja*, I understand now; yes I understand now.

This extract comes from a part of the interview in which Tracy and Andrew discuss his motivations for having children. Having a child through reproductive heterosex is construed as a 'normal thing' and as a strategy to allow Andrew to pass as heterosexual. A common trope of 'living two lives' was evident in the narratives of the older Black working-class men. Two of these men had had their children in heterosexual relationships in order to pass as straight and one Black participant was still hoping to have children for this very reason. (This resonates with the findings presented in Chapter 3, noting how for rural South African queer youth, engaging in reproductive heterosex can function in a

similar way.) This is rather different to the strategy of 'blending in' described by middle-class participants.

What is interesting in this exchange is the way that Tracy introduces the notion of 'coming out'. Andrew's apologetic response of 'not yet' suggests that this would be the ideal course of action—invoking the 'moral mandate' of visibility of the gay liberation movement (Rosenfeld 2009), which has remained largely class-based in South Africa (Oswin 2007). This notion is supported by the coming out narrative, which culminates with disclosure of sexual identity (Gibson & Macleod 2014). His response also implies that this is still a possibility, but may be a softening tactic to avoid saying no directly and thus stave off the undesirable position of 'bad gay' who remains 'in the closet'. This positioning can be contrasted with that of the middle-class White and Coloured participants who positioned themselves as unapologetically queer—albeit not excessively or offensively so (as in Karl's story).

Having children through reproductive heterosex not only allows these participants to pass as heterosexual, as Andrew alludes to, but also affords respectable personhood through assuming a normative reproductive status. This strategy therefore capitalises on the 'presumption of heterosexuality, for which a core criterion is gender conformity' (Rosenfeld 2009:16). Milton, who similar to Andrew, is a working-class African national working and residing in South Africa, renders parenthood in the context of a heterosexual marriage as establishing a credible identity:

Milton: Ja, I once thought of it [not having children], before I got married. That, ah, it's better to just get a man and then that's fine (.). Umm, up until I realised that '*joh*! This thing: culture, is forcing me to get married so I need to have kids'. But it once happened to me where I said, 'Even if I don't have kids I don't care. I just live my life, just enjoy my life AS IT IS'. Like as I'm more [inaudible] so I don't have to have kids and all of that stuff. I once thought about it, but I have chosen something which kept on coming to me so I said, 'No, I want to get married and then get a kid. I need to be CALLED father of 'WHO'.

Tracy: OK. So you said you want to have kids because you want to be able to (.) care for someone?

Milton: Yes, I just wanted to care for someone, because when I look back at my life, when I grew up, my life was very bad. I grew up from a poor family. I was struggling at school, then I ended up being taken by relatives to make them raise me, pay for me, school fees, things like that…. So THAT made me think that in future I need to have somebody that I can raise, but in a different way, not the way I grew up. I need to raise somebody in a good, good way…. Not like the way that I grew up.

In these excerpts Milton describes how parenthood through heterosex provides an opportunity to care for someone, to 'raise somebody up in a good, good way': to emulate middle-class ideals of parenthood and form a 'respectable' family (Salo et al. 2010). Having children in this manner provides for a positive position as a 'respectable' citizen, someone who is able to contribute to society, to shape a different kind of life for a child, compared to the hardship of a previous generation. In Milton's account this is contrasted with the childless life he would live should he disclose his sexuality and continue with his life 'as it is', as a gay man. For working-class participants, being openly gay precludes being a parent and the associated entitlements of reproductive citizenship, also evident in Andrew's account:

Tracy: So if you could do things differently, or if you could change things... Like, let's say the world was, you were living in a different world and there wasn't this kind of thing of, you're not allowed to be gay or your family would reject

	you, how would you like your life to be? Would you have done things differently? Would you have NOT had kids?
Andrew:	Ja, **I would have done it differently. I wouldn't have had kids** because you know, because [laugh] eish! You know like **living two lives**, you won't be happy.
Tracy:	Yes, you're sort of stuck in between.
Andrew:	Ja-ja, you're sort of **stuck in between the two lives**, you know. [Pause]

In this extract Andrew, invited by the interviewer to consider himself having children in a relationship with a man, instead orients his reply to the tension associated with living 'two lives'—his context as a migrant raising children in a country where same-sex sexualities are criminalised, and a 'secret' life as a gay man in Johannesburg, with this tension constructed as precluding his imagining of gay parenthood. Like Andrew, the participants who could not disclose their sexuality described feeling trapped in a perpetual lie. The necessity of continued passing—which the participants described as 'lying'—is of course due to the fact that the presumption of heterosexuality is provisional and must be continuously re/enacted within every interaction (Rosenfeld 2009).

The extracts from Andrew's and Milton's accounts illustrate the difficulty that Black participants had in taking up the neo-liberal imperative to be openly and unapologetically gay (Rosenfeld 2009), and how this shapes their reproductive intentions and pathways. Salo et al. (2010) point out how the intersectional effects of structural discrimination, largely through class, race, and cultural marginality, constrain the free assertion of sexual minority identities in townships. They note that part of this difficulty is related to the moral economy that has developed as a way for the marginalised socio-economic underclass to recuperate personhood and claims to citizenship. This economy, they argue, is premised upon reproductive heterosexuality and appropriate performances of traditional gendered roles. This is evident, for example, in Milton's assertion of his 'need' to have children within the bounds of reproductive heterosex. Similarly, King, when reflecting on his difficulties in disclosing his sexuality to his family, maintained that 'culturally, you find yourself doing things to make them happy, while you are not happy'.

The analysis so far has shown how White and Coloured participants described themselves as being able to evade discrimination to some extent as queer men and parents, while the Black participants positioned themselves as vulnerable. However, there was also an interesting way in which race-based positioning was highlighted as creating vulnerability for White and Coloured participants as well, by highlighting their difference from the norm when forming families through trans-racial adoption, by far the most common pathway to parenthood open to gay men in South Africa.

(4) 'It's more about race'
Race was constructed as more of a concern or a 'bigger issue' (Karl, Joe) than their sexuality by most White and Coloured participants, who were more likely to become parents through trans-racial adoption. For instance, Joe said, 'it is a very difficult thing to have a mixed-race family, I think that, you know, being gay parents and having kids it's not such a big problem as having White parents and Black kids. That to me is the bigger issue.' Indeed, most of the middle-class participants down-played their sexuality in various ways, emphasising that it was not a central aspect of their identity or 'master status' (Clarke & Kitzinger, 2004).

The challenge of having a mixed-race family was explained as being related to the South African context in which issues of race, culture, language and belonging were depicted as contentious. Being a

mixed-race family in this context was described as making the family visible as somehow 'deviant' or 'deficient' and exacerbating the vulnerability of participants and their children in two main ways.

The first was through highlighting difference and exposing children to (further) discrimination, as shown in the following extract.

> **Clive**: …sometimes, even now, [I wonder] what have (.) what are we doing? What kind of experiment are we in, you know? … The layers: trans-race, two dads… And how do you hold the child through that journey? I suppose my own experience of bullying, of being 'outed', being, you know... and the desperate need to protect your child and yet we've created this journey for a child, which is not gonna be easy, which is gonna be complex. That does become something to be conscious of.

Clive constructs being in a mixed-race family as adding another 'layer' of difference that could expose his children to further discrimination. Clive's comments illustrate the overarching concern with children's wellbeing and the parents' potential culpability in having 'created this journey' and, implicitly, in any potential harm a child might experience. He positions himself as responsible for protecting the child.

While difference related to sexuality could be managed, racial differences could not. In addition to the strategy of 'blending in', discussed above, participants spoke about how they could sometimes 'pass under the radar' as heterosexual fathers. They recounted how, being single or not having their partner with them, people sometimes assumed that they must be heterosexual and in a relationship with a woman ordinarily responsible for childcare, asking, for example, 'where's the mother?' or 'is it mom's day off?'. One participant described how he had said that his children did not have to call him 'Dad' to save the children from having to explain their family situation to others. In contrast to sexual identity, racial difference was presented as a significant obstacle, because it could not be minimised in the same way in order to protect children from discrimination.

Some participants who did not yet have children questioned whether placing children in this position of 'added difference' would be fair to them. Baxter constructed this as such a significant concern that he ruled out adoption as a potential pathway to parenthood. He described his motivation to have a child through surrogacy as partly related to a desire to have a same-race child and thereby minimise the discrimination that the child might face. Of course, as most participants pointed out surrogacy is expensive, even for fairly affluent South Africans. They also pointed to some other social reasons that adoption was preferable, despite, and in a few instances because of, the likely mixed-race composition of the family. Nevertheless, Baxter's story illustrates how economic privilege may allow more choice and control over the means to becoming parents, the extent of privacy enjoyed, and the ways to minimise the possibility of future discrimination that are not in everyone's reach.

The second way that race was depicted as creating vulnerability, was through the creation of a visual indication of participants' family formation being outside of the norm of reproductive heterosex. Having a child with a different skin colour from one's own was constructed as calling attention to the lack of a bio-genetic connection and belongingness, as Tim put it: 'they don't see this man and his child; they see this man and the ADOPTED child'. Tim's comment highlights what Riggs and Due (2014) refer to as reproductive vulnerability, discussed earlier in this chapter. They argue that reproduction via heterosex remains the most valued form of reproduction and those people who are unable to reproduce via heterosex, and so emulate the normative mode of reproduction, are attributed lesser value as reproductive citizens, with a concomitant precariousness of their status as parents. This

vulnerability was often highlighted in participants' stories as they described the ways that people discredited their relationships and feelings for their children, and sometimes even their motives for having children. For example some participants recounted people suggesting that they might give back their children if parenting became too much for them. This sort of response is illustrated in the following account.

> **Charles**: Some people stare at you to such an extent that they (.) come up to you and they'll ask you. I had a few instances where people ask you 'Is it your child?' […] they look at you, and they look at your child, and they look at your partner, and then they speak to the other staff in their language, (.) but I pick up [what they're saying], and then they would actually ask you, 'Where did you get the child? Did you steal the child?' And then I had one woman who came up to me and said to me 'Which hospital did you steal the child from?' […] THAT for me was the worst when I was asked, where did I steal this child.

In Charles's account, having a child who looks racially different to him, as well as having a man as a partner, is highlighted as significant to people's responses in which they discredit his legitimate parenthood status. In a similar vein, participants with mixed-race families frequently described being asked by strangers, 'Where's the mother?' It is significant too, of course, that people ask after '*the mother*', because this also speaks to participants' contravention of the normative expectation that children, especially young children, will be cared for by women.

What is significant in many of the accounts, however, is that the participants in mixed-race families highlighted that reproductive vulnerability arose as a result of being unable to pass as bio-genetically related to their child—where such relatedness is part of what supports the privileging of reproductive heterosex (Riggs & Due 2014). White and Coloured participants in mixed-race families therefore described their racial positioning as meaningful in that it potentially opens them to discrimination. Yet, unlike Black participants, the privilege accorded by Whiteness and by a middle-class social location meant that they could frame their experiences of doing family as positive overall or express optimism for future fatherhood. This was not always the case for the working-class, Black participants in the study.

Concluding discussion
Our analysis highlights 'the ways that ordinary actors *invoke* and *apply* this normative and discursive content [of heteronormativity and homonormativity] to shape sexual subjectivities and public identities' (Rosenfeld 2009:2). It demonstrates in particular how raced and classed positions in particular interconnect in the accounts of gay men reflecting on their thoughts and aspirations around parenthood, as apartheid-generated social categorisations and geography become salient in constructions of 'safe' and 'unsafe' spaces. These were constructed along racialised and class-based lines, drawing on existing constructions of race, particularly the construction of White spaces as 'liberal' or progressive and Black spaces as conservative or dangerous. Likewise, used in conjunction with the discursive resource of children's needs, 'good parenthood' was clearly associated with particular kinds of middle-class values. These discursive resources provided participants with a means of justifying the ways that they chose to make themselves and their families in/visible at certain times and in particular ways. Yet, at the same time, they potentially reinforce the power disparities that exist among queer men in relation to their possibilities for parenthood and the pathways that are available to them.

Our findings also show that sexuality is not the only or always the most significant factor with respect to the barriers and challenges that these gay men face in relation to parenthood decisions. The analysis highlights multiple, intersecting positions that are negotiated in participants' talk; these

simultaneously accord privilege and disadvantage; allow participants to threaten or be threatened; and both challenge and reinforce norms. These findings point to the contextual and located nature of disclosure of sexual identity as a strategic and reflexive process, as researchers have identified in other contexts (e.g. Gibson & Macleod 2014). This process was presented as constrained by the prior identity positions that participants occupied.

In concluding this chapter, we consider the implications of our findings for notions of reproductive citizenship and the politics of reproductive justice. Our analysis begins to paint a picture of the manner in which citizenship claims are taken up by gay men, in relation to parenthood. For both middle-class and working-class gay men, the version of family they are to subscribe to in order to be afforded citizenship status, is very narrow. The data show the centrality of homonormativity and gender conformity to claims for citizenship and belonging in participants' accounts (Rosenfeld 2009). On one hand, participants described passing as respectable homosexuals, which required disciplined visibility. On the other hand, participants provided accounts of passing as heterosexual—notably by approximating the norm of reproductive heterosex within marital unions—which required invisibility and 'living a lie'.

Participants' accounts illustrate the significance of class-based positions to reproductive citizenship (Richardson 2015). They show how class privilege enabled middle-class participants to claim reproductive citizenship through a queer approximation of the heteronormative family, evidenced in employing the discursive resource of 'blending in'. Drawing on this resource enabled participants to make visible their dissidence from heterosexuality and in that manner avoid assimilation of their sexual identity into the heteronorm, while at the same time 'creating a new normal'—a socially intelligible queer family.

Contrasted to this, in the accounts of working-class participants the possibility of claiming reproductive citizenship as queer men was negated, especially so in relation to spaces experienced as 'traditional' or hostile to same-sex sexualities. For Black, working-class gay men, personhood remained tied to reproductive citizenship through heterosex, foreclosing parenthood as openly gay men. Salo et al. (2010) note that in post-apartheid (and arguably post-colonial) contexts the 'deepening sense of exclusion from the apparent abundance of resources' and continued racism in a transitioning political context has seen 'redoubling of […] efforts to assert respectable personhood exclusively associated with heterosexuality' (301). In the absence of socio-economic citizenship, kin relations centred on reproductive heterosexuality, and tied to a household established and provided for by a father, continue to contribute to the recuperation of a positive sense of identity and personhood (Salo et al. 2010).

Indeed, it is possible to see how, in the talk of participants who are negatively positioned within the race-class nexus, the unequal burden of reproductive vulnerability is born out especially forcefully, where queer parenthood was constructed in terms of impossibility and a fractured sense of belonging. The talk of Black, working-class gay men demonstrated what Fine (1988:48) refers to as 'an absence of entitlement'. Contrasted with the agentic positionings called upon by middle-class participants, it becomes apparent that citizenship—as an expression of agency—is impacted on by the availability of meaningful socio-economic opportunities (Macleod & Vincent 2014). Yet at the same time, we recognise that the strategy of 'passing' is itself a form of strategic action. Such strategies reflect 'the creative use and negotiation of heteronormativity and its justification in light of new moral and political demands' (Rosenfeld 2009:3).

Such differential positioning of persons along classed, raced, gendered and sexualised lines, at times overlaid with spatial marginality, have often been taken as implying discrete advocacy agendas for those positioned as accruing dissimilar privilege. Indeed, Black feminists advocating for reproductive justice have pointed out that reproductive rights discourses have been centred on middle-class concerns—chiefly the right to choose *not* to have a child—overlooking the struggles of women of colour, indigenous women, and other marginalised groups' right to have children and to control their own fertility (Richie et al. 2012). However, our analysis also demonstrated that middle-class gay men are not positioned as having unproblematic access to reproductive citizenship. Instead, while enjoying some protections offered by class privilege, they constructed race-based visible family differences, particularly in the accounts of participants who formed families through trans-racial adoption, as contributing to reproductive vulnerability. Being unable to pass as bio-genetically related to their children positioned these participants as unmistakably diverging from reproductive heterosex —a visible marker of what is normatively considered as diminished reproductive capacity (Riggs & Due 2013).

Thus, while the concerns of differentially positioned queer persons have typically been argued as being largely distinct from each other, participants' accounts point to possibilities for a coalitional politics in support of advancing sexual and reproductive citizenship across positionalities. Such a coalitional politics will illuminate the intersections of differing vulnerabilities, emphasising reproductive vulnerability 'as existing in a continuum across all people (however differentially distributed)' (Riggs & Due 2013:965-966). Looking beyond notions of discrimination primarily on the basis of sexuality to the intersecting power relations around queer people's reproduction allows us to recognise the differences among them, but rather than fracturing our politics, this should allow us to seek chains of equivalence with the struggles of other groups (Laclau & Mouffe 1985) and to carefully think through how we engage with and support queer men in respect of their reproductive decision-making and family formation (Macleod & Vincent 2014). Engendering solidarity across multiple lines of difference, while centring the experiences of those positioned as most marginal, can contribute to the taking up of total reproductive freedom and citizenship by all, as envisioned in feminist and queer organising (Mohanty 1998; Riggs & Due 2013; Smith 1990).

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Notes:

[i] We use this term in its broadest sense to refer to persons who identify as other than heterosexual, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons.

[ii] Marshall's (1950) influential typology of citizenship outlines an evolution of citizen rights, from civil- and political-, through to social citizenship, with related duties for states towards ensuring the realisation of social rights: ranging from 'a modicum of welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and live the life of a civilised being according to the standards of a prevailing society' (Marshall 1950:11).

[iii] The racial construct 'Coloured' was created during Apartheid, along with 'White', 'Black' and 'Indian'. Formerly 'Cape Coloured', the terms refers to a person of mixed European ('white') and African ('black') or Asian ancestry, as officially defined by the South African government from 1950 to 1991.

[iv] 'Moffie' is South African slang for gay man—generally used as a homophobic slur but also at times re-appropriated by queer persons in their own descriptions of their sexuality (Tucker 2010).