
GUILTY PLEASURES IN POSTCOLONIAL CITIES: THINKING ABOUT SEXUAL AND GENDER DISSIDENCE FROM URBAN SPACE IN ABIDJAN AND KINSHASA

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SUMMARY

Historically, social norms and State rule control sexual identities and practices, but also their various modes of expression in urban spaces. The politics of regulating bodies – in both their social and biological dimensions – most strongly affect those that are seen as deviating from commonly accepted heteronormativity. By concentrating different people, interests, and activities but also the power relationships associated to these different entities, cities function as preferred spaces for socio-political models' (re)production. These models give rise to urban spaces that are more or less hostile to people on the basis of their gender and/or sexuality. Spaces of exclusion of this sexual and gender dissidence and coextensive spaces of resistance are behind a moral geography that this thesis will question from African urban rapid extension that public authorities and governments both struggle to regulate. Then, to what extent, do the power relations at play around sexual and gender dissidence in the city shape urban spaces and the postcolonial State (RQ1)?

Much of what we know about places like the Democratic Republic of Congo and Côte d'Ivoire is heavily dominated by western narratives initiated and circulated by scholarly work, media outlets, social media and (inter)national institutions, which still depict African societies and politics through essentializing discourses of State weakness, fragile cities, poor governance, unbridled sexuality, and other serious ailments. Here, the cities of Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo) and Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) have long been emblematic of these narratives. These case studies provide an opportunity to explore alternative approaches and epistemologies from new centers of knowledge production – in this case, two post-colonial African cities marked by recent conflicts, major urban and demographic expansion, and strong inequalities giving rise to various social demands, including those relating to identities. How, then, can the *local* study of sexual and gender dissidence from the perspective of the postcolonial city help to sketch out new political horizons and *global* epistemological potentialities for thinking differently about sexualities, the urban and the political – as well as their entanglement (RQ2)?

In this thesis, reflection begins where the quest for a planned urban order 'from above' ends by interrogating how marginalized people and communities experience everyday life, State power, and access to urban 'public' spaces very differently depending on their social features – among which sexual orientation and/or gender expression. The primary theoretical goal of this thesis is to uncover to what extent urban inequalities impact sexual dissidents' right to the city – i.e urban resources, water, housing, land, or urban transport – but also their urban subjectivity – i.e ways of being, loving and thinking (in) the postcolonial city. This will be documented along three axes:

1. The conceptual and identity (re)configurations behind the categorization of sexual and gender dissidence;
2. The logics of spatialization of inequalities from which sexual and gender dissidents construct themselves by acting *in* and *on* the city;
3. The strategies of social, political and artistic creativity deployed in situations of marginality enriching the conceptualization of modes of engagement in postcolonial cities.

To explore the power relations associated with urban experiences of sexual and gender dissidents in Abidjan and Kinshasa, this study proposes an interdisciplinary analysis from a feminist, decolonial and *queer* perspective, focusing on everyday life using participatory visual ethnography tools during six months fieldwork in each city.

INTRODUCTION

In 2021, the Ivorian government proposed adding a reference to 'sexual orientation' to the article of the penal code relating to discrimination. Immediately, political representatives of all stripes took offence, arguing that this "laxity [opened] the door to legislation on zoophilia and pedophilia" and that "homosexuality does not [correspond] to Ivorian morality and cultural values". This rhetoric contribute to the insidious idea of a homogenously homophobic Africa, and reveal that the subject of homosexuality is constructed around a discourse of otherness and exogeneity. And yet, during my month-long exploratory fieldwork in Abidjan, I wrote:

 Friday 21 April 2023 - Marcory district, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

The 'maquis' Le Miami looks like any other of those dance bars-restaurants that serve as regular night-time social spots for Abidjanese except that it is the only '100% branché' maquis in the city. 'Branché' is a term used by LGBT+ people¹ in Abidjan to refer to themselves. The owner of the Miami is what is known as a 'bas carré'²/a 'jeune garçon'³/a 'yorsi', i.e. a homosexual woman considered to have a masculine attitude and appearance.

In Côte d'Ivoire, LGBT+ people are subject to legal and social ambiguity: there is no condemnation of identity (such as the offence of homosexuality), but certain practices are relegated to the *private* sphere in order to comply with legislation on 'indecent assault', 'unnatural practices' and '*public decency*'. People whose sexuality is considered deviant (Becker 1985) must therefore play on different levels of visibility/invisibility to ensure that they can live in the city (Tucker 2009).

In fact, the 'branchés' develop an inventive and pragmatic use of (re)appropriating urban space and time that shapes the environments in which they exist and move around (e.g. strategic choice of location for establishments, code-swifiting between night and day, use of a language reserved for the initiated, etc). But if the subjectivities and capacities for action of the 'branchés' shape spaces and challenge State action, the constraints relating to the environment in which they evolve urge them to negotiate their sexual and gender identities in relation to urban space and politics. This threefold reflexive movement between (postcolonial) State formation, urban spaces and sexual dissidents forms the basis of my thesis. This work takes as its center of knowledge production Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) and Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo), two post-colonial African cities marked by recent conflicts, major urban and demographic expansion and strong inequalities giving rise to various social demands, including those relating to identities.

If we acknowledge that the city and sexuality are two privileged sites for practices of power and disciplinary control that give rise to regimes of exclusion, while admitting that wherever there is power

¹ The acronym LBGT+ is used to encompass a complex set of identities, practices, and actors to address non-heterosexual sexualities and non-binary gender experiences then challenging cis heteronormativity. It refers to lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders, transsexuals, queers, questioning, intersex, asexuals, allies, pansexuals. The terms LBGT+ and *queer* will be used interchangeably here.

For a semantic critique of these terms in African contexts, see the section 'Sexual and gender dissidence'. For a semantic critique of these terms in Western contexts see Serrano Amaya, José Fernando, and Oriol Ríos González. 2019. 'Introduction to the Special Issue: Challenges of LGBT Research in the 21st Century'. *International Sociology* 34 (4): 37181-. and Elchacar, Mireille, and Ada Luna Salita. 2018. "Naming non-traditional gender identities. A lexicological approach". *Language and Society* 165 (3): 13965-.

² Could be translated to 'square bottom' not destined to match with phallic forms.

³ Could be translated as 'young boy'.

there is more or less explicit and intelligible resistance, then what is understood by 'the State', 'urban spaces' and 'sexual and gender dissidence' is the result of heuristic tensions that manifest themselves through a multitude of everyday spatio-temporal, material, bodily and discursive uses.

As the aim of this dissertation is to document these tensions, it is in keeping with the tradition of political science that focuses on social organisations, power dynamics between individuals and groups with diverse interests, and the political violence that ensues. The goal is also to making up for the lack of work that (1) thinks simultaneously about urban formations, issues of governance and those relating to the control of bodies, and that (2) does so from French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa.

The research questions are therefore as follows: to what extent, do the power relations at play around sexual and gender dissidence in the city shape urban spaces and the postcolonial State (RQ1)? And how does the *local* study of sexual and gender dissidence from the perspective of the postcolonial city make it possible to sketch out new political horizons and *global* epistemological potentialities for thinking differently about sexualities, the urban and the political – as well as their entanglement (RQ2)?

In response, this thesis proposes (1) a resolutely interdisciplinary approach that draws on the theoretical and methodological wealth of political socio-anthropology, cultural geography, international relations and gender studies, so as to deploy critical tools that challenge the *top-down*, elitist and macro-scalar analyses often put forward in political science; (2) a decolonial and *queer* feminist perspective that recognises that knowledge is not neutral but socially, historically and politically situated, in order to nuance the conventional analytical categories inherited from the epistemological Western-centrism of the social sciences, which obscure alternative analytical grids.

Exploring the tensions between the day-to-day governance of the State, everyday uses of the urban environment and expressions of sexual and gender dissidence in African contexts makes it possible to challenge the dominant normative narrative reference frameworks of the West by shedding new theoretical light on and for African societies, but not only; the challenge is also to propose ways of studying non-normative sexualities in the city and their relationship to the State that could be exported to other geographical contexts – Western or otherwise. The main contributions of this thesis are structured around the following three analytical axes:

1. The conceptual and identity (re)configurations behind the categorisation of gender and sexual dissidence:
The aim here is to (a) document the day-to-day production of the dominant erotico-sexual value systems in Kinshasa and Abidjan, (b) identify the categories of gender and sexuality that deviate from them, and (c) compare these social definitions with the individual and/or collective ways in which these categorisations are reappropriated or rejected;
2. The logics of spatialization of inequalities from which sexual and gender dissidents construct themselves by acting *in* and *on* the city:
The aim here is to (a) document the spatial inscriptions of Kinshasa and Abidjan inhabitants by reconstructing their urban itineraries, (b) to account for the way in which a set of dynamic and performative socio-material spatial dispositions unequally impacts on individuals in their access to the urban and its resources and (c) to discuss its consequences on their lived and embodied space – i.e. on their way of being in the city (practices, itineraries, memories, affects, meanings, social links, emotions....) ;
3. The strategies of social, political and artistic creativity deployed in situations of marginality enrich the conceptualisation of modes of engagement in postcolonial cities:

The aim here is (a) to explore the disruptive potential that lies in the heuristic tension between the logics of subordination/violence and the logics of resilience/resistance of sexual and gender dissidents, (b) to identify the often silent, everyday spatial and political strategies for reclaiming identities and spaces (particularly at night) and (c) to sketch out ways of thinking about how to (re)conceptualise an idealised city-city in which debate in the public space would be the *sine qua non* of democracy and a so-called functional State.

To visualise (literally) spatial and social dynamics and agencies that shape power relations in the access to and use of urban spaces in post-colonial African contexts, ethnographic tools such as participant observation and in-depth interviews will be complemented by participatory visual methodologies including participatory mapping, photovoice and filming of street scenes and the urban physical environment.

In short, if I were to graphically represent my thesis topic, it would take the form of the following Venn

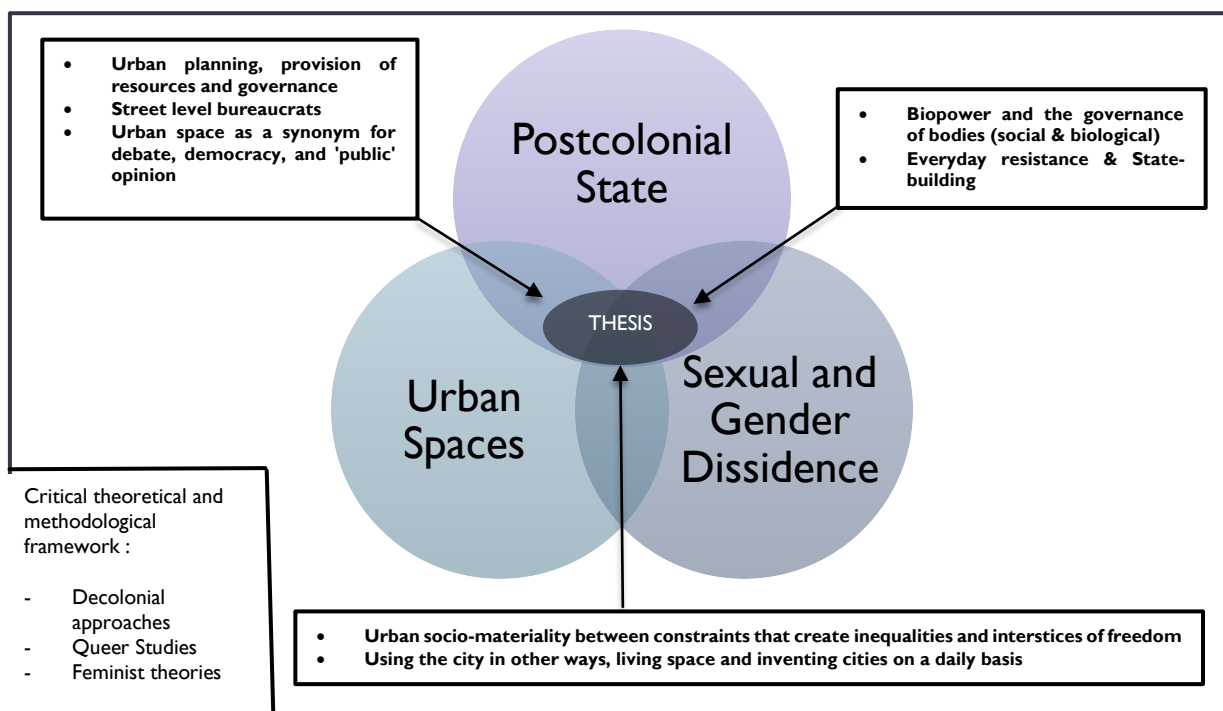


diagram:

STATE OF THE ART

Like the particle accelerator at the European Centre for Nuclear Research (CERN) based in Geneva, which makes physical particles that are already known to science collide with each other in the hope that these collisions will generate hitherto unknown massive particles to advance our knowledge of the origins of the universe, I intend to collide the contributions of existing work with empirical data from the field in order to question the reciprocal links that unite the following three bodies of work: the postcolonial State, urban spaces and sexual and gender dissidents.

POST-COLONIAL STATE

"A reasonable discourse on sub-Saharan Africa has never been self-evident". (Mbembe 2020a, 45). If defining the postcolonial State is a theoretical challenge, it is because most research has taken the Weberian ideal of the legal-rational State as the starting point for analysis (Weber 1921; 1922). Thus,

any overlap between the spheres of the State and those of 'civil society' would become a sign of State dysfunction (Migdal and Schlichte 2005; Clapham 1998; Jackson 1992; Eriksen 2011).

This normativity of analysis has led to the construction of schools of thought that are sometimes caricatural, sometimes decontextualised, sometimes both, ranging from the literature on failed States (Kaplan 2008; Young 1984; Mills 2009; Ignatieff 2003; Helman and Ratner 1992; Bates 2008) to proponents of (neo)patrimonialism (Médard 1990; 1991; Eisenstadt 1973; Reno 1997; Chabal and Daloz 1999; Bayart 2010). These generalisations and "methodological shortcuts" (Niang 2018), which maintain the idea of a homogenised, authoritarian, corrupt and nepotistic Africa, have subsequently fed an interventionist and/or developmentalist literature (notably produced by Western international organisations) promoting the restoration of a Weberian, Westphalian and Leviathanic State, the sole guarantor of security (national or international order) and of the 'good' socio-economic development of African countries (Niang 2018; Gaulme 2011; Sakue-Collins 2021; Sarr 2016). For example, in 2023, the DRC ranked 5th and Côte d'Ivoire 15th in the Fragile States Index, a ranking of 178 countries according to "risk and vulnerability indicators". (The Fund For Peace 2023).

In response to this "difficulty of studying the State (Abrams 1988) and to emerge from this 'generalised and transformative crisis' of the State (Migdal and Schlichte 2005), It is therefore preferable to follow in the footsteps of the work that postulates that the State 'is not a universal [and] is not in itself an autonomous source of power (Foucault 1984b). This is what Foucault proposes in his concept of 'governmentality' (1984b; 1997; 2004) a specific mode of exercising power through which the government of subjects and populations is operationalised – the most accomplished form of which is 'the biopolitic' (Lascoumes 2004). By recognising the elusive nature of the State and making it the very index of its nature, this theory of power relations is in line with Gramsci's idea of hegemony (2012) or De Certeau's idea of 'cultural poaching' (2010).

Anti-essentialist definitions of the State that "exorcise from the ghost of Weber" (Brandel and Randeria 2018, 75) serve as a basis for work favoring a State analysis as the result of historical-political processes of negotiation and compromises between different groups – particularly common in political socio-anthropology (Ciavolella and Wittersheim 2016). Giving more space to empirical analysis of governance and collective practices by adopting a material approach to State practices helps to (re)define the shape of the State – e.g. 'State effects' (Mitchell 1991), 'State formation' and 'State building' (Berman and Lonsdale 1992), 'Statehood' (Clapham 1998), 'Statecraft' (Isachenko 2012), 'State plasticity' (Cooper, Dhawan, and Newman 2019), 'Gendered State' (Butler and Spivak 2011; Parashar, Tickner, and True 2018), etc.

With specific regard to African contexts, how can we overcome the "crisis of language [of political science on Africa], of its procedures and of its reasoning"? (Mbembe 2020b, 2) which responds to a paradigm of radical otherness? Firstly, by analysing the modalities of power in a postcolonial context on the basis of political structures' colonial legacies (Mamdani 1996; Mbembe 2020b; Guha 1998; Bhabha 1984; Ahluwalia 2012; Cheeseman and Fisher 2019; Chakrabarty 2000). Secondly, by looking at the plurality of so-called 'State' and 'non-State' actors at local, national and international levels (Hagmann and Péclard 2010; Clapham 1998; Krämer 2019; Burton 2003; Péclard, Kernen, and Khan-Mohammad 2020). Finally, by taking as point of entry the (micro-)practices of everyday life that reveal the power relationships between societies, bureaucracies and State structures (Blundo and Meur 2008; Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan 2014; Bayart, Mbembe, and Toulabor 1992; Lombard 2016; Perazzone 2018; Gomez-Temesio 2013; Copans 2001). In short, it is through the historicisation of African political societies, the empirical examination of discourses of and about the State, and the political analysis of everyday life that the post-colonial State can be thought of in its ambiguities "as

both illusory as well as a set of concrete institutions; as both distant and impersonal ideas as well as localized and personified institutions; as both violent and destructive as well as benevolent and productive" (Hansen and Stepputat 2001, 5).

URBAN SPACES

The literature on failed and fragile States, in which African States are pathologised sites of exception, echoes the narratives relating to African cities. Firstly, it took a long time for African urbanisation to be seen as a commonplace, ancient and deep-rooted phenomenon that pre-existed European colonisation (Coquery-Vidrovitch 2006). As a result, cities in Africa have been the subject of little research, leaving them "off the world map". (Robinson 2002). Then, even when these cities were studied, it was through the prism of a hierarchy based on Western representations of modernity and development. Western cities, considered modern and integrated, were contrasted with poor, disorganised African cities plagued by informality and violence (UN Habitat 2010; Beall, Goodfellow, and Rodgers 2013; Nogueira 2017).

It was not until the critical theorists of the 'Southern turn' that a decolonisation of urban studies was called for. This epistemological shift consisted of considering non-Western urban formations beyond their capacity to conform to Euro-American typologies, and apprehending them instead as sources of new theory development and policy innovation (Robinson 2002; Roy 2011; Simone 2004a; Nuttall and Mbembe 2008; Edensor and Jayne 2012; Pieterse 2008; Marrengane and Croese 2021; Brenner and Schmid 2015; Dahou 2005; Myers 2011).

These theorists complicate the reading of African cities 'in disorder' by insisting on the fertile tensions existing between different 'urban rationalities' (Watson 2003) in cities where the following coexist (Gervais-Lambony 2014; Choplin 2019) :

- The 'neo-liberal' city - referred to as the 'official city' in this thesis: neighborhoods characterised by an aesthetic inspired by images of modernity and Western-style development organised around the former colonial city, which constitutes the economic, administrative and political centre. This idea of a 'showcase city' as part of the globalisation process, initiated by the public authorities, private investors (particularly foreign) and international organisations, is accompanied by a policy of major works, privatisation of urban spaces, the development of *smart cities* and a thorny urban security issue (Agbola 2013; Ferguson 2006; Soja 2013; Borsdorf and Hidalgo 2008; Datta and Odendaal 2019; Karvonen, Cugurullo, and Caprotti 2018; De Boeck and Baloji 2016; Bredeloup, Bertonecello, and Lombard 2008) ;
- The 'affordable' city: new districts characterised by the construction of so-called social housing for the middle – or even upper – class. (N'goran, Fofana, and Akindès 2020; Morelle, Choplin, and Biehler 2015) ;
- The 'low cost' city: stratified, unequal neighbourhoods with unplanned urban expansion characterised by incremental construction. Based on survival strategies, inhabitants self-build their infrastructures by articulating *informal* housing, *informal* economy and solid social ties (Hilgers 2013; De Boeck et Baloji 2016; M. Davis 2006; Paller 2020; Hoffman 1995; Huchzermeyer 2011; Koolhaas 2007; Simone 2004b).

These multiple forms of urbanity linked to inhabitants access to urban resources, water, housing, land, urban transport, a liveable environment etc. reveal different relationships to justice, governance and citizenship in the city and are articulated around the conceptualisation of a "right to the city in the Global South" (Samara, He, and Chen 2013; Morange and Spire 2022; Morange, Pilo', and Spire 2018; Choplin and Ciavolella 2017; Gervais-Lambony 2014).

In order to account for the multiplicity of urban subjectivities, ethnographic and microsociological work on urban lifestyles in Africa has set out to analyse *ordinary* scenes of *ordinary* citizens in cities considered to be *ordinary*. 'Street scenes' have thus become objects of study in their own right, making it possible to account for the gap between the 'official city' and what the inhabitants actually do with it: through their uses, ordinary citizens highlight a 'malaise' between the adoption of normative discourses of urban governance, and the proliferation of more diverse, temporal and informal modalities (Drummond 2000; Simone 2001; Chris 2001; Madanipour 2003; Lafargue 1996; Chenal et al. 2013). The everyday practices of street-level bureaucrats have also received particular attention insofar as these agents of the State embody and visibly implement urban governance at the smallest level (Bouquet and Kassi-Djodjo 2014; Lipsky 2010; Perazzone 2020; Zacka 2017).

These situational analyses are reminiscent of the '*petits riens*'⁴ of de Certeau's 'ordinary practitioners of the city' (2010) whose study of urban strategies makes it possible to read the city 'over the shoulder' of the city-zens (Agier 1999) and to analyse the way in which subjectivities transform places into spaces (Merleau-Ponty 2021; Buire 2021; Macherey 2009). To grasp these subjectivities, theorists of 'embodied space' resolve the dichotomy between biological body and social body by postulating that individuals are positioned in space as a function of a certain number of attributes revealing power relations enabling a dialogue, even a negotiation, between bodies and the city (Thrift and Dewsbury 2000; Zein 2022; Kenworthy Teather 1999; Shaw 2002; Vann 2017; Blum et al. 2014; Low 2003; 1996). The city is therefore a site where experiences of the body are expressed through the acts of walking, mapping, seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, etc. (Oloukoi 2016; Remy and Voyé 1981; Certeau 2010; Bouchrara 1994; Franck 2014). It should be noted that sensitive approaches to the urban in Africa have often been considered under the prism of art to account for the space perceived by its inhabitant and their imaginaries linked to the present but also to the future (Braun 2023; Dolby 2006; Gondola 2013; Kasco 1994; Mulin 1999; Choplin and Pliez 2018; Guinard 2014; Ziethen 2019; De Boeck 2005).

SEXUAL AND GENDER DISSIDENCE

Although sexuality has long been regarded in the West as a 'dirty subject' of the social sciences, it provides an opportunity to reflect on the social norms in force, in that it constitutes a privileged site for the study of tensions between the control of bodies (particularly in urban contexts) and is fertile ground for the emergence of innovative concepts that challenge the traditional theoretical dichotomies of the social sciences (e.g. private/public, formal/informal, political/intimacy, etc.). Studies of sexuality in African societies go back quite a long way, if we include in this literature review the colonial anthropology from which the colonial order legitimised the imperial enterprise through a pseudo-scientification of otherness. In this process of creating *the other*, sexuality played a crucial role through the development of a rich erotico-pornographic iconography. *Scientific* production and iconography were at the origin of a symbolic pairing of 'fascination/repulsion' of African bodies and sexualities based on the exotic, the mysterious, the uncivil and hypersexuality (Mudimbe 1988; Blanchard et al. 2018; Taraud 2018; Boidy 2017; Boetsch 2019; Samaké 2021; McClintock 1995; Stoler 2013; Jolly 2003).

The gradual creation of this colonial sexual order has led to racial hierarchies that are consubstantial with the organisation of power in sub-Saharan African territories, which also continue to influence their value systems around sexualities – e.g. fantasised exotic bodies that are found at the heart of the logic of sex tourism and certain pornographic categories, in discourses on development and health at international level, but also on the unequal distribution of rights based on sexual differences at national level (McClintock 1995; Stoler 2013; Coquery-Vidrovitch 2013; Joly 2011; Meiu 2015; Levine 2007).

⁴ Could be translated as 'trifle things'.

As regards the study of sexual experiences, work has been slow to emerge – despite some pioneering texts such as Le Pape and Vidal (1984). According to Amina Mama, it is “the historical legacy of racist fascination with the supposedly unbridled sexuality of Africans [that] has deterred researchers” interest in sexualities 'in' or 'from' Africa – and not African sexualities (Mama 1996, 39). This legacy has long influenced the way in which issues of sexuality in Africa have been conceptualised by academia, but also by development practitioners, almost systematically as problems of reproductive health (HIV/AIDS), violence (female genital mutilation), pressure on the economy and the environment (population control), etc. (Benaya 2006; Arnfred 2004). These studies, which claim to 'objectify' sexuality in universal biological terms, are in fact based on implicit assumptions, codes and moral objectives which attempt to create a universal 'normal' sexuality (Pigg and Adams 2005). We had to wait until the 2000s to find the first works that took account of different desires, practices and imaginaries – even if there was a particular focus on questions of economic-sexual exchange (Arnfred 2004; Cole and Thomas 2009; Cole 2010; Gunkel 2011; Tamale 2011).

With regard to the study of sexual and gender minorities, work recognising the complexity of gender performativity, the fluidity of sexual identities and the relational aspects of erotic practices in Africa did not appear until the 2000s or even 2010s (Spronk and Hendriks 2020; Abbas and Ekine 2013; Tamale 2011; Matebeni 2014; Arnfred 2004; Arnfred, Adomako Ampofo, and Nordiska Afrikainstitutet 2009; Spronk and Nyeck 2021; Matebeni, Monro, and Reddy 2018; Nyeck 2021; Nyanzi 2018; Oudenhuisen 2021). These "pioneers" (Spronk and Nyeck 2021) were part of decolonial, *queer* and feminist approaches that can be summarised by a simultaneous double movement of deconstruction/construction. Firstly, a movement to deconstruct hegemonic Western ways of conceptualising gender and sexualities. Secondly, a movement to construct new epistemologies from specific geographical, historical and cultural contexts (Mohanty 2018)

It is in this respect that one of the first contributions of research on sexual and gender dissidence in Africa is to point out that the terms derived from Western *queer studies* rarely make it possible to understand the complexity of African realities: while in the West LGBT+ terms generally converge social identity and sexual practices (what individuals *do* and *are*), this correlation is not universally accepted (Dankwa 2021; Amory 1997; Abbas and Ekine 2013). Thus, the use without contextualisation of the acronym LGBT+ or the term *queer* may not refer to the same realities as in the Western context and impose a normative framework even though "homosexuality has always been known and practised in Africa" (Gueboguo 2006). This is why the term used in this thesis project is 'sexual and gender dissidence' (rather than 'sexual and gender minorities' because of its minoritising and falsely quantitative nature). Although 'sexual and gender dissidence' is intended to be as broad and neutral as possible, this work recognises that the term lending to LGBT+ populations a protesting intent that is not necessarily endorsed by those concerned. As such, its use is only provisional and hopes to be replaced by endemic expressions (perhaps) developed outside of categories constructed primarily in the West - such as the term '*branchés*' in Abidjan.

In this same concern for feminist and *queer* decolonisation of the way of thinking about sexualities in Africa, the 'pioniers' have proposed analyses and methodologies seeking to explore the processes of subjectivation of actors (Fassin 2008). This constructivist-materialist analysis was reinforced by the study of imaginaries and cultural consumption (Andriamalala and Gardner 2010; Hendriks 2019a; Werner 2012), language (Cage 2003), urban infrastructures (Cirolia et Pollio 2023) or objects (Meiu 2020) so as to move towards a *queer* phenomenology (Ahmed 2022). But while the recent literature around sexual and gender dissidence in Africa is radically inspiring, it is still dominated by studies in Anglophone Africa, particularly South Africa, and focuses mainly on the study of homosexuals

(especially males), leaving aside intersex and trans issues – "How do we address the Q and the I not forgetting the T?" asks Brian Okollan (Matebeni, Monro, and Reddy 2018).

KNOWLEDGE GAPS

Existing works on the analysis of the postcolonial State, cities in Africa, and socio-material and discursive practices around sexualities, have in common that they produce studies that are often (1) *top-down*, elitist and macro, (2) inscribed in an essentialist logic of creation of the *other*, relegating African societies to sites of violence, disorder and threats to the established international order (3) and taking as a reference Western analytical frameworks that carry colonial legacies of hierarchisation of societies. These narratives are at the origin of epistemological and methodological universalisms in which researchers conceptualise a fantasised Africa by 'mirror effect' (Mohanty 2018) : failed States in Africa vs. modern States in the West; disorganised informal cities in Africa vs. developed cities at the centre of globalisation in the West; wild sexualities and widespread homophobia in Africa vs. controlled sexualities in a tolerant West. In order to break out of the 'paradigm of difference' that tends to pathologise non-Western societies and limits the possibilities of conceptualisation, my research is inspired by works that (1) recognise the historical, economic and political conditions of the objects studied (2) make everyday practices and life experiences the central axis of theorisation and (3) encourage the co-construction of knowledge as much as possible.

While works in critical geopolitics of knowledge (Dijkema, Gatelier, and Cohen 2019) make possible to think in a more complex way about the postcolonial State, cities and gender/sexual dissidence, works dealing with these three aspects simultaneously in francophone Africa are lacking⁵. It is therefore necessary to look to other branches of the existing literature to lay the foundations for the theorisation of the three analytical axes of this thesis work:

- I. The conceptual and identity (re)configurations behind the categorisation of sexual and gender dissidence:

Sexualities are understood as a set of socio-materialities that emanate from and impact on bodies, senses and pleasures, and which have no intrinsic unity or laws of their own. (Foucault 1994). Thus, the 'scripts of sexuality' specific to a given society (Gagnon 2008) are unified only by discourse, operating through a vast array of institutional forms, of which the most familiar formal level of regulation is the State – in dialogue with medical, religious, *traditional*, educational, family and other institutions (Rubin 2006; Connell 1990; Weeks 2018). The social intervention of the Ivorian and Congolese States affects patterns of sexual behaviour through the development – or non-development – of laws defining what is acceptable and unacceptable, regulation of marriage, divorce, illegitimacy, the adoption of (anti)natalist social policies impacting on reproduction, policing of sex work, and so on. This 'biopower', as the result of specific historical, political and social processes, governs intimacies in such a way as to discipline bodies and regulate the population (Foucault 1997; 2004). It helps to normalise individual behaviour by creating *de facto* categories of sexual and gender deviance (Rubin 2010; Borrillo 2015; Fassin 2015; Butler 2004; Mainsant 2021; Mbembe 2020b) – which are grouped together here under the umbrella term 'sexual and gender dissidence.

⁵ With regard to the urban uses of sexual and gender dissidence in a postcolonial African context, however, we should note the inspiring contributions on queer (in)visibilities (Tucker 2009; 2023; Ombagi 2023; Livermon 2023), mobility (Khuzwayo 2023), infrastructure (Cirolia and Pollio 2023), economic relations (Hendriks 2016) and popular artistic productions (Hendriks 2019b).

2. The logics of spatialization of inequalities from which sexual and gender dissidents construct themselves by acting *in* and *on* the city:

Starting from the observation that territory is one of the founding dimensions of a so-called modern State (Weber and Fritsch 2013; Radcliffe 2020), political structures have constantly invested the city as one of the spatial formations of their power. Urban spaces are thus considered as a “State laboratory for sorting, excluding and policing” (Fourchard 2018) that reflects and produces unequal social structures which rejects certain practices, behaviours and people at cities’ margins (Rosenberger 2020; Soja 2009; Scholar 2006; Margier 2020; Kaufmann 2001; Harvey 2011; Simmel 1984). This spatial injustice also manifests itself according to gender and sexual orientation; as a blatant illustration of the feminist slogan 'intimacy is political', not all bodies have the same urban destinies (Binnie and Valentine 1999; Duplan 2022; Coutras 1996; Direnberger and Schmoll 2014; Djelloul 2021; Parker 2016; Löw 2006; Listerborn 2016). Thus, two types of citizenship are in dialogue for LGBT+ "subaltern *citadinity*" (Fouquet and Goerg 2018): on the one hand, sexual citizenship, i.e. the articulation of a certain number of variables that make it possible to theorise access to rights granted, denied or negotiated to different social groups/individuals on the basis of their sexuality (Richardson 2017) and on the other hand, the 'right to the city' defined as an opportunity for expression and participation in urban spaces, i.e. the ability to live, work, move around, be oneself, etc. within the city (Lefebvre 1967).

3. The strategies of social, political and artistic creativity deployed in situations of marginality enrich the conceptualisation of modes of engagement in postcolonial cities:

Since power relationships are not unidirectional but relational (Hibou 2011; Foucault 1997; Hansen and Stepputat 2001) it is also important to recognise the resistance and negotiations that sexual and gender dissidents undertake to challenge them. These contestations are played out in particular through everyday urban uses (lived and perceived space) that challenge the 'official city' (designed space) and whose frictions are at the origin of the 'invention of the city' (Agier 1999). What is at stake here is a political grasp of the practices of individuals who take an active part in the relations of power and domination in which they are involved on a daily basis, but who do not necessarily assume counter-hegemonic objectives or explicit civic demands. In other words, an analysis of the relations of domination that are exercised over biological and social bodies in urban space makes it possible to highlight strategies for avoiding this domination, ranging from ordinary activism to visible and frontal demands (Scott 2000; 2006; Bayat 2013; Fouquet and Goerg 2018; Certeau 2010). This resistance can manifest itself in the emergence of counter-spaces⁶ in which people whose behaviour is considered deviant seek to exist – particularly at night, a space-time acting as a 'caricature of the day' leaving more room for manoeuvre (Gwiazdzinski 2020; Palmer 2000; Gade and Bureau 1998; Fouquet 2017). These reflections on more fluid urban spaces favouring a 'politics of transgression' from a feminist, *queer* and decolonial perspective (Pieterse 2008; Sennett 2019) nurture debates around an idealised city-city in which so-called *public* space serves as a neutral interface between society and the State by encouraging deliberation (Habermas 1988; Dacheux 2019; Paquot 2015). From a conceptual point of view, the radical scope of these 'unruly spaces'⁷ lies in the fact that they challenge the pairs of oppositions often used in the human sciences to think about social realities (e.g. public/private, State/society, formal/informal, male/female, heteronormativity/homosexuality, margin/centre, etc).

⁶ For examples of the conceptualisation of counter-spaces see: heterotopias (of deviation) (Foucault 1984a; 2009), species of spaces (Perec 2022), spaces of insurgent citizenship (Holston 1998), potential space (Fouquet 2017) or safe space (Prieur 2015).

⁷ Named after the SNSF project in which I am involved and which is funding my research, [Unruly Spaces](#), a concept developed by [Dr. Stéphanie Perazzone](#), project investigator.

RESEARCH DEVICE

CASE STUDIES

By centering people, infrastructures, and activities throughout the ages, cities are ideal sites for examining inequalities, globalization, privatisation of space, models and images associated with modernity, socio-political demands (including those relating to identity, gender and sexuality), etc. With the world's urban population set to double by 2050, Africa's fastest growing cities (OECD 2022) offer interesting case studies. Kinshasa and Abidjan, with their history and urban vitality, seem to be two emblematic laboratories for these trends.

Since “comparison is reason” (Bayart 2022) the strategy adopted is to create a dialogue between two relatively cohesive entities. Kinshasa and Abidjan are two French-speaking cities that have experienced - and are still experiencing - conflicts. Home to the largest percentage of their respective populations and the main political institutions, they are the scene of a myriad of socio-political reconfigurations. The analysis of urban materiality is closely linked to the (globalised) political and economic history of these countries characterised by an urban development strongly influenced by colonial projects and then by international development institutions. Also, Côte d'Ivoire and the DRC are two countries with a relatively similar attitude to issues of non-normative sexualities: identities are not penalised as such, which allows a degree of tolerance, but no security is guaranteed for sexual and gender dissidents, even though these practices continue to be badly perceived by the population. But Kinshasa and Abidjan are far from being homogeneous cultural, geographical, political and economic entities. Their languages and communities are not the same, Côte d'Ivoire's economic indicators are higher than those of the DRC, which is reflected in the number and viability of infrastructures in the city, and their specific historical features have led to the emergence of different political and administrative organisations.

According to estimates, between 12 and 17 million inhabitants for Kinshasa and between 4 and 6 million for Abidjan. The study needs to be narrowed down to smaller neighbourhoods/communes/administrative units. During my fieldwork in Abidjan, I was able to identify the communes of Marcory and Yopougon, two complementary neighbourhoods in terms of their urban dynamics, level of development, inhabitants and types of activity. Created after the country's independence, Yopougon was intended to be a 'new town' characterised by a modern residential suburb for the working classes. But 'Yop', as its inhabitants affectionately call it, quickly became the most densely populated district in the country – and one of the most impoverished. One of the places identified for my research is the market where the 'branchés' population own hairdressing or tailoring salons and where they work, sleep, celebrate, entertain etc. Marcory, is a district that was once reserved for colonised populations and separated from the white area of the Plateau by the Treichville drawbridge. Today, the commune shares the characteristics of the 'affordable' or even 'neoliberal' city mentioned above. Called the 'district of a thousand maquis', this area concentrates those sorts of dance bars-restaurants that serve as nocturnal social meeting places, encouraging interaction, discussion, the exchange of emotions, friendships and, of course, sexual encounters - including for the 'branchés' like at 'Le Miami' mentioned in the ethnographic micro-vignette in the introduction.

The neighbourhoods in Kinshasa have not yet been selected, but two that share certain characteristics with Yopougon and Marcory are being considered, namely La Gombe (a neighbourhood with a concentration of expatriate populations and wealthy Congolese littered with chic bars and restaurants) and Matonge (a more popular and mixed neighbourhood that concentrates Kinshasa's main artistic and nightlife venues, with the equivalent of 'maquis' called 'ngandas' in the DRC).

KEY ACTORS

The basic hypothesis of my research work lies in the idea that none of the objects of study is static: neither the city, nor the State, nor sexualities. I postulate that these objects are eminently relational and that they result from the construction of interactions and power plays between individuals, practices, discourses, uses of space-time, memories, infrastructures, etc. – in short, a set of socio-materialities. Thus, while I am obviously interested in people considered to defy dominant sexual norms, I seek to interrogate them in their relationship with a myriad of other 'ordinary' actors who, on a daily basis, consciously or unconsciously, participate in making the city, norming sexualities and producing the State.

So here the different actors' categories identified:

1. Macro Scale - The official :
 - a. Ministries responsible for cities, urban planning, housing, infrastructure, public works, and regional development
 - b. Ministry for gender issues
 - c. International organisations (e.g. UN Habitat, UNHPD, UN Women, World Bank, etc.)
 - d. National development offices (e.g. National Office for Technical Studies and Development)
2. Echelle Infra - The intermediary :
 - a. Interface bureaucracy (e.g. town halls, police and military officers, neighbourhood/market chiefs, and other State agents)
 - b. Civil society organisations working to defend the rights of sexual and gender dissidents (e.g. Jeunialissime, Alliance Congolaise pour les droits humains en RDC, NGO Espace Confiance, Alternatives Côte d'Ivoire, NGO Gromo, etc.).
3. Echelle Micro - The ordinary :
 - a. Sexual and gender dissidents
 - b. Other inhabitants, particularly those who have to work in the same area (e.g. market merchants, motorbike taxis, neighbours, owners of the premises occupied, representatives of the nearby religious building, sex workers who frequent the same 'maquis'/ngandas', etc.).
4. Meso scale - The city: buildings, streets, street art, markets, shopping centers, 'courtyards'/concessions (residential units shared by several houses), transport, noise, etc.

A CRITICAL AND REFLECTIVE APPROACH

In the societies of the past, colonial durabilities impose themselves as non-linear dynamic processes that permeate the realities and structures of international and national politics, but also everyday life (Mertens, Perazzone, and Mwambari 2022). In fact, conducting research that takes an intersectional approach (Crenshaw 1990; hooks 2015; M. Davis 2006) which invites us to think about identities at the intersection of different systems, implies methodological and epistemological changes. Can we decolonise using academic methods and writing formats that have been used for centuries precisely to deny the humanity of Africans? How do we find a way to escape heteronormative, Western-centric and androcentric validation processes characterised by positivist methodological and epistemological criteria (Collins 2018, 162) – what Serena Dankwa calls 'colonial ghosts (Dankwa 2021) ?

Hill Collins believes that "we cannot study the knowledge of the dominated with the techniques applied to the knowledge of the dominant" (2018, 155) – which, if we extrapolate to the question of struggles, echoes Audre Lorde's words: 'the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house (2007, 110). In order to "free our imaginations [so that] we can do exciting things and create our own stories on

the African continent" (Binyavanga Wainaina 2014), the work of feminist, queer, and decolonial theorists (Tamale 2011; Mohanty 2018; D.-A. Davis 2016; Lee and León 2019; Sansfaçon 2013; Bennett and Pereira 2013; Broqua 2000) call for (1) self-reflexivity on the part of the researcher and (2) an ethic of responsibility and accountability towards the objects studied.

As far as self-reflexivity is concerned, the proponents of qualitative inductive grounded theory, particularly in feminist, postcolonial and *queer* currents, have insisted on the importance of the researcher's position in relation to the people studied (in terms of gender, race as a social construct, class, etc.) and have helped to challenge the myth of axiological neutrality, which gives more room to the researcher's own experience. They have helped to challenge the myth of axiological neutrality, which gives more room for intersubjectivity between the researcher, his/her object and his/her interlocutors (Harding 1992; Haraway 1988). (Harding 1992; Haraway 1988; Bennett and Pereira 2013; Olivier de Sardan 2000; Ribeiro 2019; Kloß 2017). Reflexivity, i.e. reflections around how the researcher's social situation is an integral part of the research, must take place throughout the research work and this in an 'anti-oppressive' approach. Through my identity, personal, professional and activist journey, I have to ask myself "what is my place in this queer world" - Ivorian and Congolese might I add to Stella Nyanzi's question (2018).

With regard to the ethics of responsibility and accountability, let us acknowledge that social science research methods on African societies are still struggling to detach themselves from their colonial roots which, to some extent, make the field an act of heuristic 'predation' for the benefit of the researcher who alone reaps the benefits (Alonso Bejarano et al. 2019). While it is impossible to completely get rid of these power relations, let us try to reduce them. This involves anticipating dissemination strategies and the materials to be produced from the start of the thesis (perhaps in collaboration with artists and activists) so as to enable those involved to reappropriate certain axes of the completed thesis. Within the Unruly project, of which this work is a part, there are already plans to organise feedback workshops in Abidjan and Kinshasa, and to mount a photographic exhibition.

METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS

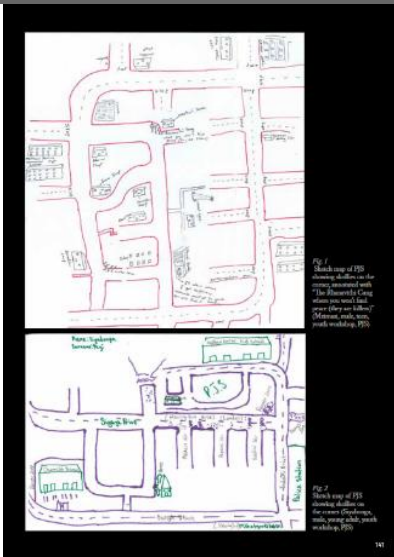
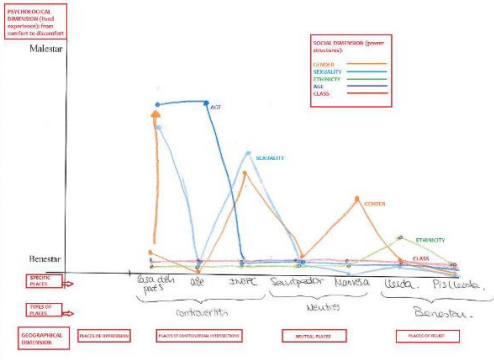
The critical feminist, decolonial and *queer* ambitions of the thesis must be reflected in a coherent methodological arsenal that constitutes less a 'way of conducting an enquiry' but rather as a political process, a 'space' in which power relations over the place of speech in the production of knowledge and ethical questions are played out (Tamale 2011).



This thesis project therefore seeks to highlight the links between the materiality of urban built space and the immateriality of social, cognitive and intersubjective relationships. In order to make (literally) visible the way in which spaces and bodies are governed and controlled, but also produced and subverted, the methodological tools used draw on visual and participatory ethnography. Each of the methods used is justified by the type of data expected and is aimed at one or more types of key actors. They will be adjusted as and when required by the survey and the needs/feedback of the interlocutors in the field.


→ Ethnographic tools...

Method	Description	Actors targeted	Analytical objectives
Semi-structured interviews	Discussions based on a more or less strict canva of topics/questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministries and Technical Services National Development Offices International organisations Surface cleaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting on the 'official city' and the discourse associated with it Documentary research/collection of (official) documents (statistics, municipal annual reports, government reports, new master plans, housing projects/new towns, major planning projects by IOs, etc.). Knowing what urban imaginations/values/futures/conceptions the official city draws on
Participatory observation	Triple work of perception, memorization & notation during activities and discussions of the interlocutors		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Putting practices (observation) and discourse (talks and in-depth interviews) into perspective - ("Observations without interviews run the risk of remaining blind to indigenous viewpoints. An interview without observations runs the risk of remaining trapped in a decontextualised discourse". (Beaud and Weber 2010, 123)) Documenting the actual management of the "official" city based on day-to-day practices Dissecting the power relations at work between State agents, their hierarchies, and the inhabitants, particularly those marginalised because of their gender and/or sexuality Chronicling the way in which citizens deal with the day-to-day difficulties of accessing urban areas and their resources Account for the avoidance strategies of inhabitants or occupy and reimagine urban spaces
Ethnographic interviews	Interviews lasting around 1h30/2h in a free-form format aimed at listening and getting people to talk while recording and taking notes in order to retrace autobiographical accounts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interface bureaucracy Civil society organisations Sexual and gender dissidents Other inhabitants 	
Analysis of popular cultural consumption	Particular interest in cultural consumer products, which are omnipresent in Kinshasa and Abidjan (songs, books, TV series and telenovelas, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual and gender dissidents Other inhabitants City 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To grasp the symbolic and cultural elements that contribute to the production of dominant conceptions of gender and sexuality, as well as to the imaginary world of the city.

→ ... visual and participative

Method	Description	Actors targeted	Analytical objectives	Example
<p>Participatory mapping</p>	<p>Co-production of maps using base maps and/or mind maps (TBD) by locating sites or places that are of particular importance to the interlocutors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual and gender dissidents Interface bureaucracy Other inhabitants City 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual representation of lived space: the aim is not to produce 'objective' maps, but to compare qualitative maps reflecting lifestyles with official maps ("there are many maps of one place, many histories of one time"). (McClintock 1995, 1)) Documenting how the city is actually used and how residents navigate it 	 <p>(Briers 2021)</p>
<p>Relief Map (Rodó-de-Zárate 2014b; 2014a)</p>	<p>Co-production of a graphic representation of the relationship between categories representing power relations (the social), lived experience and feelings/emotions (the psychological) and spaces (the geographical).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual and gender dissidents Other inhabitants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In an intersectional approach, to take account of inequalities in the ways in which people represent places and navigate the city according to certain characteristics (gender, age, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, expatriate status, etc.). Thinking about bodies in the city (embodied space) 	 <p>FIGURE 1. Mónica's Relief Map with my annotations (in red) to indicate each dimension. (Rodó-de-Zárate 2014a)</p>

<p>Photo voice</p>	<p>After distributing 10 disposable silver cameras to 10 privileged interlocutors (contacts most invested in the survey), they will be asked to capture the people, spaces, buildings, streets, etc. that they consider to be part of their daily lives so as to construct visual diaries of sorts.</p> <p>The choice of photographs to be selected for an exhibition will be made during a meeting with all the privileged interlocutors. The exchanges induced by these choices provide access to people's different representations based on verbal and emotional responses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual and gender dissidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to knowledge that does not necessarily require verbalisation: dramatisation of oneself, others and one's environment Visual representation of experienced space 	 <p>[Photo: Khayaethu, male, adult, Marikana]</p> <p>Nighttime workshop photograph comments and endorsements</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Comment</th> <th>Endorsements</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1 In darkness, criminals take advantage in people (like robbing and raping. [9]</td> <td>***** [9]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2 It's not safe the skollies mug people. [1]</td> <td>• [1]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3 Unsafe [3]</td> <td>*** [3]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4 Darkness, no lights, unsafe [1]</td> <td>• [1]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5 Darkness [4]</td> <td>**** [4]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6 Danger</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>7 It is terrible when it gets dark. [3]</td> <td>*** [3]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8 The skollies mug us because it is dark. [5]</td> <td>***** [5]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9 Unsafe [4]</td> <td>**** [4]</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Table 1: Nighttime workshop comments and endorsements of a photo from the participatory photo interview (Photo: Khayaethu, male, adult, Marikana)</p> <p>(Briers 2021)</p>	Comment	Endorsements	1 In darkness, criminals take advantage in people (like robbing and raping. [9]	***** [9]	2 It's not safe the skollies mug people. [1]	• [1]	3 Unsafe [3]	*** [3]	4 Darkness, no lights, unsafe [1]	• [1]	5 Darkness [4]	**** [4]	6 Danger		7 It is terrible when it gets dark. [3]	*** [3]	8 The skollies mug us because it is dark. [5]	***** [5]	9 Unsafe [4]	**** [4]
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<p>Urban walk filmed or with sound captured (TBD)</p>	<p>Retracing routes or strolling through different urban spaces with some actors.</p> <p>These walks can be filmed or recorded (TBD).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual and gender minorities Interface bureaucracy Other inhabitants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To gain knowledge that does not necessarily require verbalisation, by making room for analysis of other signs and modes of communication, particularly physical ones. The perfect place for a chat Documenting how the city is actually used and how residents navigate it Report on the sound and/or visual environment 	<p>Figure 6: Example of urban walk</p>  <p>Informations générales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blanc: Blanc ---: Parcours urbains For Street: Rues de rue ---: Départ et arrivée de la randonnée <p>Frontières nocturnes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mohomeng: No go areas <p>Perceptions nocturnes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Routes fortement éclairées Obscurité et silence "Mugis à côté ouvert" (odeurs et voix) Musique forte Cris et coupes de feu <p>Éléments positifs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gares de sécurité Lieux positivement perçus Régions couvertes ou semi-couvertes tard Groupe étalé Groupe étalé associé <p>Éléments ambigus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lieux perçus de manière ambiguë Groupe d'hommes <p>Éléments dissuasifs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Autoroute violente ou "pont" Lieux perçus négativement Groupe d'hommes associés <p>50m</p> <p>Réalisation: Chantal Oloukoï</p> <p>(Oloukoï 2016)</p>																				

<p>Photography of street scenes, objects and built environments</p>	<p>"Photography as an observation tool, the image as research material" (Chenal et al. 2013)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reporting on the way in which the built environment constrains or enables the various users of the city to act• "Capturing the street in both its permanence and its mutations (Chenal et al. 2013)	 <p>Yes we Kin Kinshasa 2019. Photo captured by the author.</p>
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ACCESS TO THE SITE

The methods presented in the previous section will be put into practice during a year's fieldwork (6 months in Kinshasa and 6 months in Abidjan) spread over the period from spring 2023 to summer 2025⁸. To facilitate my access to the field, in particular to the sometimes-discreet spaces used by sexual and gender minorities, I plan to approach civil society organisations that support and defend the rights of LGBT+ people. In Abidjan, the organisation I'm already working with is the NGO Espace Confiance, which has been working since 1994 to raise awareness, provide screening and offer medical and psychosocial care to Abidjan's gay population and sex workers in their clinics in Marcory and Yopougon. In Kinshasa, the prospective organisation is Jeunialissime, which focuses on the rights, health and culture of young lesbian, gay, bisexuals, transgender and queer people in the Democratic Republic of Congo. From these organisations, it is possible for me to identify activists, workers and patients who agree to meet outside these medical-social establishments. Secondly, I use the ethnographic technique known as 'snowballing' which involves, from a few contacts, creating a non-representative sample by relying on acquaintances' network of each interlocutor - which works quite well in the Ivorian and Congolese contexts and in *queer* communities where 'people are infrastructure' (Simone 2004b).

With regard to 'officials' and 'intermediaries', the use of *Unruly* project resources and contacts (a project manager, seven project partner professors and two research assistants in each city) will make it possible to target relevant actors and negotiate access.

While Abidjan and Kinshasa are both French-speaking cities, the inhabitants speak at least one other vernacular language. In Kinshasa this is mainly Lingala, so I took classes for 8 months in Geneva. This training doesn't allow me to talk to my interlocutors, but it does help me to get more accepted and to understand discussions around me – as people of Kinshasa mix a lot French with Lingala. In Abidjan, people use Nouchi among themselves, considered to be a 'slang' where French and other languages from the sub-region but also English are mixed in. There are no courses in Nouchi, so I'll be learning it on the field.

ETHICS

As part of the SNSF 'Unruly' project stamped by CUREG, data from my thesis will be collected, stored and shared in accordance with the University of Geneva's Charter of Ethics and Deontology. Particular attention will be paid to transparency, consent, the protection of interlocutors, the security of interview transcripts and field notes and the anonymisation of data - and this from the moment they are collected.

⁸ Cf. Work Plan

WORK PLAN

	Année 1												Année 2												Année 3												Année 4											
	Automne 2022			Hiver 2022			Printemps 2023			Été 2023			Automne 2023			Hiver 2023			Printemps 2024			Été 2024			Automne 2024			Hiver 2024			Printemps 2025			Été 2025			Automne 2025			Hiver 2025			Printemps 2026			Été 2026		
	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A
Projet Unruly																																																
Engagement																																																
Atelier Méthodologique en équipe												K	A																																			
Atelier de restitution																																																
CANDOC doctorante																																																
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Lectures pour projet de thèse																																																
Collège des professeurs SPERI																																																
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Summer School in Social Science Methods - Lugano																																																
TBD - Pour la rédaction																																																
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Articles																																																
Thèse																																																

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