

Gender and sexuality in the context of HIV and AIDS: sexual risk and sexual agency amongst Coloured high school girls in Durban.

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December 2012

‘As the candidate’s supervisor I agree / do not agree to the submission of this dissertation’.

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DECLARATION

I, *Sherri-Lee Gopaldass* declare that:

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Abstract

This qualitative study is an exploration of the sexual subjectivities of a group of Coloured high school girls aged 16-17. These girls emerge from both working and middle class backgrounds in the former Coloured suburb of Sydenham in Durban. The study sought to understand what the Coloured girls in this study regard as risky sexual behaviour, what types of risky sexual behaviours they engage in, as well as how they both accommodate and resist male power, with regard to their sexual attitudes and practices.

Gender-power and poststructuralist theories were used to show how gender and (male) power are implicated in sexual risk. The findings show that these Coloured girls accommodate, challenge and resist persisting gender norms, traditional sex roles and racial stereotypes. Focus group and individual interviewing techniques elicited responses that show the variegated sexual identities and evidence of sexual agency crafted in their attempts to assert themselves as young women who are able to subvert discourses of male sexual privilege and power.

The findings also illuminate how many of the girls in this study demonstrate a certain amount of agency, where they are able to negotiate safe sex practices with their partners. Such resistance and agency has important implications for sexual decision making and girls' empowerment. Findings of this study were used to develop strategies in order to raise greater HIV and AIDS awareness, encourage safer sex practices as well as build more caring, loving and cohesive relationships.

Chapter One

Introduction to the study

1.1 Introduction

This study entitled “**Gender and sexuality in the context of HIV and AIDS: sexual risk and sexual agency amongst Coloured high school girls in Durban**” explores the sexual identities of a group of seven Coloured schoolgirls aged 16-17. This particular study forms part of a larger research project which centres on the intersectionality of youth, gender, race, class and sexuality in the time of HIV and AIDS.

1.2 Background and focus of study

The sub-Saharan Africa region is experiencing a generalised epidemic with HIV transmitted largely through heterosexual intercourse and with high levels of new infections being found among young people, notably young women (UNAIDS, 2008). One in ten South Africans aged 15 to 24 is HIV positive (Department of Health in South Africa, 2003). South African youth have been disproportionately affected by the HIV and AIDS pandemic and South Africa accounts for roughly fifteen percent of all HIV infections globally, in this age group (Magnani, MacIntyre, Karim, Brown & Hutchinson, 2005). Moreover, Hoffman, O’Sullivan, Harrison, Dolezal and Monroe-Wise (2006) argue that women and girls between the ages of 15 and 24 are particularly vulnerable relative to young men, with prevalence peaking approximately five years earlier and at a higher level.

Similarly, an assessment of population-based household surveys across seven countries in sub-Saharan Africa indicated that 15 to 24 year old women are 2.7 times more likely to be living with HIV than their male counterparts (WHO/AFRO, 2002). Schoepf (1993) asserts that the spread of HIV and AIDS is inextricably rooted in poverty and gender inequality. Hallman (2005) also argues that gender is a key aspect of HIV risk. Research by Pettifor, Measham, Rees and Padian (2004) show that gender power inequalities are believed to play a key role in the HIV epidemic, through their effects on women’s power in sexual relationships.

Boyce, *et al.*, (2007) argue that sex has been at the heart of HIV and AIDS from the very beginning and specific unprotected sexual acts allow HIV to pass from infected individuals to their sexual partners. Wood, Maforah and Jewkes (1998) go on to argue that adolescents in South Africa and elsewhere in the world have a propensity to engage in a set of sexual practices characterised as high risk. It is for this reason that there was an urgent need for priority actions and raised awareness about the importance of HIV prevention, particularly amongst young women and girls in Southern Africa (UNAIDS, 2008). Several strides have been made by the South African government through the media, public health campaigns, schools and local community groups, in an attempt to curb the further spread of HIV and AIDS (Department of Health in South Africa, 2003). This was done by targeting young people in an effort to encourage them to practice safe sex, through condom use or avoiding penetration (Marston & King, 2008).

Such campaigns often had disappointing results (Marston & King, 2008). Boyce, *et al.*, (2007) confirm this by arguing that HIV prevention programmes have had limited success in the last twenty years because of inadequate conceptualisation in such work about human sexuality. Although language of rational choice is often used in these campaigns, such injunctions do not take into account the element of power in sexual relationships and the consequent problems of using condoms and abstaining (Holland, Ramazanoglu, Scott, Sharpe & Thomson, 1990). This clearly indicates that there is perhaps a disjuncture between policy and its implementation at grassroots level, as the HIV pandemic continues to grow particularly amongst young women and girls in South Africa. This study centres on seven Coloured high school girls aged 16 and 17. These girls come from Sydenham which is situated in the Durban region. They also come from both working and middle class backgrounds.

Despite several attempts made by the South African government through the media and public health campaigns, many of the messages in the various HIV and AIDS campaigns are difficult for many young women and girls in particular, to put into practice. As a result, they engage in risky sexual practices with their partners, thus placing themselves at greater risk of becoming HIV infected. It is with this understanding that Boyce, *et al.*, (2007) proposes that sexuality should be given a more prominent position in the responses to the HIV epidemic. This will raise a range

of issues, including theorisation of gender, understanding of sexual subjectivity, the significance of pleasure or lack thereof in decision making and conceptualisation of sexual behaviour and culture (Boyce, *et al.* 2007). The UNAIDS (2008) also proposes that in order to respond effectively to the exceptionally high levels of HIV infection amongst young women and girls in Southern Africa and to achieve greater impact on preventing HIV transmissions, an aggressive movement for social transformation is required. Such a movement must address the immediate practices that lead to HIV infection as well as human rights violations, harmful social norms and gender inequalities that underpin HIV risk for many young women and girls (UNAIDS, 2008).

For the purpose of this study it is important to understand the meaning of and difference between safe and unsafe sex. However it must be acknowledged that these are slippery concepts and because of this I attempt to illuminate *my* understanding of these two concepts after having reviewed a wide body of literature on safe and unsafe sexual practices. ‘**Safe sex**’ can be referred to as consistent condom use with one or multiple sexual partners (Harrison, Xaba & Kunene, 2001). It can also be associated with monogamy and remaining faithful to one sexual partner as well as abstaining from sex (Harrison, *et al.*, 2001). ‘**Unsafe sex**’ or sexual risk on the other hand can be referred to as a person participating in sexual acts with multiple partners and/or engaging in inconsistent condom use or rejecting the use of condoms (Selikow, Ahmed, Flisher, Mathews & Mukoma, 2009). Sexual risk behaviours have the potential to increase the spread of sexually transmitted diseases [STDs] and HIV and AIDS amongst people, particularly South African youth. Such behaviours also place young women and girls at risk of experiencing early and/or unwanted pregnancies.

1.3 Aims and objectives

My motivation for conducting this research includes the fact that there is a paucity in the scholarship around Coloureds in general and more specifically, young women. Very little research is available to draw on and I rely on studies by Anderson (2009) and Salo (2006; 2002) whose work focuses on Coloured men and women in KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape respectively. My intention is to explore this relatively untapped area and to present research on the sexual identities of a group of young Coloured women in KwaZulu-Natal.

For many years [since apartheid] Coloured people in South Africa have been plagued by harmful racial stereotypes (Adikhari, 2005; Anderson, 2009; Salo, 2002). This research offers a glimpse into the lives of these young women and will show the multiple ways in which they both accommodate and resist particular racial stereotypes of Coloured people, particularly around sexuality, and in doing so attempt to destabilise some of the negative perceptions of Coloureds that seek to homogenise them. This study was aimed at providing an additional perspective on Coloured girls' sexualities, by demonstrating variegated sexualities within this small sample of Coloured girls and in doing so, challenges the assumptions around Coloureds as a homogeneous group.

The main objective of this study was therefore to understand these girls' constructions of sexuality as opposed to subscribing to essentialist understandings of Coloured girls' sexualities. In this way, this study focuses on exploring the diverse ways in which these high school girls construct their sexual identities. It also presents some of the ways in which gender and power (male) are implicated in girls engaging in risky sexual behaviours, as well as how they challenge, refute and resist gender norms, traditional sex roles and racial stereotypes by exercising sexual agency (Bhana & Pattman, 2009; Casale, *et al.*, 2011; Maxwell & Aggleton, 2010; Mudaly, 2012; O'Sullivan, Harrison, Morrell, Monroe-Wise & Kubeka, 2006; Shefer, *et al.*, 2008).

Moreover, this study was interested in finding out whether these girls engage in risky sex, what they understand by sexual risk as well as why some of them chose to engage in risky sexual practices, despite their awareness of HIV and AIDS, unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, which was also a focus of this study. This study was also conducted in an effort to raise awareness around issues of gender, sexuality and HIV and AIDS. By getting these girls to talk about their sexual behaviours, attitudes and practices that potentially place them and others at risk, this study hoped to encourage some type of self reflection and possible behavioural change.

There is also a dearth in existing literature around Coloured girls' sexualities which clearly shows a neglect of this phenomenon. It was my intention in this study not only

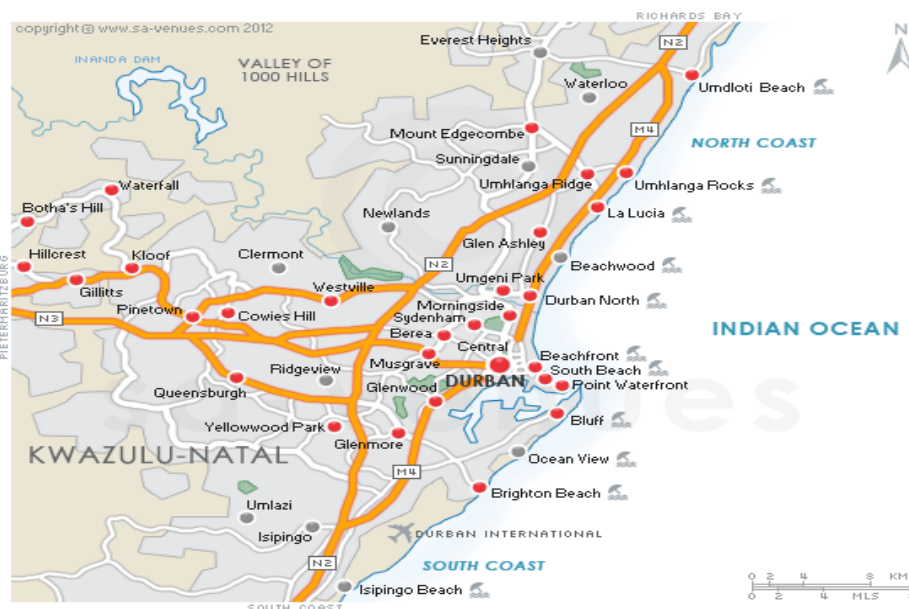
to contribute to a growing body of literature on young women's sexualities but also to contribute to the scholarship in the area of Coloured identity.

1.4 Key research questions

Research information that was produced in this qualitative [small scale] study was used to provide answers to three key research questions guiding the focus of this study. These key research questions are outlined below:

- What do the Coloured high school girls in this study regard as risky sexual behaviour?
- What types of risky sexual behaviours do these high school girls engage in?
- How do these Coloured girls both accommodate and resist male power, with regard to their sexual attitudes and practices?

1.5 Sydenham: the research site



(<http://www.sa-venues.com/searchkzn/sydenham.php>)

This research was carried out in a former Coloured area known as Sydenham which is situated in the greater Durban region (refer to map of Durban above). It was difficult to access information on this particular area and it is for this reason that I draw on my own observations and experiences in an effort to describe this research site. Based on

my personal interactions with various people who live in Sydenham it became clear that this area consists of many working and middle class families. Sydenham can also be described as a 'colourful' and diverse community in that Coloureds, Indians, Africans and Muslims currently reside here. There are primary and high schools, businesses and food outlets situated in Sydenham. Anderson (2009) points out in her study that Sydenham has been associated with a more elite group of Coloureds as compared to Wentworth, a former and still predominantly Coloured area in the South Durban basin. She also highlights that Sydenham residents are predominantly home owners who occupy permanent, stable and professional jobs (Anderson, 2009). My participants live in different parts of Sydenham but attend the same secondary school.

1.6 Coloured identity in South Africa

This section illuminates many of the negative assumptions that have been made about Coloured people in South Africa, over the decades. I also offer some justification for focusing on Coloured girls. I include this section to draw attention to the fact that Coloureds have been negatively perceived and homogenised by many people, for many years. I draw on the work of several scholars to demonstrate this. I also include this section because I feel that it will enhance the reader's understanding of the analysis chapter.

There is very little research to draw upon in terms of Coloured identity in South Africa and it is for this reason that I rely heavily on the work of Adikhari (2009; 2005), Anderson (2009), Dolby (2001), Erasmus (2001) and Salo (2006; 2002). According to Dolby (2001) Coloureds constitute a numerical majority in the Western Cape but their presence in Durban is quite small. Coloureds in South Africa have been exposed to harmful and negative stereotypes for many decades (Adikhari, 2005; Anderson, 2009; Salo, 2002). These negative stereotypes serve to intensify the plight of many Coloured people in South Africa (Anderson, 2009).

1.6.1 Negative stereotypes of Coloureds

Being Coloured in the South African context is strongly associated with being poor and being marginalised (Anderson, 2009). Anderson (2009) argues that racial boundaries still remain embedded in the everyday encounters of Coloured people. She goes on to argue that the racial discourses and Coloured identity signify a sense of

exclusion where Coloureds were and still remain the in-between people (Anderson, 2009). Coloured refers to a people of mixed race (neither White, African nor Indian), a people who have no real sense of belonging and because of this they were often referred to as the 'bastard race' (Anderson, 2009). It is very common to find very fair skinned and very dark skinned members in a single family, some with straight hair others with 'kroes' hair and some with sharp features and others with flat features (Anderson, 2009).

Erasmus (2001) asserts that there exists an underlying assumption which suggests that there is something fundamentally wrong with Coloured identity. Coloureds, even in post apartheid South Africa are labelled as 'God's stepchildren' and the 'in-between children' to name a few (Erasmus, 2001). A three tier distinction is made by Adikhari (2005) regarding Coloured people. Adikhari (2005) categorises Coloureds into three classes. The 'sunken' class suggests that some Coloureds are prone to filth, vice, dissipation and crime, the 'sinking' class are neither openly vicious nor hardened criminals and the 'uprising' class are those who are concerned with their advancement in life (Adikhari, 2005). Anderson (2009) argues that whilst there are some Coloureds who conform to some of these stereotypical notions of them as immoral, unworthy and drunks, there are also those who strive to improve their lives and who are determined to be successful in society.

Salo (2002) argues that racial stereotypes that existed during the apartheid period and that still prevail to some extent today portray Coloured men and women in a negative light. Salo (2002) further asserts that the old nationalistic ideology of race defined white, Afrikaner women as the embodiment of racial and sexual purity, whereas dominant racial meanings of 'Colouredness' equated Coloured women's sexuality with the degraded, immoral, undisciplined sexuality (sexual impurity). Drawing on the notion of Coloured women and girls who are often regarded as immoral, sexually impure and promiscuous as compared to women and girls of other races in South Africa (Salo, 2002), this study challenges an essentialist and homogeneous notion of Coloured women and girls. Studies on Coloureds show how racial meanings of 'Colouredness' equated Coloured women's sexuality with the degraded, immoral, undisciplined sexuality and sexual impurity (Salo, 2006; 2002).

Anderson's study (2009) focuses on a group of Coloured working class boys between the ages of 14 and 17. Her study shows the intersections of race, class, gender and sexuality and highlights some of the ways in which the Coloured boys in her study exhibit hypersexualised, misogynistic and homophobic hegemonic masculinities as well as loving and respectful behaviours towards girls and other boys (Anderson, 2009). She also demonstrates in her study that some Coloured girls are implicated in certain sexual behaviours that are derogating and which serve to undermine women's sexual agency (Anderson, 2009). In this way, many of these sexual behaviours which include promiscuity, gangbanging and girls' complicity in the defamation of their own reputations feed into the negative perceptions of Coloured girls (Anderson, 2009).

Stereotypical notions about Coloured identity are being contested, destabilised and eroded (Anderson, 2009; Dolby, 2001). Dolby (2001) argues that the youth no longer look solely to the past, to the remnants of apartheid in order to develop and define their identities and this clearly indicates that the meanings that youth ascribe to race have shifted. In Dolby's study (2001), many of the Coloured female learners established strong bonds or ties with learners of other races based on common interests or what she refers to as 'popular culture'.

Adikhari (2009) posits that a process of conscientisation has taken place where Coloured people (elites) have become aware that they can be agents of change in their own lives whereby they are now gradually reconstructing their old identities in an effort to move away from a negative representation of Coloured identity. Adikhari (2009) clearly illustrates in his book that Coloured people now have the agency to negotiate and reinterpret their mixed feelings and fragile identities in empowering ways. In this way, new conceptions about Colouredness have emerged and many people now recognise and acknowledge that Coloureds are not homogeneous as they were previously represented (Adikhari, 2009). This is indicative of the fact that society's perceptions of Coloured people are perhaps undergoing gradual changes, and because of this, Coloureds are now being perceived in more positive ways.

1.6.2 My justification for focusing on Coloured girls

I focused on Coloured girls because I felt that I had limited knowledge on Coloured identity. My own tainted perception of Coloured girls is challenged in this study, as I

was exposed to many negative stereotypes on Coloured women's sexuality from a young age (and this will be discussed in the methodology chapter). This study therefore presented me with an opportunity to in some ways, reflect on my own perceptions and views about Coloured people, particularly girls, by gaining a glimpse into their lives and a somewhat 'insider' perspective. Furthermore, this study not only provided me with the opportunity to gain insights into the different ways in which seven Coloured girls construct their sexual identities, but also allowed these girls to tell their stories about issues that they are currently facing as young women in South Africa. I believe that this study created a safe space, whereby I was able to understand, explore and demonstrate that Coloured girls are heterogeneous, thus challenging and deconstructing many negative stereotypes of Coloured girls, particularly those in my own study.

1.7 Brief outline of chapters

This **introductory chapter** (chapter one) clearly outlined the background and focus as well as aims and objectives of this research. This chapter also listed the three key research questions framing this study and provided a description of the research site. Finally, this chapter presented an in-depth discussion on '**Coloured identity in South Africa**' as well as some of my reasons for focusing on Coloured girls.

Chapter two presents a thematic review of related literature. I have reviewed various local, national and international studies on gender, sexuality, sexual risk, sexual violence and HIV and AIDS. These studies have been gleaned, synthesised and organised to form several broad themes. This chapter also includes a section which discusses the theoretical framework(s) used to analyse and interpret the findings of this study.

Chapter three is the 'methodology' chapter which provides an in-depth discussion and description of the research design that was appropriate for this study. The choice of a qualitative research approach, an interpretivist paradigm and a case study methodology for this study will be discussed. The sampling method, interviewing techniques, limitations of this research, issues of validity and reliability as well as ethical considerations and the data analysis process will also be presented in this chapter.

Chapter four presents an analysis and in-depth discussion of the findings of this research. This chapter also integrates documented literature on gender, sexuality and HIV and AIDS into the analysis and discussion of data.

Chapter five, which is the concluding chapter, summarises the main ideas and findings in each of the chapters outlined above. This chapter also provides a consolidation of the main findings of this research as well as suggests possible recommendations, based on the findings of this study. Conditions which permit more favourable sexual behaviours to flourish will be important for suggestions and recommendations.

Chapter Two

Review of related literature

2.1 Introduction

“Sexuality seems to be associated with pain, suffering, mourning and death (in the context of HIV and AIDS and sexual violence) in Africa, in contrast with the West where the material conditions seem to support sexuality as an aspect to be associated with pleasure, desire, sensuality and indeed freedom” (Reddy, 2004:5). Harrison, *et al.*, (2001) point out that South Africa’s HIV and AIDS pandemic is severe with the largest number of HIV infected people (particularly young women and girls) of any country in the world. In this chapter I present a thematic review of literature on the specific topic for this study. This chapter also provides a discussion on the theoretical perspectives used as lenses through which I analysed and interpreted the data produced in this study. International, national and local studies based on the constructions of young women’s sexualities, which include issues around sexual risk, particularly HIV and AIDS, have been reviewed and synthesised to form several broad themes related to this topic. The themes that this literature review focuses on are:

- * Gender, Sexuality and HIV and AIDS

- * Sexual vulnerabilities of young women and girls

- * Sexual risk amongst young women and girls

- * Gender, Sexual Violence and HIV risk infection amongst young women and girls

While there is a burgeoning interest in the field of young sexualities both locally (in South Africa) and elsewhere, there remains a glaring paucity in literature on studies around the sexual identities of Coloured women and girls. Many studies on sexuality focus on young African girls (Bell, 2012; Bhana & Epstein, 2007; Bhana & Pattman, 2009; Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Hoffman, *et al.*, 2006; Morrell, 1998; Mudaly, 2012; O’Sullivan, *et al.*, 2006; Pattman & Bhana, 2006; Reddy & Dunne, 2007). However, there is very little research to draw upon in terms of Coloured girls’ sexualities,

particularly in an era when HIV and AIDS are rife. It is primarily for this reason that scholarly works focusing on the sexual identities and sexual risk behaviours of young women and girls of other races (White, African and Indian) are also drawn on in this chapter.

The few studies that are available highlight the risky sexual behaviours of some Coloured girls in KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape. Anderson (2009) documents how some Coloured girls in Wentworth, Durban are responsible for upholding, supporting and promoting callous, crude and rampantly hypersexual masculine behaviour of boys. Her study also sheds light on some of the ways in which Coloured, working class girls are implicated in initiating and agreeing to 'gangbanging' by boys who objectify girls and view them as merely there to satisfy their sexual needs (Anderson, 2009). Some girls also strike up relationships or exchange sex with taxi drivers or condyes (boys and men who collect fares) for free taxi rides (Anderson, 2009). According to Anderson (2009), this is a regular occurrence in Wentworth.

Another study conducted by Salo (2006) in Langa and Manenberg, Cape Town shows how some young Coloured women hang out in shebeens, which are places associated with transactional sex, and young women who are there are automatically considered to be willing to enter into sexual relationships in return for favours. Many young Coloured men consider these young women to be "loose girls" or "Ou (stale bread) rolls" and many of them reported using condoms when they had sex with "loose girls" as opposed to "good girls" (Salo, 2006). Many of these young men also argued that they would sleep with these "loose girls" for practice or if lust arose (Salo, 2006).

2.2 Gender, Sexuality and HIV and AIDS

Sexuality does not only mean sexual practices, but also what people know and believe about sex, particularly what they think is natural, proper and desirable (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001). It also includes people's sexual identities in all the cultural and historical variety, and it is socially constructed (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001).

Drawing on these notions of sexuality, Fine (1988) refers to the 'missing discourse of female desire' in her article, which centres on adolescents' accounts of sexual activity. She illuminates the multiple ways in which socio-cultural forces operate to undermine, erase and de-legitimise young women's experiences and articulations of

sexual agency (Fine, 1988). For many women and girls, admitting to a sexual history, therefore a sexuality, often results in them being constructed as ‘not serious’ and as a threat to male identity, whereby they are viewed as attempting to take power in the relationship so as to boss men around (Shefer & Foster, 2001).

Several scholars argue that among young people in South Africa, socio-cultural beliefs about appropriate sexual conduct have encouraged young women to be sexually available to partners and to allow male partners to have sexual decision making authority (Bhana & Pattman, 2009; Harrison, O’Sullivan, Hoffman, Dolezal & Morrell, 2006; Shefer & Foster, 2001; Shefer & Ruiters, 1998; Wood, *et al.*, 1998). Harrison, *et al.*, (2006), Shefer and Foster (2001), Shefer and Ruiters (1998) and Wood, *et al.*, (1998) go on to argue that for many young women, traditional gender norms dictate that they have less power in relationships with men especially with regard to decision making around condom use and sexual initiation. It can therefore be argued that gender inequalities play an important role in HIV epidemics, notably in southern and eastern parts of Africa because they reduce young women’s abilities to determine the circumstances and outcomes of sexual encounters and relationships (Gupta, Ogden & Warner, 2011).

In contrast, research also indicates that females are not always passive participants in seemingly unequal sexual relationships but in fact exercise agency (Bell, 2012; Bhana & Pattman, 2009; Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Casale, *et al.*, 2011; Maxwell & Aggleton, 2010; Mudaly, 2012). According to Petesch, Smulovitz and Walton (2005), agency refers to a process whereby individuals are able to envisage different paths of action, decide among them and take action along a chosen route. Some studies show that many young women and girls exercise sexual agency whereby they often use sexual relationships to improve their own financial situations by engaging in transactional sex with older men or ‘sugar daddies’ (Bell, 2012; Lerclerc-Madlala, 2002). Other studies conducted in KwaZulu-Natal and Cape Town among young women and men reveal notable shifts in traditional gender norms and sexual scripts, particularly from young women and girls (O’Sullivan, *et al.*, 2006; Shefer, *et al.*, 2008). Despite this however, O’Sullivan, *et al.*, (2006) argue that gender roles and traditional social norms remain dominant for most people and there is now a need for alternative scripts that encapsulate more egalitarian norms.

According to Ackermann and de Klerk (2002), HIV currently poses one of the biggest health threats to South African women and girls. This resonates with the work of Lerclerc-Madlala (2002) which reinforces the message that HIV and AIDS is far more than a public health challenge as it decreases life expectancies, increases women's burdens and generates orphans. A large scale survey carried out in South Africa in 2004 revealed that KwaZulu-Natal had the highest HIV prevalence rate followed by the Eastern Cape province (Reproductive Health Research Unit, 2004; Sathiparsad & Taylor, 2006). According to the RHRU (2004) report, gender inequalities are a major driving force behind the spread of HIV, in that physical violence and fear of abandonment often prevent young women and girls from negotiating condom use. Schoub (1999) explains that biologically, women and girls have a greater susceptibility to HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

With regard to South African youth, MacPhail and Campbell (2001) argue that levels of heterosexually transmitted HIV infection are high amongst adolescents. Results of a national survey indicated that 10.2% of the 15-24 year age group were infected with HIV and there was considerable gender disparity in rates (O'Sullivan, *et al.*, 2006). Selikow, *et al.*, (2009) argue that adolescence is a high risk period for HIV exposure as it is a time when experimentation with sexual activity occurs which includes high risk behaviours such as multiple sexual partners and a lack of condom use.

Maharaj (1995) documents that race, class and gender are intertwined - structural features through which power relations are generated to shape the subordinate status of women. In an effort to explain this, Casale, *et al.*, (2011) maintain that poverty and gender inequalities are key factors that place young women and girls at risk of HIV infection. Bhana and Epstein (2007) demonstrate in their study that young children's discursive frameworks for understanding HIV and AIDS, gender and sexuality are marked by class, race and gender. This study also illuminates that while children [participants] were aware of the HIV epidemic and connected it to sex and sexuality, affluent children who were all White adopted a distancing strategy, whereby they regarded HIV and AIDS as a 'disease of the other', usually an African person (Bhana & Epstein, 2007).

Most HIV education campaigns focus on methods for preventing infection among adolescents, which include using condoms, abstaining from sex and remaining faithful to one partner (Ackermann & de Klerk, 2002). However the problem with these campaigns is that they fail to take into account the reality of women and girls' lives and the special risk factors that render them vulnerable (Ackermann & de Klerk, 2002). Hallman (2005) asserts that even in a country such as South Africa where knowledge among young people on how to protect oneself from infection is rather high, such information may not always be usable in daily situations of economic and social disadvantage that characterise many of their lives, especially females. This is clearly illustrated in a study conducted by Sathiparsad and Taylor (2006) in KwaZulu-Natal which found that many male learners attributed the spread of HIV and AIDS to young women's careless behaviours such as the inability to control themselves, being beautiful and attractive and deliberately spreading the virus.

On the other hand, Aggleton, Yankah and Crewe (2011) posit that education has long been identified as having a key role to play in reducing HIV related risk and vulnerability and mitigating the impact of the epidemic on affected individuals. These authors demonstrate some of the ways in which HIV related education has in fact achieved successful and positive outcomes (Aggleton, *et al.*, 2011). Selikow, *et al.*, (2009) propose that by understanding adolescents' beliefs as contradictory, educators can identify spaces within these contradictions where positive interaction work can take place. The next section of this literature review highlights some of the ways in which many young women and girls become sexually vulnerable and how this could have negative implications for their health.

2.3 Sexual vulnerabilities of young women and girls

The younger a girl is when she begins to have sex, the more vulnerable she is to its risks (pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV) and she is less likely than an older girl or women to plan her intercourse or to use contraception (Whitehead, 1994). Drawing on this argument, Pithey and Morojele (2002) argue that the imbalance of power between male and female partners in heterosexual relationships reduces the ability of young women to either refuse sex or negotiate the use of condoms. Holland, *et al.*, (1990) conducted a study known as the Women, Risk and AIDS project. This particular study clearly highlighted that the sexual practices, beliefs and

understandings of young women in Manchester and London often had a negative impact on their sexual encounters and relationships with men and because of this, these young women were more prone to HIV infections (Holland, *et al.*, 1990). Many young women in this study believed that sex was primarily based on the need to satisfy their male partners and their reluctance to express their own desires and needs was explained in terms of superior male knowledge about sex or their own embarrassment (Holland, *et al.*, 1990). Some of these young women also rejected condom use in favour of the pill in an attempt to avoid unwanted pregnancy, rather than preventing HIV transmissions (Holland, *et al.*, 1990).

Similarly, Hoffman, *et al.*, (2006) argue that whereas some young women may express a desire for their partners to use condoms, they view this behaviour as lying in men's control and not as one that they could request or negotiate. These researchers reveal in their study that sex was more frequently initiated by the male partner who was also more likely to control the pace (Hoffman, *et al.*, 2006). This resonates with the findings of a study conducted by O'Sullivan, *et al.*, (2006) which highlighted that men initiated most of the sexual interactions that occurred in their relationships. This is also consistent with the findings of another South African study, conducted by Pettifor, *et al.*, (2004) which clearly shows that young women and girls with low relationship control are significantly more likely to report inconsistent condom use.

Reddy and Dunne (2007) conducted research in South Africa, which consisted of a mix of African and Indian boys and girls, aged between 15 and 19. Their research found that the desire to love and be loved was one of the principle reasons why young women began sexual relations and unsafe sexual practices (Reddy & Dunne, 2007). These scholars argue that female teenagers link sexual activity and love, and love is a legitimate reason for sex (Reddy & Dunne, 2007). For many of the young girls in their study, "unprotected sex" was seen as "safe sex" and "protected sex" was seen as "unsafe sex" in that it put the possibilities for love into jeopardy (Reddy & Dunne, 2007). In addition, many of these girls believed that they were unable to assert their own needs in sexual encounters with men and boys, and the satisfaction for the female was that they succeeded in pleasing the male (Reddy & Dunne, 2007).

Morojele, Brook and Kachleng'a (2006) also point out that the main reasons for females in their study (mixed sample consisting of White, African and Coloured) engaging in sexual risk behaviours were due to their desire to please their sex partner and their inability to say no to males' sexual advances for fear of being rejected. There are also some girls who feel that once they trust their male partner, the issue of condom use is no longer a concern, as this signifies seriousness in the relationship (Holland, *et al.*, 1990). Trust therefore, while carrying symbolic meaning, may offer little protection from HIV (Holland, *et al.*, 1990).

Drawing on this notion of love, trust and romance, Wood, *et al.*, (1998) explain that to the young women in their study, agreement to love was equated specifically with having penetrative intercourse and being available sexually. This equation appeared to derive mostly from the men, who had reported to have told the women that sex was the purpose of being in love and they must have sex as often as possible (Wood, *et al.*, 1998). According to Preston-Whyte (1999), many young men and boys often described the use of a condom during sexual intercourse as 'eating sweets with the wrapper on and bathing in a raincoat'. As a result of this, many of them often refuse to use a condom based on the belief that they trap semen and lessen sensitivity and thus it takes longer to ejaculate, reducing the number of rounds (Bond & Dovers, 1997). This then places many young women and girls at risk of contracting HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases.

Based on many of these findings, Marston and King (2008) posit that social pressures also mean that young women and girls may not wish to mention sex or acknowledge sexual desires because they are often regarded as being "loose" or promiscuous. MacPhail and Campbell (2001) also argue that social norms encroach on the extent to which young women are prepared to carry condoms with them. Their study revealed that gossip was a source of conflict in a township and young women carrying condoms risked being labelled a bitch or promiscuous (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001). Many young women also fear damaging their reputations and being associated with promiscuity and prostitution if they attempt to purchase condoms (Bell, 2012).

In poor communities, concern about survival and economic security usually overrides concern about contracting HIV and AIDS (Muturi, 1998). Sathiparsad and Taylor

(2006) argue that economic deprivation and discrimination on the basis of race, class and gender are interwoven with risk of HIV and AIDS. They go on to argue that although women and girls are aware that condoms can prevent transmission, they are unable to insist on the use of condoms because of their economic dependence on men (Sathiparsad & Taylor, 2006). Pettifor, MacPhail, Anderson and Maman (2012) confirm this by highlighting that a few young African women (in their study) from Johannesburg reported that being financially dependent on their partner did affect their ability to use condoms and refuse unwanted sex. This also resonates with the work of Hallman (2005) which documents that the economic need and parental pressure to earn money may make poor adolescent girls vulnerable to exploitative and coercive sexual relationships and this places them at risk of contracting HIV and AIDS. Wood, *et al.*, (1998) further assert that economic dependence by young women upon men makes sex a source, often the only source of income.

Tillotson and Maharaj (2001) emphasise in their study that in sub-Saharan Africa there is a common belief that having sex with a virgin can cleanse one of HIV. Sathiparsad and Taylor (2006) confirm this by arguing that men often seek out young partners who are believed to be virgins to free themselves of HIV. Many young women's bodies are also associated with notions of danger, disease and the ability to weaken men and bring all sorts of danger to society, thus indicating that young women and girls are often blamed for spreading HIV and AIDS (Sathiparsad & Taylor, 2006).

With regard to myths or misconceptions, a study conducted by Bell (2012) in Uganda revealed that many adolescent girls were misinformed about condoms in that many of them believed that condoms are for adults only and women who used them would be unable to conceive later. This study also found that many girls used local herbs to prevent pregnancy by wrapping them in a small cloth which they tied around their waist during sex (Bell, 2012).

Contrary to many of these findings, O'Sullivan, *et al.*, (2006) clearly point out that some young women in a rural district in northern KZN initiated sex and expressed their sexual desires or interests, thus resisting the traditional sexual script which dictates that men are dominant sexual beings. Young women are therefore agents and

not merely passive victims of accepted gender role norms (Bell, 2012; Bhana & Pattman, 2009; Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Casale, *et al.*, 2011; Maxwell & Aggleton, 2010; Mudaly, 2012; O'Sullivan, *et al.*, 2006). The section that follows illuminates some of the ways in which young women and girls engage in risky sexual behaviours, thus placing themselves [and others] at greater risk of becoming pregnant or contracting HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases.

2.4 Sexual risk amongst young women and girls

Sexual intercourse can generally be associated with high risk sexual behaviours such as multiple sexual partners and not using contraception (Selikow, *et al.*, 2009). In contrast to several findings outlined in the previous section, a Mozambican study conducted by Groes-Green (2009) revealed stories about girls who deliberately ignored and rejected condom use in order to get pregnant by a boy or because they wanted to infect the boy with HIV. Getting pregnant for economic reasons or in order to secure a relationship is a reproductive strategy that has been noticed across sub-Saharan Africa (Groes-Green, 2009). Morojele, *et al.*, (2006) confirm this in their study by highlighting that some girls were believed to deliberately refrain from condom use to fulfil a desire to conceive.

A large scale survey conducted in KwaZulu-Natal among 4000 young women and men aged 14-24 found that residing in a low wealth household was associated with females having multiple sexual partners and lower chances of condom use (Hallman, 2005). This particular study highlights the linkages between low socio-economic status, risky sexual behaviours and youth HIV risk (Hallman, 2005). Many young women and girls in South Africa also exchange sex for money and gifts with their sugar-daddies and condom use is often non-negotiable (Campbell, 2003). This is consistent with research conducted by Leclerc-Madlala (2002) which reveals that many young girls in her study openly acknowledged and bragged about the material advantages that they seek and acquire as gifts for sex. Moreover, Pithey and Morojele (2002) argue that young women and girls enter into relationships with older men called 'sugar daddies' who pay their school fees, buy them gifts and offer them inducements. 'Gift giving' often sets the parameters of sexual experiences for adolescent females with serious implications for pregnancy and the transmission of HIV and sexually transmitted diseases (Kaufman & Stavrou, 2002). Many young

urban women also perceive themselves to be active decision makers in their identity as modern empowered women which is largely predicated upon a strategy of extracting financial and material resources through sex (Lerclerc-Madlala, 2008). In this way one could argue that some young women are sexually agentic, whereby they use sex as a means to improve their own financial or economic situations (Bell, 2012).

Other research conducted in Cape Town found that some girls put pressure on female peers and on boys to be sexually active, noting that it is fashionable to be sexually active and in circles of friends where girls are sexually active, the pressure to engage in sex is intense (Selikow, *et al.*, 2009). Some girls in this study reported that having multiple sexual partners is becoming a popular norm for girls (Selikow, *et al.*, 2009). High risk sexualities are often exacerbated by negotiated norms embodied in peer pressure which serve to undermine the ABCD messages (Selikow, *et al.*, 2009).

According to Smith, *et al.*, (2008), sexual behaviours and substance abuse represent major threats to the health and wellbeing of South African adolescents, especially in light of the high prevalence of HIV infection in this population. A large scale study based on the influence of substance abuse on sexual risk behaviours was conducted in Mitchell's Plain, a low income predominantly Coloured township situated in Cape Town (Palen, *et al.*, 2006). The sample for this study consisted mainly of grade eight Coloured boys and girls. This study found that 12% of the sample (total of 2201 participants) already reported having sexual intercourse in their lifetime and 39% reported using alcohol and marijuana (Palen, *et al.*, 2006). Among those who used these substances, 23% reported that these substances influenced their decision to have sex as well as made them feel more comfortable with their partners (Palen, *et al.*, 2006).

In contrast however, research indicates that there are also some young women and girls who are actively involved in sexual decision making and who choose to engage in safe sex practices with their partners. Bhana and Pattman (2011) reveal in their study that none of the 16 turning 17 female participants who attended an all African township school were sexually active. Some girls resisted sexual advances and others claimed that they were not ready (Bhana & Pattman, 2011). Pithey and Morojele (2002) document in their study that condom use was highest among young African

women, followed by young Coloured women, young White women and the lowest among young Asian women. These researchers also found that 90% of the young women in their study reported staying faithful to one partner, using condoms, using clean needles for injections and avoiding sharing razor blades as valid means of protection against HIV (Pithey & Morojele, 2002). This finding resonates with the work of Harrison, *et al.*, (2001) which shows that girls in their study aged 13-15 believed that abstaining from sex was a positive strategy often associated with a moral point of view and the belief that sex was not good for people their age. Another study conducted in KZN revealed that a high proportion of sexually active boys and girls reported lifelong condom use and girls expressed greater self efficacy regarding the refusal of sex (Harrison, *et al.*, 2012). The next section of this chapter discusses and explores issues around gender and sexual violence which further places young women and girls at risk of contracting HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases.

2.5 Gender, Sexual Violence and HIV risk infection amongst young women and girls

Dunkle, *et al.*, (2004a) argue that researchers and policy makers have increasingly cited gender-based violence and gender inequality as essential determinants of women's HIV risk both worldwide and within sub-Saharan Africa. According to Bhana and Pattman (2011), AIDS continues to press inexorably along the fault lines of inequality, with young women most vulnerable. Gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence, is widely recognised as an important public health problem because of the acute morbidity and mortality associated with assault and because of its long term impact on women's health, including sexually transmitted diseases and HIV and AIDS (Dunkle, *et al.*, 2004b).

Gender violence has also been widely recognised as being a big problem in South Africa (Ackermann & de Klerk, 2002). Violent practices among young women and girls in South Africa have been described as endemic, in the sense that they are widespread, common and deeply entrenched (Vogelman & Eagle, 1991). The rates of gender-based violence in South Africa are considered to be of the highest in the world and appear to be increasing every year (Ackermann & de Klerk, 2002). Penn-Kekana (1997) argues that violence in intimate relationships occurs often, so often that it has

come to be perceived as normative and to a large extent accepted rather than challenged.

Sexual violence can be defined as any assaults or intrusions that have an explicit sexual content (Morrell, 2002). Thousands of girls from all levels of society and among all ethnic groups are affected by sexual violence and many girls in South Africa encounter sexual violence as an inevitable part of their school environment (Human Rights Watch, 2001). According to Human Rights Watch (2001), sexual violence occurs in different forms which include rape, gang rape, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual assault and verbal degradation. Sexual violence is directly and indirectly relevant to the HIV epidemic and it is an important factor for increasing the risk of HIV infection among young women in Southern Africa (Andersson, *et al.*, 2012).

Wood, *et al.*, (1998) assert that in reality it is often women and girls who are frequently coerced, forced or beaten into sex by male partners who control sexual encounters and refuse to use condoms. A study conducted in Cape Town amongst twenty-four African adolescent women revealed that violence against these young women was not limited to the first sexual act or to the first relationship, but was also reported to be a feature of all subsequent sexual relationships (Wood, *et al.*, 1998). The findings further revealed that these young women believed that sex was bad and it was seen as an activity that you are forced to do by someone who is stronger than you (Wood, *et al.*, 1998). Three young women in this study also reported cases of gang rape and attempted rape and one of them was silenced by her mother, in an attempt to avoid bringing shame (Wood, *et al.*, 1998). This resonates with the findings of a study conducted by Marston and King (2008) which found that some girls were also told by friends to keep silent about coercion by their boyfriends.

Another study conducted among adolescents in Khayelitsha in the Western Cape Province found that in most cases men used violent strategies at the beginning of relationships by forcing girls to have sex with them (Wood, Jewkes & Maforah, 1997). Coerced sex also increases the vulnerability of young women in particular, as it is less likely to be protected and often more physically traumatic than consensual sex (Sathiparsad & Taylor, 2006). Furthermore, Stock, Bell, Boyer and Connell

(1997) reveal in their study that young women who reported sexual abuse were three times as likely as those who had not experienced abuse to become pregnant before 18 years of age.

Morrell, Moletsane, Abdool Karim, Epstein and Unterhalter (2002) draw attention to the extent to which patriarchal power impacts on rates of HIV transmission, particularly amongst girls, via coerced sexual intercourse. Many women and girls have little bargaining power to negotiate safe sex with their partners and few have control over the sexual behaviours of their partners (Ackermann & de Klerk, 2002). An earlier study conducted by Holland, *et al.*, (1990) found that the amount of pressure from men which many young women in the United Kingdom experienced was an inevitable part of their sexual relationships. Findings of this study go on to show that many of these young women participants, aged between 16 and 21 were frequently coerced by men, whose main objective was penetrative sex (Holland, *et al.*, 1990). These young women also reported cases of sexual coercion by men, which ranged from mild cases of persuasion to give way sexually or to accept unprotected sex to more extreme cases of assault and rape (Holland, *et al.*, 1990).

A study in Rwanda which centred on women in stable relationships with men demonstrated that HIV positive women were more likely to report a history of physical violence and sexual coercion by their male partners than were women without HIV (Dunkle, *et al.*, 2004a). Dunkle, *et al.*, (2004a) conclude in their study that women and girls with violent or controlling male partners were at increased risk of HIV infection. This is consistent with the work of Botha, Durden and Dalrymple (2004) which argues that aggressive assertion of masculine dominance is expressed through violence against young women and this often manifests itself as rape and is a key factor in exacerbating the spread of HIV and AIDS. In contrast however, Bhana and Pattman (2011) reveal that whilst girls in their study recognised their gendered vulnerabilities in relation to male power and violence, there was evidence of resistance to boys who hit them, whereby one girl even dumped a boy who hit her. The next section describes and discusses the theoretical perspectives used as lenses to analyse and interpret the data produced in this study.

2.6 Theoretical framework

This section of the chapter highlights and discusses the theoretical perspectives used as lenses through which I analysed and interpreted the data produced in this study. Connell's gender-power theory (Connell, 1987) as well as Foucault's poststructuralist theory (Foucault, 1978) are presented in this section. These perspectives provide a nuanced interpretation of the variegated ways in which the seven Coloured girls in my study construct their sexual identities. A discussion on each of these theoretical perspectives follows.

2.6.1 Connell's theory of gender and power

Structure is more than another term for pattern and it reflects the experience of being up against something, of limits on freedom (Connell, 1987). Social structure therefore expresses constraints that lie in a given form of social organisation and these constraints on social practice operate through a complex interplay of powers (Connell, 1987). Connell (1987) asserts that gender identity corresponds to the social expectations for the male and female sex. Social prescriptions are often called 'norms' and the process of social learning is often referred to as 'sex role socialisation' (Connell, 1987). According to Connell (2002) being a man or woman is a condition that is actively under construction and because of this inequalities between men and women are produced in society. This scholar argues that female sex roles (gender norms) are often associated with the suppression of women's sexuality and satisfaction of men's sexual desires (Connell, 1987). The power of heterosexual men in a patriarchal system makes it possible to treat women as objects in a way that not only depersonalises desire but practically dismembers their bodies (Connell, 2002). In this way men generally benefit from the inequalities in the gender order and the place of authority, and the privileged subjectivity is always that of the masculine (Connell, 2002).

Based on Connell's theory of gender and power, the data that was produced in this study was analysed from a *gendered* perspective in an attempt to understand how gender is implicated in girls engaging in risky sexual behaviours. Moreover, this particular theory was used in order to explore and understand how gender norms (social prescriptions) and traditional sex roles (dominant masculine behaviours) often

force many young women and girls into subordinate and sexually vulnerable positions, thus inhibiting their abilities to exercise sexual agency.

2.6.2 Foucauldian theory on the subversion and resistance of power

To demonstrate the resistance of some participants in this study, I draw on the work of Michel Foucault (1978) and his theory on the subversion and resistance of power which can also be referred to as ‘poststructuralist theory’. His theory proposes that ‘where there is power, there is resistance’ whereby dominant social structures can be deconstructed and rebelled against by individuals in modern Western societies (Foucault, 1978). The concept of power is theoretically hot and is suffused with the revolutionary energies of countless diatribes against inequality, oppression and domination (Gergen, 1995). Gergen (1995) draws on the work of Foucault in an attempt to illustrate that power is one among many symbolic implements for analysing and criticising existing states of affairs and it, like any other concept, is subject to various forms of deconstruction. He goes on to highlight that no society is bound by a singular discursive regime and there is a possibility of multiple, fragmentary and partial regimes of power relations as heterogeneous and ever changing (Gergen, 1995). Resistance can therefore be used as a chemical catalyst so as to bring to light power relations, locate their position and find out their points of application and methods used (Foucault, 1982).

Foucault’s poststructuralist theory was therefore used to explore, understand and demonstrate how the high school girls in my study attempt to challenge, resist and destabilise gender norms and traditional sex roles in their everyday lives. This theory was also used as a means to challenge the stereotypes and assumptions around African femininities as passive victims of accepted gender role norms (see Bell, 2012; Bhana & Pattman, 2009; Mudaly, 2012). In a similar way, many of the Coloured girls in this study deconstruct gender norms, traditional sex roles and racial stereotypes, by being sexual agents. I also explored this theoretical perspective in a greater effort to understand that the concept of power is fluid and dynamic, it is not fixed and this often creates spaces whereby individuals can challenge, resist and refute dominant social structures that currently exist in society (Foucault, 1978).

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented an in depth and critical discussion of documented literature on the specific topic for this study. This was done by highlighting various international, national and local studies (in South Africa) that have already been conducted on the constructions of young women's sexualities, which include issues around sexual risk, particularly HIV and AIDS. Furthermore, this chapter provided a discussion on the theoretical perspectives used as lenses through which I analysed and interpreted the data produced in this study. The chapter that follows seeks to describe and discuss the research design and methodology that was employed in this study, in order to produce relevant research information, which was used to provide answers to the three key research questions, guiding the focus of this study.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth discussion and description of the research design and methodology that was employed in this study. In order to do this, I firstly discuss the research methodology appropriate for this research project. Thereafter, I briefly describe the research site (context) as well as the school that the participants currently attend. This chapter then moves on to describe and discuss the method of sampling that was used to gather a sample that was suitable for the nature and purpose of this study. This chapter then highlights and discusses the methods of data production that were used in this study to produce relevant research information as well as possible limitations of this research and several ways in which I attempted to overcome these limitations. Finally, this chapter provides a discussion on issues of validity and reliability, ethical considerations and the data analysis process which had to be addressed due to the nature and complexity of qualitative research. Documented literature on research approaches and methodologies are also drawn on in this chapter.

3.2 A qualitative approach

According to Creswell (2008) qualitative research does not compare groups or variables but rather the researcher attains a deep understanding of the views of an individual or group of individuals. Willis (2007) maintains that interpretivists favour qualitative methods such as interviews and observation because these methods allow them to understand how people interpret the world around them. Mason (2005) in Anderson (2009) also argues that qualitative research allows researchers to explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world which include the understanding, experiences and imaginings of their research participants. It is for these reasons that a qualitative research approach was employed in this study, as this approach provided me with the opportunity to gain insight into the sexual lives of the seven Coloured girls in my study. Moreover, this research approach was used to produce rich textual descriptions of the experiences and perceptions of these high school girls as well as some of the ways in which they construct meaning in the world in which they interact and live.

I did not engage with a quantitative research approach based on the idea that the production of numerical or statistical data would not provide answers to the three key research questions guiding the focus of this study. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) confirm this by arguing that quantitative research often produces statistical and numerical data and it is for this reason primarily that I chose to engage with a qualitative research approach instead. This research approach was also used, as this study is a small scale study with a sample size of seven.

3.3 Interpretivism

This study is located within the interpretivist paradigm as it focuses specifically on individual perspectives, personal constructs and negotiated meanings and definitions of situations of selected participants (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004) assert that most interpretivist knowledge is gained through social constructions such as language, shared meaning, documents and other artefacts. A case study methodology was also adopted for this study. According to Rule and John (2011) a case study is a systematic and in-depth investigation of a particular instance in its context, in order to generate knowledge. Similarly, this in-depth study was conducted in an effort to explore and learn more about the selected participants operating within a mixed class context (working and middle class), in order to generate knowledge on Coloured girls' sexualities, in an era of concern around the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

3.4 The research site

As discussed in the introductory chapter, I chose to conduct my research in a former Coloured area known as Sydenham, which is situated in the greater Durban region. Violence, gangsterism, crime, excessive drug and alcohol use as well as high rates of teenage pregnancy are some of the issues that plague this community.

3.5 The school

The Coloured girls selected for this study all attend the same school which is situated in the Sydenham area. Breach High (pseudonym) is a co-educational, public high school. Grades range from 8 to 12. There are approximately 1200 learners in this school. The learner population consists of African, Coloured, Indian and Muslim learners. Some learners come from middle class families and they occupy homes in

Sydenham. Other learners live in informal settlements and/or come from working class backgrounds. As a result of this, many of them are economically disadvantaged. High rates of learner pregnancy and substance [alcohol and drug] abuse are some of the issues that plague this school and its community.

3.6 Sampling

With regard to methods of sampling, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) maintain that researchers use purposive sampling to build up a sample satisfactory to their specific needs. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), purposive sampling can also be described as a selection of those individuals who will yield the most relevant information about the topic under study. It is for this reason that the participants in this study were purposively selected, as I searched specifically for Coloured girls who were between 16 and 17 years of age. After a few weeks, I successfully identified five 17 year old and two 16 year old Coloured girls who emerged from both working and middle class backgrounds. This sample was selected from a co-educational, public high school in Sydenham. I was able to do this with the assistance of a small group of teachers in the Sydenham area. These teachers contacted some of the girls on my behalf and I was then able to arrange and schedule interviews with each of my participants.

I chose to investigate and explore the experiences of adolescent girls rather than boys because I felt that talking to girls in this age group about issues around sexuality would perhaps be easier seeing as I am a young female novice researcher. I also offered some justification for focusing on Coloured girls in chapter one.

3.7 Data collection: Interviews

An interview is a 'two way' conversation in which the interviewer asks the participant[s] questions to collect data and to learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of the participant[s] (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). In an attempt to gather relevant research information, focus group and individual interviewing techniques were employed in this study. I conducted a 90 minute long, semi-structured focus group interview (7 participants) as well as an hour long semi-structured individual interview with only one of the seven participants. The interview schedules that were designed for each of these interviews included open and close

ended questions, which allowed the participants to elaborate on their responses. Each of these interview schedules were made up of about twenty interview questions (see appendix 3 and 4). All the interviews were conducted in a vacant classroom at a primary school in the Sydenham area. This was done because it was convenient for all the girls to meet at this particular venue. Most of the girls also opted to participate in these interviews after school or on a Saturday rather than during school hours. Many of the parents of these participants were in favour of this research and they expressed the importance of this research for the youth as well as their gratitude for providing their daughters with the opportunity to participate in such a study. All the interviews that were conducted were tape recorded using a dictaphone in order to increase the validity of this study. I will now discuss and describe each of the interviews in greater detail.

With regard to focus group interviewing, Cohen, *et al.*, (2007) argue that the use of focus groups is growing in educational research. Robinson (1999) defines a focus group as an in depth, open-ended group discussion of one to two hours' duration that explores a specific set of issues on a predefined and limited topic. Focus groups are contrived settings that also bring together a specifically chosen sector of the population to discuss a particular given topic, where the interaction with the group leads to data and outcomes (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007).

The focus group interview was conducted relatively smoothly and it went quite well. There were seven girls (pseudonyms) [Catherine, Mary, Maxine, Claire, Nancy, Alice and Molly] who participated in this interview. Each of the girls arrived on time on the Saturday morning. This was my first attempt at conducting a focus group interview and because of this I was nervous and concerned about how these Coloured girls would perceive and/or respond to me, a young Indian female researcher. When the girls first arrived, many of them appeared to be unfriendly and reluctant to speak. Two or three of them simply sat in their seats and stared at me. During the initial briefing that took place before the actual interview was conducted, some of these girls engaged in casual chat amongst themselves. I was immediately consumed by feelings of intimidation and panic. Despite this, I tried to remain calm by using humour to create a more comfortable and relaxed space for the girls and myself. However it appeared as though many of them were not amused. At that moment it became clear that these

seven participants were likely to control the flow of the discussion during the focus group interview. Morgan (1997) asserts that focus groups may confront the researcher with a choice between either giving control to the group and possibly hearing less about the topic or taking direct control of the group and losing the free flowing discussion that was the original intent of the group interview. During the focus group interview, there were a few intervals where some of the girls focused more on a topic of personal interest, as opposed to the topic that was being discussed. I allowed them to chat freely but at times I had to interrupt them by getting them to focus on the issue that I put forward. By doing this, I was able to control the flow of the discussion to a certain extent without inhibiting the girls' responses and this session was able to generate rich data.

As the interview progressed, it appeared as though each of the girls became more relaxed and comfortable in my presence and in their natural surrounding. They then began to talk about their life experiences and they expressed their thoughts and reflections with more ease. During the interview they often laughed at each others' comments and criticised one another's actions. It did however appear as though some of the girls were reluctant to speak about their own sexuality and sexual practices. In this case, I not only probed them for more responses but I also questioned them about their friends and other Coloured girls in their school and community. I noticed that they spoke more freely and openly about other girls' sexual behaviours and encounters and often shied away from talking about themselves. This resonates strongly with Leach's (2006) assertion in Chadwick (2010) that while girls in her study were enthusiastic to be interviewed, they were reluctant to talk about their own experiences and almost never spoke about sex in relation to themselves. Leach (2006) in Chadwick (2010) connects this imperative of femininity to appear modest and innocent. Nonetheless, this data was useful as it enriched and strengthened the quality of my research, whereby I was able to explore and highlight my participants' perceptions of sexual risk behaviours of both boys and other girls. There were also one or two girls who were less talkative in the group and because of this I often directed a question to them so that they could also provide some sort of input or response.

There was one incident where one of the girls became tearful and sad when she reflected on some of the failed relationships that she had with some boys. In an attempt to comfort her, I offered her some advice about relationships and dating and I reassured her that many people, including myself experienced feelings of sadness and pain in failed relationships. I also tried to ensure that I was non-judgemental by communicating with these girls in a way that perhaps made them feel comfortable and safe.

Towards the latter part of the focus group interview one of the participants (Nancy) appeared to be reluctant to discuss her sexual encounters with her partner in front of the other group members. She informed me that she could not disclose personal information regarding her sexuality to some of the girls in the group. It is for this reason that a follow up individual interview was conducted with this participant. This was done to delve more deeply into social and personal matters (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). I did not ask the other participants to participate in individual interviews because I felt that the focus group interview produced sufficient data for this study.

One of the advantages of focus group interviewing is that these interviews are economical on time and they produce a large amount of data in a short period of time (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). However, Kidd and Parshall (2000) argue that the time saved in interviewing is often lost in trying to make sense out of data that are complex and messy. Despite my awareness of the research process, I felt that the task of transcribing the recorded data that was produced in this interview was tedious, confusing and time consuming.

The follow up individual interview took place two weeks after the focus group interview. During this time, I contacted Nancy and arranged to meet her for a second time. During the interview, it became apparent that she was not as talkative as she was during the focus group interview. Her responses were often short and vague. Morgan (1996) argues that the dynamics of an individual interview puts more burden on a participant to explain themselves to a researcher and perhaps this was also the case with this participant. In an effort to counteract this problem, I had to prompt and probe Nancy for more detailed responses to generate substantial data.

3.8 Limitations of this research

I feel that I could have perhaps produced more data on issues around *class* by probing the participants for more information during the focus group interview. I should have explored this issue in greater detail and had I done this, I would have been able to provide a more in-depth and critical discussion on the intersectionality of race, *class*, gender and sexuality in the analysis chapter. Watts and Ebbutt (1987) argue that group interviewing is of little use in allowing personal matters to emerge. It is for this reason that I could have also perhaps conducted individual interviews with each of my participants, in order to explore their personal and social backgrounds to a greater extent. This could have further strengthened the quality of my research.

3.9 Indian researcher-Coloured participants and stereotypes of Coloureds

I would like to acknowledge and declare my own biases and subjectivities as a young Indian female researcher towards my own research subjects. Drawing on my own experiences, from an early age I was exposed to the negative stereotyping of Coloured women and girls. Being a young Indian female, I was not only raised in a traditional Catholic family but I also attended an Indian state high school. While I was growing up, I was aware of my family's negative perceptions of Coloured women and girls to whom they often referred as 'loose, wild, raw and easy'. These words imply that Coloured women and girls are sexually promiscuous or what Salo (2002) terms 'sexually impure'. When I was a learner in high school, many Indian boys degraded Coloured girls in a similar way. It is almost ten years later and I still remember how some of these boys sexually objectified Coloured girls. They did this by describing these girls' bodies as hot and curvaceous and they often freely expressed their desire to 'tap that ass' which in other words means to have sex with a girl. In retrospect, it appeared as though many of these boys believed that Coloured, unlike Indian girls were more accommodating of men's sexual advances and they were perhaps more sexually adventurous. As a result of this, Coloured girls were often portrayed as sexually promiscuous.

I had to declare these negative perceptions and beliefs that I had about Coloured girls so that my own subjective position is known at the outset. To be fair to my participants, I did however try to approach them with as little preconceived ideas about them as possible, considering that we [researchers] are co-constructors of

knowledge in the research process. It became evident after the focus group interview that Coloured girls are not a homogeneous group (and this will be discussed in the analysis chapter). I also realised that my own personal beliefs, attitudes and ideologies about sexuality and sexual risk had the potential to contaminate my research, whereby I perhaps viewed some of the sexual behaviours of the girls in my study in a judgemental manner. However, I tried my best not to express any feelings of disbelief. Each of the interviews that were conducted not only provided me with the opportunity to gain an additional perspective on Coloured girls' sexualities but also forced me to reflect on my own sexual practices as a high school girl and as an adult. In this way, I was able to understand and relate to many of these girls' experiences on a more personal level.

3.10 Validity and reliability

It was my intention throughout this research process to try to remain as objective as possible and to limit biased interpretations during the analysis of data. Cohen, *et al.*, (2007) suggest that participants should be given interview transcriptions to check whether data are captured correctly, in order to increase the validity of a study. I therefore attempted to contact each of the seven girls who participated in my study so that they could read through the interview transcriptions and verify my interpretations. However, due to personal matters, school examinations and time constraints, many of the participants were unable to do this. I was also unable to contact three of the participants a few months after the interviewing process.

3.11 Ethical considerations

Cohen, *et al.*, (2000) maintain that ethical issues may stem from the kinds of problems investigated by social scientists and the methods they use to obtain valid and reliable data. In an attempt to address similar problems in this study, ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal was firstly obtained (see appendix 1). I am also working within a larger research project entitled “**16 turning 17: Gender and sexuality within the context of HIV and AIDS**” and because of this, permission was granted by the Department of Education to conduct this research with 16 and 17 year old learners from the school that I selected. Consent from both the participants and their parents were obtained before data production took place. The participants and their parents were handed letters of consent containing all the necessary information

regarding this study, which was carefully read, understood and signed by each of them (see appendix 2).

The participants were also informed that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time and they were also not compelled to answer any questions if they were not comfortable to do so. They were also made aware that their identities would remain anonymous and would not be revealed throughout this study. This was done through the use of suitable pseudonyms in an attempt to protect their rights to privacy. I also ensured that the participants understood that I would not disclose the contents of the interviews to anyone.

I obtained verbal and written consent from each of the participants before I tape recorded each of the interviews. I also ensured that the recorded data and the transcripts remain strictly confidential and it has been stored safely and will be carefully disposed of at a later stage. In an attempt to ensure confidentiality within the group, I ensured that all the participants understood that issues discussed in the group should also remain confidential.

3.12 Data analysis

Data analysis is an ongoing process that involves making sense of the text data (Creswell, 2007). When the interviewing process was complete, the two interviews were transcribed verbatim to produce interview transcriptions which consisted of rich, textual descriptions of the participants' life experiences, sexual encounters as well as sexual beliefs and attitudes. These interview transcriptions also included and documented silences as well as moments of laughter and sadness of each of the participants. To analyse the generated data, the transcriptions were read and re-read in order to gain a thorough understanding of the data. The data was then grouped into categories to form several broad themes which highlight the diverse sexualities of the Coloured girls in this study. Two theoretical positions were used to analyse and interpret the data. These theories include Connell's theory of gender and power (Connell, 1987) as well as Foucauldian theory on the subversion and resistance of power [post structuralism] (Foucault, 1978).

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter clearly outlined and discussed the research design and methodology that was employed in this study. A qualitative research approach, interpretivist paradigm, case study methodology, purposive sampling method and two interviewing techniques were used to produce relevant research information. This was done to provide answers to the three key research questions framing this study. This chapter also highlighted several limitations of this research as well as some of the ways in which I attempted to overcome these limitations, in order to strengthen the quality of this research. The chapter that follows will explore my own analysis and interpretation of the data that was produced in this study. This chapter will also draw on two theoretical frameworks [Connell's gender-power theory and Foucault's poststructuralist theory] in order to guide my analysis and interpretation of the data. Scholarly works based on gender, HIV and AIDS, sexual risk behaviour and young women's sexualities will be integrated into the analysis and discussion of data.

Chapter Four

Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of the diverse sexualities amongst a group of young Coloured women. An eclectic approach is employed by drawing on more than one theoretical perspective. This approach is useful in explaining the multiple, contradictory and conflicting notions around the constructions of gender and sexuality amongst this group of girls. Moreover, this approach offers a nuanced understanding of how these high school girls construct their sexualities, particularly in an era where HIV and AIDS and teenage pregnancy are rife. These theories that I draw on include Connell's theory of gender and power (Connell, 1987) as well as Foucault's poststructuralist theory which is used to demonstrate that male power, particularly around sexuality, is not stable and immutable, but rather fluid and dynamic (Foucault, 1978). These theories are also useful in illuminating the variegated sexual identities that these girls subscribe to and demonstrate that despite all being Coloured, they are certainly not a homogeneous group. These theories also provide an in-depth analysis into these girls' vulnerabilities, their accommodation, complicity and resistance of male dominance in their own sexual encounters with their partners. Thematic analysis was used in this study, whereby data was generated from a focus group and an individual interview.

Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identities of the seven participants as well as that of their school and the different roads in which they live. The participants will be referred to as Catherine, Mary, Maxine, Claire, Nancy, Alice and Molly and their high school will be referred to as Breach High. The names of the roads have been changed to Kennedy Road, Blinker Road, Redford Road and Gale Road and Brunter. Scholarly works on young women's sexualities, gender and HIV and AIDS have been integrated into the analysis and discussion of data.

The following themes are discussed in this chapter:

* Girls, boys and sex

- * Sex for money, clothing, transport and roc
- * “They’ll go to parties get drunk and end up in some corner”
- * “Safe sex” practices of girls
- * Girls, condoms and unsafe sex
- * Losing one’s virginity and Christian beliefs
- * “He asked me if I will sleep with him and I said NO”: Girls’ sexual agency
- * Sex education: HIV and AIDS awareness

I provide a bio-sketch on each of the seven girls that were selected for my study. This was done in order to highlight the different backgrounds that these girls come from as well as to provide a picture of each of the participants. The girls are described in no particular order.

Catherine is 17 years old and she is in grade eleven. Her mother is currently unemployed and her father is a fitter and turner. She lives with both of her parents and her aunt.

Mary is 17 and she is completing grade eleven. Her parents are divorced. She lives with her grandparents and her mother who is currently unemployed. She has limited knowledge of her father and his whereabouts. Mary has a boyfriend.

Maxine is 17 and she is in grade eleven. Her parents are divorced and she lives with her mother, stepfather and twin sister. Her mother is a nurse and her stepfather is a mechanic. She has a boyfriend who is also her age and he attends a different high school in the area.

Claire is 16 and she is in grade ten. She lives with her parents and her younger brother. Her mother is a broker consultant at Sanlam and her father is a shock fitter. Claire is currently dating her boyfriend for three years.

Nancy is 17 and she is currently completing grade eleven. Her parents are divorced and she lives with her mother, stepfather and sister. Her mother is a staff nurse. Nancy is in a dating relationship with a 17 year old boy who is in her school.

Alice is 17 and she lives with her parents and her two siblings. Her mother is a nurse and her father is a lecturer. Alice has a boyfriend who is a 20 year old student.

Molly is 16 and she is completing grade ten. Her parents are divorced and she lives with her mother, brother and two sisters. Molly's mother works for a security company. She does not see her father frequently. She has a boyfriend who is 25 years old and they have been dating for six months. Molly's mother is not aware of this.

The data produced in this study reveals that all of the participants live in a former Coloured area situated in the greater Durban region, known as Sydenham. This community experiences many social ills, some of which include relatively high levels of violence, gangsterism, crime, alcohol and drug use and teenage pregnancy. Some of the participants point out that many of these social ills are rife in certain parts of Sydenham such as Gale Road and Brunter. Nancy asserts, *"There's like buttons, zol and alotta drinking."* Claire also states, *"There is also teenage pregnancy around here too but like in Gale Road and Brunter and there are also gangs, girl gangs too and ya they from the area where you get drugs and alcohol, you get drug merchants and all from that area."* Alice also points out that *"drugs are everywhere in Sydenham."* Nancy goes on to state, *"You can ask any Sydenham person about Breach High they'll say it's like a maternity ward. You just see big stomachs everywhere. You can come to my school and see how many girls are pregnant."* Nancy's words indicate that teenage pregnancy is perhaps a serious problem in

Breach High School. The high rates of learner pregnancy also signify many learners' engagement in unprotected sexual activities.

4.2 Girls, boys and sex

When discussing sexuality it is clear that boys are integral to girls' experiences around heterosexual relationships and sex. Many researchers document how male and female relationships are imbued with expressions of love, [mis]trust and pleasure and often with boys who date girls for sex (Anderson, 2009; Gevers, Jewkes, Mathews & Flisher, 2012; Shefer & Ruiters, 1998). The girls in this study express how boys have relationships purely to satisfy their sexual needs. Sexual gratification is often associated with many boys objectifying and perceiving girls as mere objects of sexual pleasure and in some cases, perverted sexual activities (Anderson, 2009).

Alice points out that she feels that boys only enter into dating relationships with girls with the intent to gain sex. She says,

Ya like they'll wait for a certain period of time like some will wait a month some will wait three months, then they'll expect it because they with you for so long and they are faithful to you that's what they say. It's heart sore but like you can't be bothering yourself about people that, like he weren't thinking about you he was only thinking about satisfying himself.

This extract illustrates that many girls are involved in some type of negotiation in their determination to keep their boyfriends. Alice is of the view that boys who remain with their girlfriends and are faithful are being held to ransom, where some boys expect a 'reward' for remaining in a relationship if no sex is imminent. This can become an emotionally charged situation in that many girls are often aware that they are involved in relationships based on the sexual gratification of their partners. This is consistent with research conducted by Gevers, *et al.*, (2012) which found that a common belief amongst adolescent girls in their study was that boys expected sex from girlfriends. This places many girls under pressure, whereby they are often forced to have sex in a desperate attempt to secure their relationships and avoid losing their boyfriends. As a result of this, many girls become vulnerable and this often hinders their ability to make responsible decisions, regarding sex.

During the focus group interview Molly expresses her displeasure about the sexual promiscuity of boys as compared to girls. She states,

And when it comes to us girls I'd like to say we more civilised, we'll sleep with a guy that we know for some time. Boys will just go to a party and see this girl and they'll sleep with her and some boys they'll like do like maybe one girl, there'll be five boys on one girl and then they'll do another girl the next day. They going for a all nighter the whole weekend, that's dirty.

In this extract, Molly attributes a level of decency and morality to having sex with a long time partner as opposed to casual sexual relationships that many girls view with contempt. She berates boys by portraying them as rampantly hypersexual or sexually promiscuous, and girls [including herself] are described in moral, decent and 'civilised' terms. Sex within a relationship is preferred to casual sex and legitimated due to familiarity. This extract also demonstrates how some girls perhaps implicate themselves by engaging in risky sexual behaviours, which include having casual sex with boys at parties. This is also indicative of how the sexual freedom of some girls has the potential to negatively impact on their health and that of others, whereby they place themselves at risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and AIDS.

According to Shefer and Ruiters (1998), inherent in the discourse of men as sexual and women as loving and asexual, is the double standard which censures men's sexuality and privileges it as positive, healthy and appropriate. Women and girls are often restrained by moralistic discourses of faithfulness, loyalty, commitment and stigmatising discourses which construct them as 'slags' or 'sluts' if they are sexually active (Shefer & Ruiters, 1998). Drawing on the male sexual drive discourse (Shefer & Foster, 2001; Shefer & Ruiters, 1998), data produced in this study reveals that both Alice and Catherine believe that most people have a gender stereotypical view of the world and because of this many male sexual practices are often sanctioned, normalised and encouraged based on societal expectations. Alice asserts,

A boy can have sex with you now pull up his pants and walk away and you left with the mess. They don't carry nothing, when they walk they by themselves. It's

just the way it's always been when I was brought up. Girls must always be like this like that but they'll never really stress on a boy, what he must do or what he's done, it's always what the girl does and it's unfair. But it's just the way boys are they never talk about a boy, ooh he slept with three of those girls. A girl must walk passed she slept with three of those boys there'll be a fat lot to say.

According to Catherine girls are also expected to 'act like nuns'.

It becomes clear that these two participants feel that many societal pressures are placed upon girls. Social pressures and expectations often ensure that girls remain in subordinate and oppressive positions and this inhibits their ability to exercise sexual agency. 'Sexual agency' is best understood as an individual's actions and decisions about one's body and emotions to shape and change one's sexual practice including when, where and with whom to initiate a sexual relationship (Bell, 2012; Teitelman, 2004). In this excerpt, Alice therefore expresses her desire for sexual agency and gender equity. Such an expression can be regarded as a form of protest and resistance, where she challenges and destabilises traditional sexual scripts which serve to uphold and encourage the suppression of women's sexuality and the satisfaction of male sexual desires (Connell, 1987). This excerpt also illustrates that many double standards or contradictory practices remain prevalent in society, whereby many young women are criticised and judged by others far more than young men, despite several strides that have been made over the years to ensure greater gender equality (Human Rights Watch, 2001; Wolpe, Quinlan & Martinez, 1997). This clearly reinforces the message that modern society still produces and reproduces gender inequalities.

Other findings of this research reveal that Maxine believes that some girls in her high school deliberately want to become pregnant to secure their relationships with their boyfriends. She points this out during the focus group interview by stating,

Some girls are like well if I have a baby with a boy he'll stay with me forever and that's actually wrong.

This finding is consistent with the work of Groes-Green (2009), which clearly shows that some girls deliberately ignore and reject condom use in order to get pregnant by a

boy. Maxine's words illuminate one of the ways in which some girls are implicated in entrapment. She disapproves of this controlling mechanism, by girls that seek to coerce boys to remain in relationships where a baby is involved. In other words, they are willing to conceive children at an early age and possibly risk their health and wellbeing to avoid losing their boyfriends. Kaufman and Stavrou (2002) revealed in their study that some young women who wanted to 'catch' a guy would pretend to agree not to use a condom, especially after being offered a gift but in reality they manipulated the situation in order to become pregnant. This forces one to recognise that some girls' beliefs and actions regarding their sexuality can be potentially harmful to their lives (health) and to that of other people.

4.3 Sex for money, clothing, transport and roc

Sexual relationships are often pinioned by an economic exchange of gifts or favours for sex (Kaufman & Stavrou, 2002). 'Gift giving' of any kind within a relationship can be associated with sexual leverage, an exchange that somehow entitles one partner to physical and sexual rights to the other's body (Kaufman & Stavrou, 2002). In general flowers, chocolates, jewellery, clothes, lingerie, CDs, drugs, meals, drinks in a club, tickets to concerts, vacations, free entry into clubs and books are only some of the items that can be exchanged for sex (Kaufman & Stavrou, 2002). Drawing on this notion of gift giving, participants in the focus group were asked questions about young women who date older men and boys (sugar-daddy phenomenon). Some of the participants expressed their personal thoughts and opinions about this.

Nancy believes that some girls enter into sexual relationships with older men and boys in exchange for money, clothing and expensive material goods. She says,

There's like quite a few girls they say like the older you are the more mature you are. There's my one friend she was 13 and dating a 26 year old man. There's also like grade elevens, tens and matriculants they are dating boys who are 21 and older those that drive nice cars. I think that the girls are just using the older men for their money, transport and things like that. You don't get a ride for free and some of these girls have a new outfit every week.

Leach (2006) in Chadwick (2010) documents how girls in her study were enthusiastic to be interviewed but also reluctant to talk about their own experiences and almost never spoke about sex in relation to themselves. Leach (2006) in Chadwick (2010) connects this imperative of femininity to appear modest and innocent. This extract illustrates one of the ways in which my participants talk about other girls and how sex can often be used as a tool in acquiring material possessions (Anderson, 2009). Bell (2012) argues that many young women are sexual agents, whereby they use sex as a means to improve their own economic or financial situations. In this way, it appears as though for some girls, their desire and need for money and material possessions are greater than their concern for protecting themselves. Campbell (2003) posits that although many young women and girls in South Africa exchange sex for money and gifts with their sugar-daddies, condom use is often non-negotiable. This is indicative of how some girls become sexually and economically vulnerable which then creates opportunities for older males to sexually exploit them (Kaufman & Stavrou, 2002). All seven participants in the focus group claimed that they have never dated or had sex with an older male in exchange for money or material rewards.

On the other hand, Molly is involved in a sexual relationship with her 25 year old boyfriend. According to this participant, some boys believe that she is dating her older boyfriend for monetary and material gain. She states,

Like some boys in my school will be like hey he must be giving you right and pressing you right and they think like okay he's working so he's spoiling you he gives me money and I have sex with him and you know what it's not like that at all.

In Anderson's study (2009) of Coloured boys, it was explained that 'press' is a slang term for sex. In this extract, Molly makes it explicit that she does not exchange sex for money or material goods with her older boyfriend. It appears as though she is somewhat uncomfortable or uneasy about the tainted perceptions that these boys have of her. She also tries to vindicate herself and defend her participation [or not] in sexual activity.

Drug use and HIV and AIDS are major problems among adolescents in South Africa (Morojele, *et al.*, 2006). Alice points out that some girls have sex with boys in exchange for drugs. She says,

I know a girl she gotta child and this boy he's my friend and he sells drugs and she slept with him for roc.

Alice highlights another way in which girls place themselves at risk by having sex in exchange for drugs. This resonates with the findings of a study conducted by Kaufman and Stavrou (2002) which revealed that young White females in their study admitted to 'often' having sex in exchange for drugs. In many of these cases, girls are often unable to negotiate the use of condoms during sex, thus making them more susceptible to HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases (Campbell, 2003). Moreover, girls who engage in drug use are less likely to make informed decisions regarding safe sex practices due to potential loss of inhibitions or self control. Morojele, *et al.*, (2006) confirm this when they argue that drug use impairs judgements and causes engagement in irresponsible sexual behaviours. Drugs also lessen one's inhibitions, tenseness and awareness of their environments and often have disempowering effects on females (Morojele, *et al.*, 2006).

4.4 "They'll go to parties get drunk and end up in some corner"

Sexual behaviour and alcohol use represent major threats to the health and wellbeing of South African adolescents, especially in light of the high prevalence of HIV infection in this population (Smith, *et al.*, 2008). Casale, *et al.*, (2011) argue that alternative explanations for young women's higher susceptibility to HIV infection include high risk and careless behaviours such as substance (alcohol) abuse. It is therefore clear that there is an association between substance use and sexual risk behaviour (Palen, *et al.*, 2006). In this study, the data shows that Molly and Nancy are aware that some boys have sex with girls who are under the heavy influence of alcohol (drunk). Molly points this out when she states,

Ya and they'll take a girl to the toilet in the jol and make her bend over and then they having fun but she's drunk and she don't know what's going on.

Nancy also states, “*They’ll go to parties get drunk and end up in some corner.*”

Nancy’s words highlight that she disapproves of drunken, casual sex that some girls are implicated in. These participants also demonstrate how some girls place themselves in vulnerable and risky positions, by consuming large amounts of alcohol in unsafe or harmful environments such as nightclubs. The Kaiser Family Foundation (2002) documents that using alcohol influences what teens (girls) do sexually and makes them feel more comfortable with a sexual partner and less likely to practise safe sex. Alcohol use therefore creates opportunities for some girls to participate in unsafe sexual acts which may expose them to HIV infections and other sexually transmitted infections. These kinds of environments (clubs) also have the potential to create spaces for some boys to sexually exploit and oppress girls who are drunk. Morojele, *et al.*, (2006) assert that males are believed to exploit intoxicated females who they consider to be opportune targets of their sexual advances. Boys sometimes take advantage of intoxicated girls believing them to be less inclined or able to refuse or resist their sexual advances (Morojele, *et al.*, 2006). This resonates with the findings highlighted in the extract above.

During the focus group interview Molly describes her sexual debut (first sexual experience). She states,

The first time I was fourteen, and I didn’t choose to do it cause I mean who wants to break their virginity at age fourteen. You know I was, I don’t even remember half of the night I only got flashbacks and it was so, it was so not like me and I woke up the next morning feeling so dirty uh, I was even crying in the bath and it was Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. I was so drunk my mother was at home and I was in the bathroom with that boy yoh, it was terrible. I didn’t even know the boy I just met him the next day I only found out his name. He was seventeen and I was fourteen. And we were all drinking by my house my mother allowed me to drink no she allowed me to drink ciders and uh, there must have been Vodka and I stole Vodka from them and I poured it in a little bottle so there was a hell of a lot and I went to the bathroom and I drank it. And then after that I dunno what happened.

This account strongly reinforces the idea that the use and abuse of alcohol often influences girls' decisions to engage in irresponsible or careless sexual behaviours or lose their virginities before they are ready to do so (Casale, *et al.*, 2011; Kaufman & Stavrou, 2002; Palen, *et al.*, 2006; Smith, *et al.*, 2008; Zeigler, *et al.*, 2005). Kaufman and Stavrou (2002) argue that alcohol often acts as a catalyst for sex before girls are really ready. Similarly, many grade eight Coloured girls and boys in the Western Cape used substances such as alcohol and marijuana and reported that these substances influenced their decision to have sex at an early age (Palen, *et al.*, 2006). Zeigler, *et al.*, (2005) point out that alcohol use includes deficits in verbal and non-verbal performance, memory and abstract reasoning. As a result of this, many girls who are intoxicated do not have much control over their bodies and they are sometimes perhaps forced to deal with the emotional and psychological effects of their actions later on in their lives. This is evident in Molly's case. Many of the findings in this study are also similar to the work of Casale, *et al.*, (2011) which found that girls go to nightclubs, consume alcohol and have sex with strangers and the following day these girls do not know who they slept with or whether they have HIV.

It is interesting to note that in the previous extract, it appears as though Molly berates other girls when she speaks about their experiences with sex and alcohol. Yet she later reveals that she had a similar experience when she was 14 years old. Despite this, it must be acknowledged that this participant was able to recognise that she perhaps made a mistake and she appears to be regretful and ashamed of her careless behaviour. This clearly indicates that she does not merely place the blame on the 17 year old boy, especially since she is unable to recall most of the events of that night. This boy could have also perhaps coerced her into sex, however she chooses to take responsibility for her own complicity in this risky situation, which many girls often fail to do.

4.5 "Safe sex" practices of girls

Safe sex can be associated with condom use, remaining faithful to one partner and abstinence (Harrison, *et al.*, 2001). During the focus group and individual interview, participants were given the opportunity to express their thoughts and share their experiences about sex and the use of protection (condoms). Four out of seven participants (Claire, Nancy, Alice and Molly) reported being sexually active. Each of

their responses differed. The data shows that only three (Claire, Nancy and Alice) out of the four sexually active girls reported using condoms consistently and/or having one sexual partner in their lifetime. The data goes on to reveal that the other three participants (Catherine, Mary, and Maxine) reported being virgins. Each of the six participants that are discussed in this section are from middle class families. These girls occupy homes in Kennedy, Blinker and Redford Road, which are situated in the more affluent part of Sydenham.

Claire draws attention to the issue of condom use in her own sexual relationship with her boyfriend. She says,

We always use protection everytime but because everytime even though you use protection the condom can bust and it has uhm I had like three pregnancy scares and like because of diseases and all of that stuff there and not like we sleeping around but I mean I just like to prevent HIV and be careful basically.

It appears as though despite Claire's attempts to practice safe sex there are also other risks that girls may encounter. This participant understands that the use of condoms during sexual intercourse does not always ensure protection against HIV infection and becoming pregnant. This awareness perhaps stems from her prior experience of having three pregnancy scares. She also alludes to condoms being used if girls or boys have multiple sexual partners, as opposed to one sexual partner. Despite this, it is clear that Claire is able to negotiate the use of condoms during sex, which many girls are unable to do (see Harrison, *et al.*, 2006; Shefer & Ruiters, 1998; Wood, *et al.*, 1998). It is also important to acknowledge that although Claire and her boyfriend have been dating for a long time, she exercises sexual agency by making a conscious decision to engage in consistent condom use, in order to protect herself from becoming HIV infected or becoming pregnant.

Nancy reported that she has only had sex on one occasion with her 17 year old boyfriend. She states,

We slept together it was a mutual decision and he broke his with me and I broke mine with him and we just like did it that one time. And we decided to use a

condom together because I gotta friend who fell pregnant and she was 16 and I've learnt from that and I think he's learnt his lesson too because his older brother, his girlfriend fell pregnant when she was in matric.

From the extract above it is evident that Nancy and her boyfriend are aware of the consequences and hardships of some girls who become young mothers at school. This awareness is also based on familial experiences of early pregnancies and it has the potential to act as a deterrent, whereby some girls (like Nancy) choose to use condoms during sex in order to avoid unwanted or early pregnancies. It is also clear in this excerpt that Nancy becomes a sexual agent because she chose to practise safe sex. The two excerpts above also clearly highlight that both Claire and Nancy are in control of their sexual decision making. Similarly, Pithey and Morojele (2002) point out that most of the young women in their study reported staying faithful to one partner and using condoms. Pettifor, *et al.*, (2012) also document that half of the young women in their study who subscribed to resistant femininity reported using condoms and being able to have control over this.

Alice appears to be very assertive as compared to the other girls in this study. She claims that she has only had sexual relations with her 20 year old boyfriend and she does make use of condoms on occasion. She states,

I told him that I wanted to use protection and like the last two times uhm, I don't know, I just didn't bother about it like that and then afterwards I asked him why do do I have to tell him like you know like to use it, then he said how why you didn't say anything and I said no it's not for me to always be telling you what to do, you must also think and be responsible sometimes. Me I'm not worried I speak my mind and if he don't like it that's his own thing. I don't listen to him, if I don't wanna do something we both want our own way so there's no way in hell I'm gonna listen to him, no matter what he says I won't. If I don't wanna do it he knows I won't do it. I think cause I'm my own person I don't listen to anybody, I do things the way I feel they should be done.

It is evident that this participant exercises sexual agency, by sexually asserting herself in her relationship with her older boyfriend. In this way, she resists and contests

accepted gender role norms which encourage young women to be sexually available to partners and allow male partners to have sexual decision making authority (Bhana & Pattman, 2009; Harrison, *et al.*, 2006; Shefer & Foster, 2001; Shefer & Ruiters, 1998; Wood, *et al.*, 1998). Casale, *et al.*, (2011) also argue that female agency in sexual relationships challenge the stereotypical notion of women as passive sufferers in sexual relationships. It is clear that Alice positions herself as the dominant sexual partner in her relationship and like many of the girls in Maxwell and Aggleton's (2010) study, she wears the 'trousers'. She also rejects the notion of female subordination by wanting to be the 'boss' in her sexual relationship (Mudaly, 2012). It is also evident that although Alice is forceful about safe sex, she does concede when her partner does not have a condom. By doing this, she perhaps jeopardises her health and wellbeing to some extent by placing herself at risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases or becoming pregnant.

Research conducted by Auslander, Perfect, Succop and Rosenthal (2007) found that sexual assertiveness was related to prior sexual experiences, where girls were sexually active for longer and had more sexual partners. However it appears as though this is not the case for Alice because she claims that she has only ever had one sexual partner in her lifetime, that being her current boyfriend. It could perhaps be argued that she, like Claire and Nancy, is also responsible for practising safe sex. Moreover, Alice expresses her desire for boys to initiate safer sex practices, which could decrease the enormous pressure that is often placed upon many girls.

According to three of the participants (Catherine, Mary and Maxine), they are not sexually active. Mary and Maxine expressed that they chose to abstain from sex because they felt that they were not ready. This resonates with the work of Bhana and Pattman (2011) which found that none of the 16 turning 17 female participants were sexually active because they too claimed that they were not ready. Catherine, on the other hand, openly expressed her desire to abstain from sex until marriage (see to the section on losing one's virginity and Christian beliefs).

Although three of the girls in this study claim to be virgins, this does not mean that they do not discuss issues related to sex and sexuality. This is evident when Maxine states during the focus group interview,

I'm sure you know the term when girls get fingered ya like yesterday I asked Catherine have you ever been fingered and she says yes and I knew she was lying so I asked her if it was sore and she said how you should know and we all laughing cause it was like a ripper (all girls laugh).

In this extract it appears as though these girls seem flippant when they talk about certain sexual acts, particularly 'fingering' which involves a girl having her vagina penetrated by one's finger/s. It is also clear that all the girls laugh when Maxine talks about 'fingering'. They perhaps do this because they appeared to be shy and embarrassed to discuss this sexual act in my presence and amongst themselves. This extract also points out that whilst some girls may not have experienced penetrative sex, they still have sexual desires. These girls also perhaps want to show their sexual experience amongst their group of friends.

In this extract, it seems as though Maxine believes that Catherine is lying about her experience of being fingered. She perhaps accuses Catherine of lying to demonstrate that she is sexually inexperienced, especially amongst the group. In some ways this could have a negative impact on girls' health, where they give into peer pressure by engaging in these kinds of sexual activities, in a desperate attempt to fit in and impress their peers. Gevers, *et al.*, (2012) and Selikow, *et al.*, (2009) argue that adolescents (girls) often experience explicit pressure from their friends to have sex and implicit pressure to fit into a group that is perceived to be sexually active.

It becomes quite clear that some of the girls in this study exercise sexual agency, by either choosing to abstain from sex, engaging in consistent condom use and/or remaining faithful to one sexual partner (Harrison, *et al.*, 2001). Many of these girls are also able to assert themselves in their sexual relationships with their partners, in an attempt to protect their bodies and live healthier lifestyles. In this way, these girls resist, refute and destabilise gender norms and traditional sex roles, by showing that they are not passive sufferers of male dominance and sexual power in their relationships (Bhana & Pattman, 2009; Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Casale, *et al.*, 2011; Maxwell & Aggleton, 2010; Mudaly, 2012). In addition, these girls challenge and deconstruct harmful, racial stereotypes that portray Coloured women and girls as immoral and sexually promiscuous beings (Salo, 2002). It is clear that this particular

group of girls construct their sexualities in variegated ways and in doing so, they offer resistance.

It is here that I would like to acknowledge that the ability to exercise sexual agency does not always ensure one's protection against HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases, through safe sex practices. Sexual agency also enables one to engage in irresponsible, careless and risky sexual behaviours, as pointed out in other sections of this chapter.

4.6 Girls, condoms and unsafe sex

In contrast to many of the findings revealed in the previous section, Selikow, *et al.*, (2009) posit that sexual intercourse can generally be associated with high risk sexual behaviours such as multiple sexual partners and not using contraceptives (condoms). As pointed out earlier, questions related to sex and the use of protection (condoms) were posed during the focus group interview. Participants were also given the opportunity to express their views on the sexual practices (safe or unsafe) of their peers and other girls living in Sydenham. The data produced in this study shows that one of the participants engages in unsafe or risky sexual behaviour.

The data reveals that Molly is the only participant who comes from a working class background. She lives in a block of flats on Gale Road and Brunter, which is situated in the poorer part of Sydenham. The data shows that she has had more than one sexual partner and she is currently involved in a sexual relationship with her older boyfriend, but she does not place much emphasis on condoms or insist on condom use. She states,

We use protection sometimes, sometimes we don't. Like when we did the first few times he just went and got the condom from his wardrobe and I was cool with it but like recently we haven't been using protection. I was on the injection for two months but then I stopped it cause it just wasn't for me. Like this thing about condoms it's like if he takes it out then it's okay if he doesn't then hey I'm also cool with that.

In this excerpt, it is quite clear that Molly does not discuss or negotiate the use of a condom during sex with her older boyfriend, thus placing herself in a sexually vulnerable position. She also renders herself vulnerable to HIV infection, other sexually transmitted diseases as well as becoming pregnant. Molly's choices regarding her sexual behaviour shows how some girls often reject or ignore the use of condoms, either to accommodate the sexual desires of their partners or satisfy their own sexual desires, which includes having sex for pleasure (Mudaly, 2012). This remains somewhat unclear in Molly's case. Some girls also encourage boys to occupy dominant positions in their sexual relationships by allowing boys to determine the nature (risky or safe) and timing of sex (Hoffman, *et al.*, 2006; Holland, *et al.*, 1990).

Mudaly (2012) documents that some of the girls in her study did not view unsafe sexual strategies as problematic. Similarly, Molly believes that she is not at risk of experiencing an early pregnancy or contracting HIV, despite her no longer using condoms during sex. She says,

You know it's actually never crossed my mind like what if he gives me AIDS because I trust him fully and I just think that even falling pregnant or having sex without a condom it just wouldn't happen to me I just feel that it just wouldn't happen to me.

This powerful statement is indicative of how some girls' sexual beliefs and attitudes influence their decisions to engage in unsafe sexual behaviours (see Holland, *et al.*, 1990; Reddy & Dunne, 2007). Some girls also use 'trust' as a means to justify why they fail to make use of condoms during sex. Holland, *et al.*, (1990) argue that some girls feel that once they trust their partners, condom use is no longer a concern as this signifies seriousness in the relationship. Trust therefore, while carrying symbolic meaning may offer little protection against HIV and AIDS (Holland, *et al.*, 1990).

It also appears as though Molly considers herself unlikely to become pregnant or contract HIV and AIDS, despite the fact that she does not make use of condoms, which according to Bond and Dovers (1997) are one of the major strategies for combating STDs, including HIV.

It is here that I attempt to make several comparisons between Molly and the other six participants in my study. It could perhaps be assumed that her sexual beliefs and actions differ from that of the other six girls based on contextual factors. In an attempt to explain this, Molly is the only participant who lives in the poorer part of Sydenham. This particular area (Gale Road and Brunter) has a high level of drug and alcohol use, gangsterism and teenage pregnancy. Molly is perhaps affected by and exposed to many of these low socio-economic conditions far more than any of the other girls in this study because she lives in this kind of environment. This could perhaps explain why she is the only participant who reported dating and having sex with a man who is almost ten years her senior. She is also the only girl in this study who revealed that she lost her virginity to a stranger at the age of 14 (see to the section on “They’ll go to parties get drunk and end up in some corner”). Molly also appeared to be the least assertive of all the girls and she was the only girl who believed that engaging in risky sex (sex without a condom) would in no way have a negative impact on her health and wellbeing, in terms of contracting HIV, other sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant. Misconceptions or misinformation are therefore often contributors of girls’ engagement in unprotected sexual activities.

During the individual interview, Nancy points out that some girls in Breach High School reject condom use during sexual intercourse. She states,

I gotta friend it’s a girl. She didn’t want to use a condom she said the condom irritates her. The boys were so excited they don’t have to use it cause they don’t like to spend money on expensive condoms. That’s how she fell pregnant cause she didn’t wanna use it.

This extract shows how some girls reject condom usage by being assertive in their sexual relationships. These girls, in pursuit of sex and pleasure, choose to reject condoms. This extract also demonstrates that in being sexually assertive, it can be potentially risky because irresponsible and careless behaviours could lead to HIV infection as well as unplanned pregnancies. In an effort to prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS and as a means of family planning, the South African government makes condoms (freely) available to adolescents. However, in this particular case it is

apparent that some boys do not want to use these condoms and they prefer to buy their own. When they cannot afford to do this, they simply do without them.

Findings of other research highlight that most men and boys reject condoms based on the perceived diminution of sexual sensation (Bond & Dovers, 1997; Preston-Whyte, 1999). In the extract above, it is the girl who chooses to do this, thus indicating that some girls also have the power or freedom to reject condoms. Their sexual agency is evident and shows that some girls opt for sex for pleasure rather than love (Mudaly, 2012; Shefer & Foster, 2001; Shefer & Ruiters, 1998). In this way, they resist and destabilise fixed, hegemonic gendered scripts (Mudaly, 2012) which sanction and encourage male sexual prowess or the celebration of multiple sexual partners (Bhana, Morrell, Hearn & Moletsane, 2007). These girls also place more emphasis on sexual gratification as opposed to being safe. In this extract, Nancy also draws attention to the fact that she is very much aware that condoms are important in preventing early or unplanned pregnancies.

Two of the participants also point out that many girls in their high school have multiple sexual partners. Nancy states,

This one girl she doesn't use protection with all the boys she's been with. I can't even count all the boys on my hands.

Alice also states,

Like some girls she don't even get to know the boy before sleeping with him.

Anderson's (2009) study focuses on a group of Coloured boys aged 14-17. She documents that many of the boys in her study were hypersexual (Anderson, 2009). In contrast, findings of this research illuminate that some Coloured girls in this age group (16-17) are responsible for displaying similar hypersexual behaviours, as found in Mudaly (2012). In this way, girls who engage in sex with multiple partners are responsible for destabilising boys' positions as the dominant sexual beings (Anderson, 2009). On the one hand, these irresponsible and risky sexual behaviours feed into the negative perceptions of Coloured girls. On the other hand, this shows that not all girls

(Coloured) are passive participants in seemingly unequal sexual relationships, but in fact exercise sexual agency (Bhana & Pattman, 2009; Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Casale, *et al.*, 2011; Maxwell & Aggleton, 2010). This extract is also indicative of how girls (Nancy and Alice) are judgemental of other girls having sex on a first encounter. Getting to know someone first is important to Alice.

During the focus group interview, Claire attempts to explain why some girls engage in risky sexual practices with their partners. She states,

My reason is when they horny they horny and they are. When they put on there's no way of turning them off so, but but even if they use a plastic packet, they will even though it's gonna be ... (all girls laugh) What? I have been in a relationship that you know when you like, things are like heated, there's nothing around obviously. Me you know. That's when the baby comes along. You know like honestly at that moment girls aren't really worried about that honestly at that moment just all, it's like all about I want him in me like now now like I want him in me now. I wanna cum like you know like you know, I want satisfaction and at that moment the girls aren't thinking about like oh what if I get AIDS, what if I get this, what if I get herpes. Like you know it's like you know crabs, they not thinking about all that. Only the next day they'll say when they laying in bed and they open their eyes they'll say like oh shit, what if I got crabs? Then like, what if I got this, what if I got that? It's like a after thought, it's not a thought like right then.

This excerpt highlights that some girls enjoy sex and they are often unable to control their sexual urges. Safe sex is of secondary importance when desire and pleasure are sought. Claire, like one of the girls in Shefer and Foster's study also provides a very graphic or detailed description of her own sexual experience which is actually quite rare (Shefer & Foster, 2001). By openly expressing herself, she challenges and resists accepted gender role norms which often prevent many young women from openly discussing their sexuality and issues related to sex.

“Gang banging” can also be regarded as an unsafe or risky sexual behaviour of many teenage boys and girls. It is a sexual activity where many boys wait in line to have sex

with a girl either through coercing the girl or of her own accord (Anderson, 2009).

Nancy states,

There was a girl a few years back she used to come here and she used to go to Breach High and they say it was her twin brother. She made a video and he stood outside her room door while she was making the video and everybody at a time she even said next, next, next. Her brother stood by the door and everytime she said next he sent the next boy in.

This scenario resonates with the work of Anderson (2009) which clearly highlights that some girls are complicit in maintaining and upholding misogynistic masculinity that is demeaning to them, by participating in acts that serve to reinforce the disdain and disrespect that some boys have for them. Nancy points out that some girls collude with their own sexual oppression and this could have serious implications for their health and that of others. Research conducted by Mudaly (2012) revealed that the girls in her study also privileged their own sexual desires and self-indulgences as young women, whereby they turned their gaze away from heteropatriarchal discourses and focused on ways to maximise their pleasure. It appears as though Nancy views this kind of sexual behaviour with contempt. This type of sexual behaviour also feeds into the negative perceptions of Coloured girls.

4.7 Losing one's virginity and Christian beliefs

A study conducted by Nack (2002) draws particular attention to the 'good-bad' girl or 'virgin-whore' dichotomy. This scholar clearly points out in her article that there are cultural definitions of "feminine goodness" which prescribe that 'good' girls adhere to gender norms and sexual morality, whereas 'bad' girls are sexually promiscuous and labelled as slags, sluts or teases (Nack, 2002). Some of the female participants in her study believed that being a 'good' girl required virginity and a 'bad' girl was associated with being a promiscuous slut (Nack, 2002). Gevers, *et al.*, (2012) suggest that there is a discourse of modesty around sex and some girls in their study portrayed abstinence as the most desirable option. In addition, young women in another South African study indicated that abstention from sexual intercourse was the right thing to do and they perceived their own engagement in sexual activities as a transgression of accepted gender role norms (Mudaly, 2012).

Drawing on the good-bad girl dichotomy, data produced in this study shows that Claire has been sexually active from the age of 13, as compared to many of the other girls in this study. She describes her sexual debut,

I lost my virginity when I was I think 13 it was a few days before Christmas, it was my friend's house and it was our Christmas gift to each other and we were both virgins.

This resonates with the work of Richter (1996) in Lerclerc-Madlala (2002) which argues that South African youth become sexually active on average between the ages of 13-15 and girls as young as 13 are often diagnosed with HIV. In this particular case it could perhaps be argued that Claire does not display characteristics of feminine goodness and sexual morality, as Nack (2002) explains. Claire's words also point out that her first sexual experience was a mutual agreement between her and her boyfriend. She has attached some significance to her sexual debut (a gift) but also does so because it occurred with a boy who was also a virgin.

On the other hand, data shows that Catherine comes from a devoted Christian family and she, unlike any of the other girls in this study intends to abstain from sex until marriage. She says,

When I break my virginity with my husband I wonder if he's gonna like say oh and she's a virgin. In my whole life I've always wanted to break my virginity on my wedding day. I want to keep my virginity for marriage cause I feel it will be special. I was shocked to hear that a girl younger than me broke her virginity.

This extract highlights that Catherine associates the act of sex with the sacrament of marriage. It appears as though she attaches the symbolic meaning of marriage to sex and because of this she exercises her sexual agency, by choosing to preserve and protect her virginity until she marries. This is also indicative of how religion (Christianity) has perhaps enabled Catherine to remain sexually pure, whereby she has decided not to engage in premarital sex. In a similar way, Kaufman and Stavrou (2002) reveal in their study that for many Asian girls, sex before marriage was regarded as culturally unacceptable.

During another interval Catherine states,

As everyone says you can't walk down the aisle with a veil unless you are a virgin and what will my mother and them think?

This statement indicates that Catherine's motives for abstaining from sex until marriage are somewhat conflicting or ambivalent because while her religious beliefs may have influenced her decision to remain a virgin, it is clear that familial and societal opinion is also important. This extract therefore illuminates one of the many ways in which religious beliefs and familial expectations or opinions have the potential to act as deterrents, whereby some girls choose to abstain from sex. This also shows that Catherine is very much in control of her own sexuality and in this way she resists, contests and destabilises accepted gender role norms. Her choices and ability to exercise sexual agency does not only highlight that not all girls are passive victims of accepted gender role norms (Bhana & Pattman, 2009; Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Casale, *et al.*, 2011; Maxwell & Aggleton, 2010; Mudaly, 2012), but also shows that not all Coloured girls are sexually promiscuous or sexually impure (Salo, 2002).

Catherine also believes that boys make promises (emotional blackmail) to girls who are virgins in order to have sex with them. She states,

A lot of boys are like ay you must break your virginity like let me do it for you, like you know and a lot of boys will use you for sex. I know boys who asked me to break my virginity with them why because I will treat you right. What shit, it's all lies.

This extract demonstrates how some boys view sex as a goal and in order to achieve this goal they often 'sweet talk the girl' (Gevers, *et al.*, 2012; Shefer & Ruiters, 1998). Kaufman and Stavrou (2002) also found that many boys in their study were responsible for making promises to girls before sex that they would not keep. Catherine however expresses her awareness and she alludes to not being naïve or fooled by boys. Her words also illuminate one of the difficult decisions that many girls (virgins) are currently faced with, whereby they have to decide whether or not to lose their virginities to boys, who in pursuit of sex make 'empty' promises. This

places many girls (virgins) under enormous pressure. Furthermore, this could explain why Catherine intends to remain a virgin until marriage, as she perhaps has a fear of losing her virginity to someone who is only seeking sexual gratification and may have no intention of remaining with her.

4.8 “He asked me if I will sleep with him and I said NO”: Girls’ sexual agency

According to Harrison, *et al.*, (2012) girls are able to refuse sex. These researchers demonstrate how some of the girls in their study expressed greater self efficacy regarding the refusal of sex as compared to boys (Harrison, *et al.*, 2012). Nancy states during the individual interview,

My one boyfriend I went out with him for one year and I refused to sleep with him so he went around sleeping with everybody.

The pressure on some girls to engage in sexual activities is evident in this excerpt. Non-compliance and the refusal to submit to sex often places an enormous amount of pressure on many girls, thus making them sexually vulnerable. Many girls are often forced to deal with the reality of not giving into sex and therefore losing their boyfriends to other girls. This is indicative of the ways in which many girls are held to ransom by boys. There is also pressure on many girls to give into sex, particularly if they have been dating their boyfriends for a long time. Some girls believe that sex motivates boys to become involved in intimate or long term relationships (Gevers, *et al.*, 2012). In this particular scenario, Nancy’s boyfriend does not only gain or reclaim a strong sense of maleness (being macho) but also places girls at risk of becoming HIV infected or contracting other sexually transmitted diseases, due to his irresponsible and careless behaviour which includes having multiple sexual partners. Despite this however, it is clear that Nancy was able to exercise sexual agency through her refusal to have sex. This indicates that not all girls are passive recipients of male dominance and sexual power as they are able to assert themselves in these kinds of situations (Bhana & Pattman, 2009; Casale, *et al.*, 2011).

The data also reveals that Catherine exercises her right to refuse to have sex with a boy that she had been dating. She says,

He asked me if I will sleep with him and I said NO.

These words clearly indicate that Catherine was sexually agentic, whereby she was able to reject boys who resorted to emotional blackmail in order to gain sex. This shows that there are girls who do not easily succumb to one of the many pressures that they are currently facing as teenagers, the pressure to submit to sex. This particular participant therefore challenges and destabilises accepted gender norms, thus indicating that she is not only aware but also in control of her sexuality. This finding is consistent with the findings of research conducted by Bhana and Pattman (2011) which found that some girls in their study were able to resist and reject boys' sexual advances because they claimed that they were not ready to have sex.

Salo (2002) argues that racial meanings of 'Colouredness' equated Coloured women's sexuality with the degraded, immoral, undisciplined sexuality and sexual impurity. This notion of Colouredness clearly reinforces the view that Coloured girls' sexuality in particular, has been negatively represented in the past. However, the two extracts highlighted above clearly show that not all Coloured girls are promiscuous or sexually impure, as Salo (2002) describes. Both Nancy and Catherine exercise sexual agency through their refusal to submit to sex. This can be seen as a form of protest and resistance, as they are not merely passive victims of accepted gender role norms, which often encourage young women to be sexually available to their male partners (Bhana & Pattman, 2009; Harrison, *et al.*, 2006; Shefer & Ruiters, 1998; Wood, *et al.*, 1998).

4.9 Sex education: HIV and AIDS awareness

Several scholars point out that there is a disjuncture between HIV and AIDS awareness programmes and their implementation at grassroots level (Ackermann & de Klerk, 2002; Boyce, *et al.*, 2007; Hallman, 2005; Marston & King, 2008). South African youth are often unable to put many of the educational messages portrayed in these various campaigns into practice. Whilst many of these campaigns focus on HIV prevention methods, they fail to take into account the reality of young people's lives (especially females) and the intersectionality of race, class, gender, sexuality and HIV and AIDS (Ackermann & de Klerk, 2002; Bhana & Epstein, 2007; Bhana & Pattman,

2011; Harrison, *et al.*, 2012; Holland, *et al.*, 1990; Pattman & Bhana, 2006; Pettifor, *et al.*, 2004).

In this study, it became clear that Nancy has several concerns regarding HIV and AIDS awareness programmes, whereby she feels that most preventative strategies are ambivalent because they encourage rather than prevent young people from engaging in sexual activities. She asserts,

Why tell people to condomise they should be telling them to wait till marriage. Why give free condoms in the library when you want people to wait till they married or till marriage. If they start talking about it to us in school then it will just make people start saying oh let's try it everyone is talking about it everyone wants to try it cause it sounds interesting.

This excerpt highlights Nancy's strong awareness of HIV and AIDS. She was also one of the two participants who shared their views on the HIV and AIDS pandemic, whereas many of the other participants showed little or no interest in this particular topic. It appears as though Nancy believes that issues around sexuality and HIV and AIDS should perhaps be silenced in her school, in an attempt to prevent learners from experimenting with sex at a young age. This excerpt therefore reinforces the message that curbing further spread of HIV and AIDS amongst South African school-going youth proves challenging and greater strides should be made, in order to encourage them to look after their bodies and health, especially in light of the fact that they are most vulnerable to HIV infection (Boyce, *et al.*, 2007; Hallman, 2005; Magnani, *et al.*, 2005; Marston & King, 2008 and elsewhere).

Nancy goes on to state,

It is nonsense because they'll put up the slogan ABC and nobody will go out and explain everything so they just put it out there and they say oh this is the new slogan but nobody knows the true meaning of it.

Although knowledge on how to protect oneself against HIV and AIDS may not be usable in daily situations of economic and social disadvantage that characterise many

of the lives of young people, especially females (Hallman, 2005), Nancy's argument however, highlights that many young people are often unable to *understand* many of the messages portrayed in various HIV awareness campaigns, such as the ABC [Abstain, Be faithful, Condomise] slogan. This could perhaps explain why many girls in particular, choose to engage in risky sexual behaviours in the time of HIV and AIDS. This participant therefore expresses her desire for young people to be better informed about issues around sexuality and HIV and AIDS. Despite much debate around the achievement of success and positive outcomes of HIV and AIDS projects (Aggleton, *et al.*, 2011; Gupta, *et al.*, 2011), Nancy's views resonate with the work of several researchers which documents that sex education and HIV awareness programmes have had disappointing results (Ackermann & de Klerk, 2002; Boyce, *et al.*, 2007; Hallman, 2005; Marston & King, 2008).

It must be acknowledged that whilst Nancy on the one hand feels that issues around sex and HIV and AIDS should be regarded as taboo, she also expresses her desire to be better informed about these issues, thus indicating that as a teenager, she does perhaps have conflicting notions or ideas about sex, sexuality and HIV and AIDS. This could also perhaps be the case for many teenagers living in Sydenham.

4.10 Conclusion

This analysis illuminated the diverse ways in which seven Coloured high school girls construct their sexual identities, particularly in an era where HIV and AIDS is rife. This was done in an effort to show how these girls give meaning to their sexualities, as opposed to negatively representing Coloured women and girls' sexuality. This analysis attempted to do this in several ways. Firstly, it highlighted many of the negative perceptions that some girls in this study have towards the gendered and sexual (unsafe or risky) practices of boys and other girls. Secondly, it demonstrated how gender and sexual agency is implicated in girls' engagement in unsafe sexual practices, which not only feeds into the negative perceptions of Coloured girls, but also shows how these girls resist, contest and challenge accepted gender role norms and dominant male sexual behaviours (Casale, *et al.*, 2011; Mudaly, 2012; O'Sullivan, *et al.*, 2006; Shefer & Foster, 2001; Shefer & Ruiters, 1998). Thirdly, this analysis illustrated the multiple ways in which many of the girls in this study negotiate safe sex practices with their partners, by being sexual agents. In this way,

they also resist and deconstruct accepted gender role norms and racial stereotypes of Coloured girls, which are still pervasive in society. This clearly reinforces the message that these girls, despite all being Coloured, are not a homogeneous group. This analysis also showed that the participants from a middle class context were able to exercise a certain amount of agency and negotiate safe sex practices with their partners, whereas the participant from a working class context chose to engage in unsafe sexual practices, thus placing herself at risk of becoming HIV infected or pregnant. This indicates that contextual factors can also perhaps have an impact on the sexual behaviours and decisions of many teenagers (girls).

The concluding chapter that follows provides a consolidation of the main findings of this research. This chapter also provides possible recommendations, in an attempt to raise greater HIV and AIDS awareness, encourage safer sex practices as well as build more caring, loving and cohesive relationships amongst young people living in Sydenham and elsewhere.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter presents a summary of the content and structure of the four chapters of this dissertation. This chapter also provides a consolidation of the main findings of this research. It then goes on to provide possible recommendations, in an attempt to raise greater HIV and AIDS awareness, encourage safer sex practices as well as build more caring, loving and cohesive relationships amongst young people living in Sydenham and elsewhere.

This qualitative study has centred on a group of seven Coloured high school girls aged 16-17. These girls emerge from both working and middle class backgrounds in the former Coloured suburb, Sydenham. This study explored the variegated ways in which these schoolgirls construct their sexualities, particularly in the time of HIV and AIDS. It also focused on the intersectionality of youth, gender, race, class and sexuality.

In the introductory chapter (chapter one), an outline of the background and focus as well as aims and objectives of this research was provided. The three key research questions framing this study were listed and the research site was also described in this chapter. An in-depth discussion on 'Coloured identity in South Africa' was then presented. This section highlighted many negative stereotypes of Coloured people as well as my reasons for exploring the sexual lives of Coloured girls.

Chapter two presented a thematic review of related literature. Numerous studies conducted in South Africa and elsewhere on gender, young women's sexuality, sexual risk, sexual violence and HIV and AIDS were reviewed, interrogated, synthesised and organised, to form several broad themes. This chapter documented findings of other research, paying particular attention to young women's constructions of sexuality in the context of HIV and AIDS. The themes identified in this chapter include gender, sexuality and HIV and AIDS; sexual vulnerabilities of young women and girls; sexual risk amongst young women and girls and sexual violence against young women and

girls. This chapter also highlighted and discussed Connell's theory of gender and power (Connell, 1987) and Foucault's poststructuralist theory (Foucault, 1978).

Chapter three provided an in-depth discussion and description of the research design appropriate for this study. A qualitative research approach, interpretivist paradigm, case study methodology, purposive sampling method as well as two interviewing techniques (focus group and individual) were explored in this chapter. Limitations of this research, issues of validity and reliability, ethical considerations and the data analysis process were also outlined and discussed.

Chapter four presented the analysis and in-depth discussion of the findings using verbatim data and the main findings and conclusions were the focus of this chapter. Gender-power and poststructuralist theories were used to demonstrate how gender and power (male) are implicated in girls engaging in risky sexual practices, as well as the ways in which some girls (in this study) display and exercise sexual agency, by challenging, contesting and resisting accepted gender role norms, masculine sexual behaviours and racial stereotypes (Bhana & Pattman, 2009; Maxwell & Aggleton, 2010; Mudaly, 2012; O'Sullivan, *et al.*, 2006; Shefer, *et al.*, 2008; Shefer & Foster, 2001; Shefer & Ruiters, 1998).

Several themes emerged from the data produced in this study. These themes include Girls, boys and sex; Sex for money, clothing, transport and roc; "They'll go to parties get drunk and end up in some corner"; "Safe sex" practices of girls; Girls, condoms and unsafe sex; Losing one's virginity and Christian beliefs; "He asked me if I will sleep with him and I said NO": Girls' sexual agency as well as Sex education: HIV and AIDS awareness. Scholarly works on gender, race, class, sexuality and HIV and AIDS were also included in the analysis and discussion of these findings.

5.2 Main findings

This research concluded that many participants in this study have negative perceptions of the gendered and sexual behaviours of boys and other girls. These behaviours include the emotional blackmail of girls by boys who are in pursuit of sex, girls and boys having multiple sexual partners, gangbanging as well as girls rejecting condoms. This research also found that some girls engage in transactional sex with

older males, whereby they exchange sex for money, clothing, transport and drugs. In addition, this research revealed that some girls participated in unsafe sexual practices, due to a high consumption of alcohol.

This research goes on to show that six of the seven participants from middle class families reported practising safe sex with their partners, which included abstention, remaining faithful to one sexual partner and/or consistent condom use (Harrison, *et al.*, 2001). Whereas, one of the participants (from a working class family) along with many other girls, participated in unsafe or risky sexual practices, which included having more than one sexual partner, rejecting condoms, inconsistent condom use and/or gangbanging. These irresponsible or careless sexual behaviours have the potential to place many of these girls at risk of contracting HIV, other sexually transmitted diseases or becoming young mothers at school.

Other findings of this research revealed that three participants reported being virgins. One participant asserted that she intended to abstain from sex until marriage. Many of the participants also reported rejecting boys' sexual advances by refusing to submit to sex. This research finally concluded that there remains a disjuncture between HIV and AIDS awareness programmes, sex education and the implementation of preventative methods in many South African schools, particularly Breach High (Ackermann & de Klerk, 2002; Boyce, *et al.*, 2007; Hallman, 2005; Marston & King, 2008).

The findings of this research highlight the diverse ways in which these seven Coloured high school girls construct their sexual identities, particularly in an era when the HIV and AIDS prevalence rate is high. The findings show how constructions around gender and sexuality serve to perpetuate sexual practices that often place these girls at risk, but also illustrate how they resist, contest and challenge gender norms and dominant male sexual behaviours. This research also documents how many of the girls in this study demonstrate a certain amount of agency where they are able to negotiate safe sex practices with their partners, by being sexual agents. In this way, they show resistance to gender norms and racial stereotypes of Coloured girls.

5.3 Possible recommendations

According to Gupta, *et al.*, (2011), it is time for key players in the AIDS response to challenge and re-assess the basic assumptions about gender and sexuality on which interventions and entire national programmes are based, and invest in new and rigorous social science research to require the evidence base for future programming. This research shows that there are several conditions that allowed for more safer and alternative sexualities to flourish. Religious beliefs, familial opinion, self assertiveness and a strong awareness of the consequences of unplanned pregnancies were some of the factors that deterred many of the participants in this study from participating in unsafe sexual activities.

I would like to mention that I am not teaching in a school, as I am currently a full time Master of Education student. However, I intend to implement many of the strategies that I recommend, in my own school and classroom in the near future. From an educator's point of view, I feel that religious leaders, respected members of the community as well as parents should discuss issues around sex and the importance of being safe, with teenagers living in Sydenham. This should be done in order to encourage teenagers to practice safe sex, raise greater awareness around HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections and possibly deter them from engaging in risky sex. Teachers should also create opportunities for learners to discuss important issues such as teenage pregnancy, love, romance, dating and sex both inside and outside of the classroom. This is perhaps already being done during Life Orientation lessons. However, teachers should continue to encourage learners to express their thoughts, opinions, concerns and anxieties, in order to facilitate some sort of positive behavioural change, whereby they learn from each other's experiences and hardships.

Schools should also form social support groups which comprise of learners, teachers and even parents. These groups should create spaces for learners and adults [teachers and parents] to communicate more effectively with one another, especially with regard to issues around sexuality. Role-playing can also be a useful strategy, whereby learners are given the opportunity to enact different kinds of scenarios [risky or dangerous], in order to develop coping strategies that they could perhaps apply to their own lives, if the need arises.

Motivational speakers, community members as well as ex-learners could also be invited to these sessions to share their life experiences with learners and this could in turn, bring about some sort of reflection or positive behavioural change in the lives of some learners. I feel that teachers should also place more emphasis on building and encouraging more caring, loving and cohesive relationships amongst learners, in order to ensure greater gender equality in schools. Teachers should encourage learners to respect each other and their bodies and this should be ongoing. These social support groups could be used as a platform to build and strengthen learners' confidence and to teach them how to become more loving, sensitive and tolerant individuals, in simple and practical ways.

In addition, teachers should focus on understanding and listening to learners' concerns and anxieties around relationships, love, dating and sex, in an attempt to get to know them on a more personal level and to establish healthy and trustworthy relationships. This could enable teachers to develop effective strategies in order to encourage learners to nurture their health and make safer and healthier choices, through safe sex practices. Selikow, *et al.*, (2009) suggest that by understanding adolescents' beliefs as contradictory, educators (and others) can identify spaces within these contradictions where positive intervention work can take place.

I believe that encouraging and influencing even a small group of teenagers, to pursue safe sex practices is a step towards a healthier South Africa. My study clearly indicates that there are girls who choose to engage in safe sexual behaviours, despite many social prescriptions and pressures that are often placed upon them, as females. MacPhail and Campbell (2001) propose that young people who challenge stereotypical norms and beliefs provide a fertile starting point for the possibility of new behavioural norms which provide health enhancing environments in which healthy sexual behaviour is more likely to be maintained. This study shed light on the fact that (working class) learners who live in harmful and toxic environments are perhaps more likely to engage in risky sex, thus placing themselves and others at risk. Some of these learners may have certain skills or interests and if this is the case, they should be encouraged to develop their skills and talents or pursue their interests, in an effort to deter them from engaging in unsafe or risky [sexual] activities. They should

also be encouraged to strive towards achieving their goals so that they can improve their quality of life.

5.4 Conclusion

I do not in anyway suggest that these recommendations are easy to implement, as promoting safe sex practices and achieving greater gender equality will be a constant struggle for many teachers in South Africa (and elsewhere). What is refreshing though is the evidence of some girls in this study who are determined to be champions in resisting male power and domination, particularly in the domain of sexuality. These girls also chose to practice safe sex, despite many pressures that are placed upon them as young South African women. One can therefore be *hopeful* that in the future, young people will live in a safer, healthier and more gender equitable South Africa.

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Appendices

Appendix 1



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3 August 2011

Ms. S Gopaldass (205511777)
School of Education Studies

Dear Ms. Gopaldass

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0088/08R

PROJECT TITLE: Gender and sexuality in the context of HIV/AIDS: Vulnerability and sexual risk amongst Coloured, working class high school girls in Durban.

NEED FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL WAIVED

I wish to inform you that the need for ethical review has been waived because this protocol forms part of a broader research protocol which has already received ethical clearance (HSS/0088/08).

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

cc. Supervisor – Prof. D Bhana
cc. Ms. T Mnisi



Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

Appendix 2

Dear parent / guardian

Title of study: Gender and sexuality in the context of HIV and AIDS: sexual risk and sexual agency amongst Coloured high school girls in Durban

My name is Sherri-Lee Gopaldass and I am currently studying towards a Master of Education Degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). As part of the requirements of the degree, I am required to complete a research dissertation. My study aims to explore and understand Coloured high school girls' views on sexuality which includes the practice of risky sexual behaviours as well as issues of growing concern in our country, such as teenage pregnancy and HIV and AIDS.

In order for the study to be a success, I require 16 or 17 year old, Coloured high school girls to participate in the research. I would be very grateful if you would consent to your daughter participating in my study.

If you choose to allow your daughter to participate in this research, she will be invited to respond to questions in a focus group interview, aimed at gaining an understanding of 16 or 17 year old girls' views on sexuality which as mentioned, includes the practice of risky sexual behaviours as well as issues such as teenage pregnancy and HIV and AIDS. Please note that this focus group interview will be tape recorded, as the information is required for the analysis of data and completion of the Master of Education Degree. The completion of this focus group interview will take approximately one and a half hours and it will be conducted at a primary school in Sydenham on a Friday afternoon or Saturday morning.

Participation is completely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your daughter (and your daughter has the right to withdraw herself) at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained at all times and in the analysis of the data and the completion of the Master of Education Degree. In other words, your daughter's identity and the identity of other people that she may refer to during the focus group interview will not be revealed at any time.

If you would like any further information or if you are unclear about anything, please feel free to contact me on **0728701869**.

Your cooperation and your daughter's participation is valued and highly appreciated.

Kind regards

S. Gopaldass

(Researcher)

Dr. B. Anderson

(Supervisor)

Declaration by parent of participant

<p>I, _____ (I.D. number _____)</p> <p>in the capacity of parent/guardian of (daughter's details)</p> <p>_____ (I.D. number _____)</p> <p>hereby confirm as follows:</p>

(Please initial against each paragraph)

1. My child was invited to participate in the above mentioned research project, which is being undertaken by Sherri-Lee Gopaldass of the Department of Gender in the Faculty of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal - Edgewood Campus. _____

2. This research aims to explore and understand Coloured high school girls' views on sexuality which includes the practice of risky sexual behaviours and issues of growing concern such as teenage pregnancy and HIV and AIDS. The information will be used as part of the requirements for the Master of Education Degree. The results of the study may be presented in specific publications. _____

3. I understand that I will need to complete the consent form and return it to the researcher on completion. In addition, my child will be required to participate in a one and a half to two hour long focus group interview, which will be tape recorded by the researcher. _____

4. My child's identity will not be revealed in any discussion, description or scientific publication by the researcher. _____

5. My child's participation is voluntary. My decision whether or not to allow my child to participate, or my child's decision whether or not to participate, will in no way affect her present or future school career or lifestyle. _____

6. No pressure was exerted on me to consent to my child's participation and I understand that I may withdraw my child or she may withdraw at any stage, without penalisation. _____

7. Participation in this study will not result in any cost to my child or myself. _____

I consent voluntarily to allow my child to participate in the above mentioned project.

Signed at _____ on _____ 2012.

Signature of parent/guardian of participant: _____

Dear participant (child)

Do you understand this study and are you willing to participate?

Tick one:

YES

NO

Signature of child

Date

Appendix 3

Interview Schedule

Focus group

1. What is your name? How old are you? What grade are you in?
2. Where do you live? Who do you live with?
3. Do your parents work? What type of work do they do?
4. What about your area/community? Tell me a little bit about the area that you live in.
5. Do you like school? Explain
6. Do you have many friends at school? Explain
7. Do you have a boyfriend? Tell me about this.
8. Where and how did you meet?
9. What are some of the things that you like about your boyfriend?
10. What do you and your boyfriend do for fun?
11. Do you love your boyfriend? Why do you say this?
12. What are some of the qualities that you look for in a boy?
13. How many boyfriends have you had? Have you ever had more than one boyfriend at a time? Explain
14. Is it okay for your boyfriend to date other girls? Talk about this.
15. What about other girls? Do they date more than one boy at a time?
16. In your school or community, is it okay for girls to date more than one boy at a time? Is this acceptable? Explain
17. How are girls expected to behave in your school or community?
18. Do you know if your friends have sex with their partners? What about you?
19. Do you or your friends use protection during sex? Why?
20. Do you know any girls in your school or community who have fallen pregnant while they were still in school? Tell me a little bit about this.
21. What about HIV and AIDS? Do you know about HIV and AIDS? In your opinion, why do you think so many girls in your age group (16 or 17) engage in unsafe sex with their partners?
22. Do you and your friends ever talk about sex or HIV and AIDS? Tell me what are some of the things that you talk about.

Appendix 4

Interview Schedule

Follow up individual interview

1. Let's talk a little bit about your sexual debut. How old were you when you first had sex? Tell me a little bit about this.
2. Have you had sex with more than one partner? Explain
3. You have a boyfriend. So do you have sex with him? Do you use protection? Explain
4. Do you ask your boyfriend to use a condom during sex? Tell me about this.
5. What about your friends? Do they have protected sex? Talk to me about this.
6. Can they ask their boyfriends/partners to use a condom during sex? Are boys okay with this?
7. Do your friends have sex with different partners (boys)? Explain
8. Do you think its okay to have multiple sexual partners? Explain
9. Do your friends or other girls in your school date older boys or men? Tell me about this. Do you do this?
10. Do your friends or any of these girls have sex with older boys or men? Talk about this.
11. During the focus group interview we talked about boys who break up with girls if they refuse sex. Has this ever happened to you? Tell me about this.
12. Have any of your friends ever been forced or pressurised to have sex? What about you?
13. What about HIV and AIDS? Do you and your friends ever talk about this? What are some of the things that you talk about?
14. What are your views on condom use and abstinence?
15. Let's talk about teenage pregnancy? Have you ever fallen pregnant?
16. Has this ever happened to your friends or girls in your school? Tell me about this.