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Beyond Schooling: Primary School Girls Experiences of Gender and Sexual violence.

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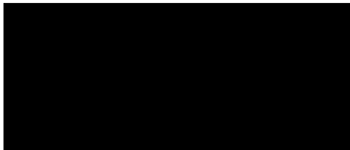
Signed: 

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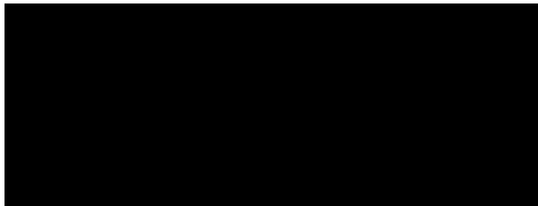
Signed: 

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Dedication

To the girls in this study

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My mother, Mrs Chilka Reddy, You have always been so proud of me and I do hope that I continue to make you proud. Your perseverance in ensuring that we, your children, are educated and successful is something that I am forever grateful and has been *the* stepping stone to my success in life. Your investment in your children continues to draw dividends, and this study is evidence. Thank you.

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Preface

My reflections on writing this thesis

This ethnography is not about me, but I am an inescapable part of it; the 'me' in it troubles and disturbs the neat process through which qualitative research is constructed. I am an Indian Tamil woman, born in South Africa. Tamils orginated in the southern parts of Indian and Sri Lanka and speak the language which is also called Tamil (more than 2 000 years old). My religion is Hinduism. Hinduism proscribes my beliefs and actions as a woman. As an Indian Hindu woman, I am expected to adhere to specific cultural beliefs and gender norms that should dictate my existence. These include beliefs that I am supposed to imbibe so that they infuse my whole being, operating like a network, that should flood my body and mind so that I undertand my position in Indian society and within an Indian family. Being an Indian woman meant that I adhere to the socialisation process that was already carved for me. These included my mannerisms, my attire, my devotion to my husband, children and elders, my role as nurturer and caregiver, and my commitment to Hinduism. In my greetings, I am supposed to put my palms together and say 'Namaste' or 'Vanakkam', which is also a sign of respect.

Apartheid also infused my life, classifying me as person of colour who was also subjected to restrictions. My freedom was curtailed. However, where there is oppression, there is resistance and my resistance to cultural and gender norms marks my power. Throughout the study, I found that the concept of being an 'insider' take on more meaning than I had initially imagined. To me, the predication of what an insider is, was more than being a teacher at the research site for ten years. In fact, and to be true to myself, the concept of 'insider' and the intimacy with the subject it entails became real as the study progressed, and with my growing familiarity with the participants. It forced me empathise, to relive my youth, and my school days, unearthing memories and emotions that I had buried years ago. To date, I would offer people only a glimpse into my past, preferring to keep my history to myself. However, this study demanded more than just writing up my ethnography. It required honesty from myself first, in order to be more perceptive of the nuances in character and emotions I had shared with the girls in this study. This required that I unravelled my own psyche, and trace my roots to my working class upbringing and understanding my experiences of school violence, along with gender and sexual harassment I dealt with when I was a learner.

I grew up in an extended family; my parents lived with my grandmother who rented a council home for R35 a month in Springfield, an all Indian working classdistrict constructed under apartheid. As I write now, I am able to reflect on how the poorer residential areas were named districts and the wealthy residential areas called suburbs. Along with my three siblings and parents I shared this home with my grandmother. We were a family of six, and an extended family of seven.

We were not rich, but we were not poor either. My father worked as a waiter and my mother supplemented this income by working as a service hand in a clothing factory. My mother was thirty eight years old when my father died. I was fifteen. I was sad that he had died, but I was not devastated. My biggest fear revolved around what would happen to us as a family. I had realised long ago that my grandmother knew of my father's extra-marital affair, witnessed my mother's suffering and despair and now with my father dead, wished us to leave as she held no extended loyalty or feeling toward us without the shadow of a man, her son, to shade us. I recognise now the power of patriarchy. My mother lacked a voice and a position in her union with a man she named her husband; a connection that was tenuous after his death, all dependent on those surrounding us.

My mother left work, and collected child support grants to support and pay for our schooling. We attended Araya Samaj, a state aided primary school, where the school fees was R2 [0.13USD] a year. There were huge power differentials between the teachers and the learners here, which was typical at the time, given the intrinsic veneration awarded to teachers retained through first and second generational Indians. A teacher was also given the title 'Guru' [translated, means a spiritual teacher] thus teachers were seen as 'Godlike' and therefore unquestionable and incontestable both in their knowledge and teaching practices. Parents respected this authority, hence when we were beaten, we never complained to our parents since they [parents] they beat us even further.

Teachers did take advantage of their exalted positions and my parents, amongst many, sought to gain favour with my teachers. They would often send fruit, appetizing curries and 'presents' for our teachers. When my father returned from Lorenzo Marques (now, Maputo) in Mozambique, my parents maintained a steady supply of 'cashew nuts' for a teacher who requested them regularly. At the end of the year, it was customary to send small gifts to thank our teachers for teaching us.

Ideas of teaching and disciplinary practices have changed drastically from then. We were often subjected to ridicule and corporal punishment for not knowing our work. I used to receive ‘strikes’ on my knuckles for not knowing my tables and for not emphasising the ‘r’ in Afrikaans[1] words. I remember an English exercise that required we write an imaginary story about the sea. When our work was returned, mine was held back. I had written about encountering a grouper [a giant fish] in the ocean. The teacher then proceeded to tell the class about my story and they all laughed, including the teacher, who tried to convince me that there was no such fish as a ‘grouper’. I know it was an imaginary story, but the grouper is a real fish!

In August, 1976, I misbalanced and fell whilst doing a cartwheel during a physical education (P.E) lesson. I suffered a major fracture on my hip. I had pins inserted into my hips and hard plaster wrapped around my entire body and my left leg for six weeks. I had to walk with crutches for three months. I stayed at home for the remainder of the year and I did not want to be seen walking and balancing with crutches. I hated my P.E. Teacher.

It was during this period that I became very conscious of my body and my gait [I walked with a limp following the injury]. I became ashamed of my physical appearance, which is not unique, however during that period to every teenager seems to be, heightening the feelings of isolation and awkwardness that comes with developing sexuality. This shame followed me into high school the following year.

In 1978, I started standard 7 in Abelia Secondary School. It was a year of turmoil and violence. Abelia Secondary School became one of the many schools that joined in the rejection of apartheid schooling. Learners boycotted classes, argued with teachers who urged them to return to class and even resorted to violence, like stoning the school and teachers cars. The police would be called to disperse students and we would try to run into nearby houses but many of us would run or walk quickly into the nearby ground and head towards our district. It was both a frightening and exciting experience, formative in a way. We prided

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Afrikaans[1] One of the compulsory languages that prevailed in the Apartheid era. Leaners refused to be taught in this language, arguing that Afrikaans (and English) were foreign languages, associated with oppression and racism. Furthermore, the language was regarded as foreign as it led to the suppression and oppression of indigenous language that most people in South Africa spoke (Napier & Napier, 2002).

ourselves with the knowledge that we were fighting against structural inequalities and we would become part of history. [2]

I remembered the day when I was accosted by a boy on my way home from school. I was 14 years old. I usually walked home through the municipal grounds, as this was a shortcut. Many other learners also walked this route as my school was the closest high school to the district in which I lived.[3] At the moment the boy grabbed me, I had no friends nearby. I fell to the ground. He fell on top of me and attempted to kiss me, hurting me in my struggles to free myself. His friends laughed and I remember kicking and fighting and crying. He let me go. I was so ashamed and I felt that I was responsible. I remember thinking that this only happened to girls. Why did this person want to hurt or embarass me? This is not what boys do to girls that they like. So why did he do it? It is this question that becomes fundamental to the victim in many cases of assault. Why did they do this to me, which often turns to self-reflection and blame towards themselves. I did not tell my mother. But now, 42 years later, I shared this experience with the girls in this study.

I remember my typing teacher at school. I recall how he used to pause behind me and other girls. And then I would wait, knowing that he would be reaching for my bra strap any second. And then the sting would come. He would pull on the bra strap and release it to sting as a reprimand for a mistake or error in our work. We never complained to the other teachers or to our parents. Silence was the order of the day. I now recognise fear as an all-encompassing emotion–and that dictated my decisions to remain silent. This is what I too recognised in the girls in this PhD study.

I recall another incident: I was going to the local shop and I was stopped by an older man who asked me for directions to the same ground, even though the ground was a mere 20 meters from the shop. I remember turning tail and walking as fast as I could back to my granny's house. When I realised that he was following, I broke into a run and reached her house.

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[2]

[3] As I write now, I reflect on how the poorer residential areas were labelled 'districts' and the wealthier residential areas were called suburbs.

Sometimes I felt uneasy listening to a girl as she talked about an experience that reminded me of an experience of my own. For example, when girls spoke about their boyfriends with such animation, I was often transported to my childhood days in primary school. I remember being aware and conscious of thoughts, my feelings and my body from an early age. I always wanted to look neat and clean and prided myself on having the pleats in my uniform pressed with a hot iron over a damp cloth [I did not know about steam irons and even if they existed at that time, we never owned one]. When I was in the lower grades, my mother used to plait my long hair tightly, but I countered this severe look by asking her to weave shiny, long silky white ribbons into my plaits. When I was in standard 5 (grade 7), she cut my hair to a shoulder length and I would then wear an 'Alice band'. My hair used to curl around my face and I felt pretty. I know understand how self-objectification was key to the way I presented myself to my peers. However, boyfriends did not feature at this stage in my life. Boys were not attracted to me. Even in high school, I recall being teased and looked down upon because of my physical appearance and my social location. What was wrong with my physical appearance? Many who know me now would ask this question. Now, in my adult life, I am considered pretty. But I remember what it was like to feel less 'with it' than the other girls, and this, I am sure, impacted on my fieldwork (See p. 18).

I started menstruating in when I was 13 years old and a few months before I fractured my hip. When I first got my period, I was asked to stay in room where only females had access to me. I had to swallow a raw egg for breakfast every morning as it was believed that the egg would strengthen my uterus. My mother also noted the time and date when my period first started and this information was taken to a Hindu Brahmin (male priest) who would then consult with his religious 'books' and inform her as to whether my period has started in a 'good' time or a 'bad' time. If it was a 'bad' time, then my mother has to perform a special prayer to ward off the evil. Then a ceremony would be performed. This ritual required that I dress in a sari, decorate my hair with flowers and wear gold jewelry. I had to resemble an Indian bride. These rituals celebrated my coming of age, meaning that I was now of a marriageable age since I had reached reproductive status. Subsequently, girls who achieved menstrual status were referred to as 'aged up'! I hated these words, I felt that they somehow made me appear 'old', no longer a child. Yet my so-called maturity did not earn me suitors. I remember the word 'dark' was often used to describe me and my skin colour by relatives and people I knew and by my peers. I remember clearly an experience at school when I was walking with a friend and I heard the boys behind us comment on the differences in our legs. I still remember

the boy's scornful laughter as he said "check the colour and shape!" pointing out my legs to his friends. My legs were dark brown and thin as compared to my friend's, whom I thought was more attractive and who had a lighter complexion. I remember clearly the humiliation and hurt I felt. I wanted to be admired and I wanted boys to find me attractive too. Thus, as Lamb and Peterson (2011) suggest, perhaps subjective empowerment is suspect when considering a 13 year old who may not be in the best position to evaluate the context and background behind her own sense of empowerment–or her own subordination. Light skin colour was, and I think still is, most attractive to Indian people. Even now, when my mother-in-law introduces me to people she usually says something in Hindi that ends with "Naveen's wife. She is Tamil". Tamil people emerging from the South of Indian, are generally noted for their dark skin.

My menstruation time was truly a most unhappy and stressful time for me. I experienced both shame and pain. I used to be so embarrassed to purchase sanitary pads at the local shop because I was scared that the boys would see it and then tease me. I was even ashamed to ask the shopkeeper for sanitary pads. However, I soon moved past this: I would write the word 'Kotex' [a brand name] on a piece of paper and hand it to the shopkeeper. He would wrap the 'offending' item in newspaper and then place it into a packet. I would accept the packet with my head bent and walk as fast as I could out of the shop, avoiding the groups of boys that used to congregate around the shops, holding my 'secret' tightly. I often wondered if this transaction was embarrassing for him as it was for me. Campus days were most traumatic. I had to dose myself with painkillers a day before my menstruation started and continue until it ceased. I used to suffer acute pain and I sometimes used to faint. I would then be brought home by one of my lecturers.

From the time I started my menstruation I was viewed in a different light. I was not allowed to wear jeans because it drew attention to my body, my mother expected me home at a certain time, she estimated the time it will take me to reach home after school and she would wait for me. If I was late, I had to have a plausible explanation or risk being accused having a boyfriend and then punished physically and verbally. I did manage to get a boyfriend though, although the relationship fizzled out after a few months. He was my brother's peer and I was scared of my brother.

I am now a married women with two children, a boy and a girl. The world has not changed even though I am now on the other side in terms of my status. I find myself constantly contesting the essentialist constructs of gender and normative gender roles bestowed upon me by society and culture.

Abstract

This ethnography explored primary school girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence at Westhills Primary School. My key objectives were to understand the underlying factors that shaped my respondents' experiences of such violence, to develop an understanding of how teachers' attitudes contributed to these experiences, and to explore how the girls constructed their sexual identities. Throughout the study I highlight the importance of understanding the context in which gender and sexual violence occurs.

Gender and sexual violence and harassment is not easily explained but through girls' own experiences this study seeks to provide a contextual understanding of such violence. Often feminist researchers suggest that such violence is always an exercise of power that boys and men engage in to subordinate girls. Sexualised verbal abuse, taunts and teasing are conduits through which boys assert themselves to display dominance.

In this study I ask questions about how humiliating acts—such as the 'sexualised touching' of girls' private parts—can be interpreted both as an indication of heterosexual teasing linked to heterosexual attraction and as a humiliating act that seeks to erode girls' sexuality by drawing attention to their sexual development. Such confusion suggests that girls are complicit in their own subordination, just as they are subordinated by the performance of dominant heterosexual masculinities. The study shows that heterosexual femininity is shaped by broader structural, cultural and social processes in which girls are subordinated through rampant sexual harassment, abuse and violence. Girls' experiences of persecution and oppression are located in socio-cultural factors that manifest in gender asymmetries that benefit the construct of hegemonic masculinities and subordinated femininities. Such misogyny is part of the enactment and pursuit of hegemonic ideals since it works to destroy a girl's concept of herself, eroding her sexuality and dignity and causing her humiliation. To claim that the girls were passive victims nullifies their sexualities, just as to claim that boys performed sexually harassing behaviours towards girls because of their age and stage of development is too simplistic: it nullifies the legitimacy of the girls' experiences of unwanted touching, fondling and groping. While the school thus became a platform or training ground for boys to display culturally exalted forms of masculinity, such as boldness, sexual entitlement, heterosexuality and the privilege of male power, it was also a training ground for the girls.

However, embedded in the girls' experiences of persecution and oppression was their negotiation of their own gender and sexual identities in heterosexuality. Girls, too, are invested in heterosexuality, and a central aim of this thesis is to show the agency that young girls' exercise through their experiences of gender and sexual violence.

The girls' increased sexual assertiveness debunks the myth of the sexual innocence and sexual passivity in young school girls, resisting the construction of them as little people who have little or no agency. The girls' resistance and challenge to the hierarchal positioning that the boys occupy constitutes a challenge to hegemonic displays of masculinity such as male supremacy and male domination.. Girls have a sophisticated sense of what constitutes sexual harassment and violence. They have the ability to name and make visible their complex gendered and sexual entanglement with and among boys.

Listening carefully to what girls themselves raised as problematic, unwanted and oppressive, has enabled me to illuminate the nuanced dimensions of sexual harassment and violence – physical, verbal and emotional assault – and its dynamic association with heterosexual masculinity and the broader social and cultural environment through which girls are subordinated. The girls' experiences of sexual harassment, and the teachers' lack of interest in addressing it, suggest that whilst the education system has evolved over time, the violence that the girls experience is situated within a larger sociocultural construction of gender that has its roots in patriarchy which, whilst being malleable, remains steadfastly robust and resilient.

I conclude by arguing that what is required is a rigorous and concerted effort on the part of all teaching staff to examine our teaching practices, our accountability and our integrity in relation to our jobs as teachers and our ethics of care towards the learners. More importantly, it requires an analysis of our own gendered behaviours and beliefs, and a critical reflection of how these contribute to the regulatory capture of young girls' sexuality and agency. Once we have a better understanding of young girls' sexuality and agency, we will be able to reject practices that condone gender inequalities in our school and beyond and offer alternatives whereby the school can become a core site of change, and where teachers are prepared and supported to challenge the widespread practice and tolerance of unequal gender norms.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAUW – American Association of University Women

AIDS - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

ATM – Automatic Teller Machine

CAPS – Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

CP – Corporal Punishment

DoE – Department of Education

ECD – Early Childhood Development

FCS – Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences

FP – Foundation Phase

HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HOD – Head of Department

HRW – Human Rights Watch

IP – Intermediate Phase

L/S- Life Skills

MMC – Medical Male Circumcision

NCS – National Curriculum Statement

NS – Natural Science

RNCS – Revised National Curriculum Statement

SAHRC – South African Human Rights Council

SAPS – South African Police Services

SASA- South African School Act No. 84 of 1996

SNES – Special Needs Education Services

SOA – Sexual Offences Act

SP - Senior Primary

UNAIDS – Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

WHO – World Health Organisation

Glossary of terms

Asidlale amagenda – girls explained that this was a slang word boys used to indicate a desire to have sex with them

Blocks – the school building is built in separate long buildings that is referred to as ‘Blocks’.

Foundation Phase – Grades R - 3

Imijondolo/jondol - shacks

Intermediate Phase – Grades 4 - 5

intombiyana - girl

ischoolbus – taxis that are used by the learners to commute to school and home

Lento mnyama le asikhungce okukhala – you are like burnt meat

Malume/uMalume - uncle

Msunu kanyoko - (slang and derogatory word) your mother’s private part

Msunu kayihlo – (slang and derogatory word) your father’s private part

ingquza (ingquza) - vagina

Ntombazane yesikhashana - girl of the moment

Nkosi Sikelel` iAfrika – South African Naional Anthem

Quantum – minibus that serves as a taxi by taxi operators

Senior Phase – grades 7-9

Siyanda – name of the taxi driver and the taxi.

uAunti - aunty

Uyabanda (kubanda) – cold or frigid

Ukubatshwa – to be struck

Ukuhlonipha - respect

Umfana – boy

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Chapter 1

Gender and sexual violence in primary schools

Field notes: Date: 31/08/2012 Time: 11:45 Place: Senior Primary Block

The lunch break that normally ends at 11h15 has been extended to 11h45 because an emergency staff meeting has been called concerning the merger of Westhills Primary School with its neighbouring school. Cleaners and prefects and some members of management are asked to assist with ground duty whilst the meeting is in progress. I am dispatched to block duty. I walk around the Foundation Phase (FP) blocks and then make my way towards the Senior Primary (SP) block. At 11h45, the buzzer goes. The wail of the siren combines with the noisy learners as they start running towards their classrooms. I stand aside, wanting to ensure that no one gets hurt as the learners push their way up the stairs, heading towards their classrooms. It is hot, the children are hot and sweating. I notice a small group of Senior Primary girls lingering just behind the block. I move towards them to ask that they make their way to their classrooms. When I get closer, I notice that one of the girls is visibly upset. She is crying so I enquire what the matter is. The girls hesitate, then one of them says that she got hurt when a boy pushed her, but that she is okay now. I ask the girl to confirm that this is what happened and she nods to indicate that she is okay. She also avoids looking at me. I ask her to take a few minutes to regain her composure and suggest that she washes her face to remove traces of her crying. I ask the other girls to return to class. I ask again if she is okay and she says 'Yes'. I leave her and head towards my class where I am due to teach Mathematics.

Field notes: Date: 31/08/2012 Time: 14h00 Place: My office

The Senior Primary Head of Department (HOD) comes into my office and asks me if I am aware of a game called 'Spin the bottle'. I say I am not, and she proceeds to explain it to me. She tells me that the game involves kissing and violence. She also tells me that the girl who had been upset earlier was crying because a boy had grabbed her breast. She says she has spoken to both the learners and that the girl said they had been playing a game of 'slapping' each other and that the game had gone wrong.

1.1.Introduction

The focus of this thesis is to explore gender and sexual violence within a primary school. These two extracts reflect the core my argument, which is that primary school girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence are driven by unequal gender norms which are situated within a heterosexual discourse. The purpose of this chapter is to provide background to the study, in particular how the school works as an intermediary to regulate, capture and stymy young girls' sexuality. I then locate sexual violence within the discourse of

heterosexuality and discuss how sociocultural norms and values attached to gender, sexuality and age underpin girls' experiences of sexual violence.

My fieldwork examined the experiences of gender and sexual violence amongst twelve primary school girls, aged twelve to fourteen, in Westhills Primary, a co-educational school located in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa. These excerpts from my field notes capture the essence of my study. To begin with, they immediately locate the girl's experiences of gender and sexual violence within the context of heterosexuality. Although there is an extensive and growing amount of research on sexuality and sexual violence in South Africa, the focus has largely been on high schools (Bhana, 2012; Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Jewkes & Morrell, 2012) and on children aged seven to nine (Bhana, 2013, Jewnarain, 2013, and Mayeza, 2017). Girls between the ages of 12–14 have been largely overlooked (see Bhana 2018 as an exception). Part of the purpose of my thesis is to address this gap. I believe that working with girls of the 12–14 age group is critical if we are to reduce the scourge of gender and sexual violence in schools, and in society more broadly.

The experiences of primary school girls such as those in my study seldom come to light, and even less seldom are they heard from the girls' own perspectives, and in their own words. In the chapters that follow I present their graphic and vivid descriptions of the experiences they have lived through, and show how they navigate a heterosexual and masculine domain that significantly reduces their opportunity to exercise agency. Throughout the study, I emphasise girls' interpretations of what constitutes gendered and sexualised harassment, interpretations that are driven by their own social and cultural realities. Throughout my thesis, sexual violence is thus defined by the girls: through the scenarios and examples they themselves highlight as unwanted sexualised behaviours. The girls' ambivalence towards sexual violence or unwanted behaviour problematizes such top down definitions. The lines between sexual harassment, sexual violence and consent are blurred. In the same vein, scholars caution about romanticising girls' agency because sexual harassment is, undeniably, an issue of power that is located mainly within a masculinity discourse (Bhana, 2017). For this reason I am cautious about romanticising my respondents' agency. Rather, I adopt the concept 'lite' agency (Bhana, 2017) which is not to indicate the absence of power or girls' ability to act. Rather 'lite' agency as Bhana explains, points to girls' restrictions, their inability to comprehensively act, choose and contest within a broader environment which reduces their action. Her conception of 'lite' agency is incredibly important as it sends such a clear signal, telling us

that whilst it is important to recognise young girls' agency, it is also important to recognise how incredibly complex and nuanced violence plays out within the domain of heterosexuality.

1.2. Defining the problem of gender and sexual violence in schools

In 2001, Human Rights Watch (HRW) released a report entitled *Scared at School* that communicated the horror of sexual violence in and around a sample of South African schools. It spoke of widespread sexual violence, sexual abuse and sexual harassment in which teachers and boys were named as perpetrators. According to the report, one of the greatest threats to a South African girl's safety at school is likely to be seated next to her in the class. Larger, quantitative studies that followed in the wake of this report validated that sexual violence and abuse of schoolgirls was, indeed, prevalent in many schools throughout South Africa (see, for example, Burton and Leoschut, 2012; Mncube & Harber, 2013; Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013). These studies are important because they provide evidence of an extensive landscape of sexual violence in South African schools. However, a notable gap in these studies has been attention to the context in which sexual violence occurs.

Recent reports of gender and sexual violence conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (Lynch, Essop, Tolla & Morison, 2018) and published in the media (Daniels, 2018) show that South African schools continue to be dangerous and violent spaces. Qualitative research that puts sexual violence at the forefront of investigation is scarce (see Bhana, 2018 as an exception). Bhana, who has located the primary school as a key site for the production of sexual identities, argues that there is a need to explore sexual violence in the primary school, and that young children's sexuality needs to be recognised. She argues that interventions to ameliorate girls' negative schooling experiences must take account of contextual realities, and emphasises that girls' sexuality must not be seen as a biological construct but as a part of their identity construction—which is underpinned by their social relations with others. Scholars have also recognised that a key feature of South African girls' experiences of sexual violence is that they are situated within a heterosexual discourse (Bhana, 2018; Gevers et al., 2012; Lynch et al., 2018). Such studies have shown that dominant constructions of gender and sexuality inform boys' interactions with girls, and that there is no other place, except the school, where such displays of power become most evident: Girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence are linked to dominant

constructions of hegemonic masculinity that define maleness as powerful, strong, and displaying both sexual interest and misogyny towards females.

Throughout this thesis I thus highlight the importance of understanding the context in which gender and sexual violence occurs. I argue, drawing on studies (Bhana, 2017; 2018, Cobbett & Warrington, 2013; Renold, 2005) that girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence are not so easily explained because there is no general consensus over what constitutes sexual harassment. I ask questions about how humiliating acts—such as the 'sexualised touching' of girls' private parts—can be interpreted both as an indication of heterosexual teasing linked to heterosexual attraction and as a humiliating act that seeks to erode girls' sexuality by drawing attention to their sexual development. In many of my respondents' experiences, confusion created uncertainty about sexualised touching and blurred the line between wanted and unwanted sexualised behaviour. Such confusion suggests that girls are complicit in their own subordination, just as they are subordinated by the performance of dominant heterosexual masculinities. Thus it is important that due consideration is given to what the girls themselves say and do, and their interpretation of their experiences. For me this was important as it prevented me from allowing my own bias to prevail in the interpretation of sexual harassment. It also allowed me to recognise my respondents' sexual agency as they contested gender power relations. Thus, whilst I recognise that sexual harassment causes huge anxieties, I also recognise that my respondents' active engagement in their sexualities was, for most, a pleasurable experience.

In the following part of this chapter, I draw on literature to discuss the prevalence of gender and sexual violence in schools. I also highlight recent reports of gender and sexual violence in South African schools.

1.3. Gender and sexual violence in South African schools

South African studies, such as those by Harber and Mncube (2017), Moletsane & Mitchell (2018) and Morrell, Bhana & Hamlall (2012), assert that structures within schools are heavily influenced by patriarchal notions of control and discipline that endow teachers with institutional powers which determine and reinforces the authoritarian relationship between the teacher and the learner. Connell (2002) explains that such authority is embedded in the patriarchal notion of power that exists in individuals, structures and institutions. Schools thus

serve as institutions where teachers' responsibility is exercised through authority and power, even within the classroom, where the teacher is outnumbered (Morrell, 2001). Morrell further argues that such binary positioning of teachers and learners sustains power relationships by allowing teachers to inflict verbal and even physical and violent disciplinary measures on their learners despite its prohibition. Studies (Dunne, Humphreys & Leach, 2003; Humphreys, 2008) support that such positioning places girls as objects to be manipulated within the school, explaining that when teachers instill discipline, it is located within the same asymmetrical power relations that underpin the sometimes excessive and draconian measures of punishment that some teachers employ. According to Humphreys, corporal punishment also serves as a socialization process that reinforces obedience, passivity and tolerance of violence in girls. Dunne et al. (2003) further identify additional practices of gender violence like unsolicited touching and grabbing of girls (and boys private parts), coercive sex and rape as manifestations of heterosexual violence in our schools.

Academic studies, and even reports such as *Scared at School,* do not reach the masses in South Africa. Rather, it is the media—newspapers, television news and social media—that has brought the phenomena of sexual violence and sexual abuse in both primary and high schools into the public arena:

In February, 2019, sexual assault claims lodged at Valhalla Primary School in Pretoria surfaced in media reports (Mahlokwane, 2019) and television news (eNCS, February 2019). The reports stated that a 55-year-old male teacher was suspended from school after girls between 10 and 13 years old, in Grades 5, 6, and 7 reported that he had touched them inappropriately and indecently. According to the report, the alleged violations took place in 2018 but only came to light after Metro Police (South African Police Services) visited Valhalla Primary School to teach learners how to recognise sexual violence.

In 2017, a scholar patrol (believed to be in his late fifties and whom the children referred to as *Malume* (uncle in isiZulu), was charged with sexually molesting 54 school girls from Grade R to Grade 7 in AB Zuma Primary School, in Soweto, Johannesburg, South Africa (Mabuza, 2017). It was alleged that the guard violated the girls in his security guardhouse near the school's gate, that he hit them on the buttocks and told them that he wanted to have sex with them. It was reported that the Principal learned of the abuse much earlier but asked the children to remain silent while the matter was investigated. The principal and her

management team were subsequently suspended for failing to report the abuse. However, in 2018, the guard walked free because of errors, discrepancies, insufficient evidence and contradictions regarding the case. The presiding judge described the case as “a comedy of errors” saying that the ‘errors’ contaminated the girls’ testimonies.

These two reports resonate with Lynch et al. (2018) and the HRW report that emerged almost twenty years ago, highlighting the prevalence of sexual violence in our schools. However, whilst such explicit forms of sexual violence make headlines, other implicit forms of gender and sexual harassment go unnoticed.

1.3.1. Corporal punishment in schools

Notwithstanding South African laws which state that “everyone has the right not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way”, (The South African Constitution and the National Education Policy Act of 1996), statistics suggest that little headway has been made in reducing corporal punishment in schools (Burton and Leoschut, 2013, School violence in South Africa). The study showed that primary school learners (70%) were more likely to experience corporal punishment than high school learners (47%) in South African schools. Furthermore, (73.7%) was observed in KwaZulu-Natal, the province in which my study is located (Geldenhuys & Doubell, 2011). In July 2013, the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) raised concerns after receiving complaints about corporal punishment in schools across the country. They noted instances where learners were shamed, seriously injured, and that some even succumbed to their injuries.

Corporal punishment has been recognised as a form of gender violence in its use and in the meanings it holds for boys and girls. For example, boys are supposed to endure corporal punishment as a means of toughening them up in preparation for manhood, which entails being able to endure pain and violence, and girls are hit in order to suppress ‘unruly’ behaviour in them (Morrell, 2001). Boys also learn that violence is a tool for ensuring compliance and dominance, and girls learn that violence is necessary for passivity, submissiveness and compliance.

Incidents of corporal punishment in the primary school are usually silenced mainly because of the fear wielded by authoritarian figures. Learners, like the girls in this study, are often scared of the repercussions of challenging their teachers, hence they are silent about the

punishments they receive. However recent media reports and social media have drawn attention to teachers' use of corporal punishment. In 2017, a cell phone recording showing a girl being brutally beaten, caned and thrown about the classroom by her male teacher in Mdlamfe Secondary School in Esikhawini, KwaZulu Natal, received widespread attention (Hayden, 2017). The teacher was served with suspension papers. There was no explanation for the teacher's behaviour. In 2018, seven teachers from Zamokuhle Primary School in KwaMashu, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal were accused of inflicting corporal punishment on learners (Vilakazi, 2018). According to the report, one of the teachers also hit a learner on his head with a coat hanger that resulted in an injury that required stitches. The teachers accused of corporal punishment were suspended pending further investigation.

1.3.2. Gendering the schooling curriculum

The curriculum has undergone major changes over time and now we are implementing the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). Educators grapple to keep abreast of the changes. A good example is the Life Orientation Learning area, which is aimed at developing the learner holistically. The aim is to empower the learner with skills, knowledge and values to make informed decisions regarding personal, health and social matters. However, studies have found that there is reluctance to implement the health aspect of Life Orientation because of a reluctance to discuss sexuality and matters related to sexuality with school children (Buthelezi et al., 2007). Buthelezi contends that the non-implementation of the Life Orientation can be seen as a nuanced form of violence as it deprives leaners of knowledge, values and skills regarding sex and sexuality and thus leaves huge gaps in their knowledge, social skills, values and beliefs regarding matters such as safe sex and reproductive health. This non-implementation is underscored by teachers' power to determine the content of the Life Orientation programme they teach to the learners.

According to Dunne, Humphreys and Leach (2003) the failure to deliver sexual health and reproductive rights education to learners compromises their decision-making skills, especially concerning their sexuality and their ability to understand and implement safe sex related behaviour.

1.3.3. Gendered production tasks in school

Connell (2002) situates gender and power relations in what she refers to as productive relations that emerge out of differentiated tasks or a gendered segregation of labour. In my school, I have seen girls assigned to kitchen duties, especially when the cleaner is absent, whilst boys are asked to help work in the gardens or clean the school hall. In most cases boys are offered tasks that require strength and stamina, for example, moving chairs and tables, whilst girls stand quietly washing and drying dishes in the staffroom. Being prefects shows learners' potential to be leaders, but when girls are made prefects boys tend to reject girls exerting power over them for their misdemeanours. I draw on the field notes below to illustrate this assertion.

Field notes: Date: 15 August 2012 Time: 11:15 Place: School corridor

> Paleesa was red in the face. She was angry. I stopped her and enquired if everything was okay.
> P.J.: She explained that when the siren was sounded, she noticed that some boys were still lingering at the taps. When she asked them to make their way to their classroom. A boy retaliated by saying that she should go and her duty behind the tuck-shop because girls and boys were having sex there. Paleesa explained that when she sought help from the Principal, she was told that she must report the incident to the Prefect mistress since she (the Principal) was not in charge of the prefects.

Whilst such as 'they are having sex there were intended to embarrass Paleesa, they also reinforce the male prerogative to speak unabashedly about sex, highlighting the heterosexual domain in which sexual harassment is perpetrated. In the following sections I focus on sexual harassment within a heterosexual discourse.

1.4. Gender and sexual violence perpetration by boys

In the school where I teach girls navigate a heterosexual domain where boys have already accrued sociocultural status, and have learnt that heterosexual prowess and masculinity are deeply connected to the validation of male privilege (Bhana, 2018). South African studies report that boys engage in gender and sexual violence to show domination, power and

privilege, whilst simultaneously claiming their heterosexuality, which offers them pathways to demonstrating hegemonic forms of masculinity (Gevers et al., 2012; Lynch, et al., 2018). Whilst touching, grabbing, groping and fondling is misogynistic behaviour that boys deploy to unsettle and humiliate girls, girls who are found to be sexually attractive also bear the brunt of sexually violent acts that entail unwanted touching, pawing, grabbing and, in some instances, even rape or attempted rape.

Both Bhana (2018) and Lynch et al. (2018) argue that boys' collective engagement in sexually harassing behaviour suggests a collusion intended to demonstrate power and reinforce unequal gender relations by coercing girls to occupy traditional roles of femininity which position them as weak and subordinate, sex objects who are fearful, compliant and accepting. However, in the field notes above, it is worthwhile to consider Paleesa's response as one that attempts to defy this construction of femininity. However, the shame that she experiences combine with the dismissal of her complaint to her subordination, demonstrating how male privilege and power reinforce the dominant constructions of masculinity (Connell, 1985)

Mirembe and Davies (2001) also asserted that the disinclination of school staff to address gender and sexual violence encouraged misogyny and legitimized male power, thereby widening the power disparities between boys and girls. Such behaviour, both authors concluded exploited the teacher's position of authority and betrayed their duty of care. Wilson (2012) also explained the mismatch between female teachers' action and words, explaining that whilst female teachers condemned gender and sexual violence, their own responses often are generally consistent with inequality since they too intimidated girls to ensure their subordination. These authors suggest that teachers need to first understand the meanings given to harassment and sexual harassment in order to be able to recognise such behaviours. Furthermore they state that teachers must be prepared to recognise and acknowledge harassment of learners. Similarly, inadequate school responses has been documented by other researchers in sub-Saharan Africa (Jones and Norton, 2007; Kajawu, 2001; Leach and Humphreys, 2007; Mirembe and Davies, 2001; Pattman and Chege, 2003).

However, Renold (2005) and Cobbett and Warrington (2013) argue that girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence is not so easily explained: The binary positioning of boys as perpetrators and girls as victims misses how girls navigate a heterosexual and masculine

domain which significantly reduces their opportunity to exercise agency. This understanding is shared by Bhana (2018), who argues for more rigorous research into gender violence in order to investigate and explore the nuances surrounding young girls' experiences of sexual violence. Bhana maintains that this requires readjusting the research gaze on young girls' sexuality. Whilst dominant discourses position girls as being at the mercy of boys' violent and harassing behaviour, emerging studies show that girls are not simply victims (Bhana, 2018; Cobbett and Warrington, 2013; Gadin, 2012). Rather they are active social beings who are able to make decisions to shift their positioning as victims by contesting and challenging gender inequality, gender violence, and sexual harassment in ways that reflect their individual empowerment and self-advocacy.

1.5. Warrior girls

I use the heading 'warrior girls' because it immediately displaces the image of girls as victims. A major thread that runs throughout my thesis is that girls resist and reject gender inequalities in relation to the school, and to boys and other girls. This indicates the presence of a changing discourse around femininities and young girls' sexuality (Jewkes & Morrell, 2012). The assertion of the 'self' by girls is an indication of how the cultural capital afforded to institutions (school, society and gender) become contested and unstable. As I show, for the girls in this study, their agency is in verbal and physical opposition to structures that seek to erode their sexuality. In the context of heterosexuality, girls, like boys, are motivated by jealousy, control, self-defence and anger. Whilst boys' aggression correlates with a desire to achieve hegemonic forms of masculinity, girls' aggression can be seen as located within shifting femininities that seek to repudiate and challenge the boys who wish to subordinate them. However, when girls engage in violent behaviour they are often described as 'raw', 'wild' and 'acting like a boy', the latter simultaneously endorsing violence as a form of masculinity whilst rejecting girls who show aggression as deviants of proscribed gender norms (Eliasson, Isaksson & Laflamme, 2007). Silence about the violence they experience can also be seen as action-orientated as it shows innate strength in rejecting potential provocation and sexual harassment from boys: It shows their ability to ignore situations that have the potential to erupt or result in further victimisation and violence against them.

Changing expectations in relationships suggests that girls are rethinking and repudiating unequal gender practices to contest their subordination. It also suggest that girls are

developing clearer and different expectations in relationships that allude to their agency in wanting to establish themselves within the gender order and within heterosexual relationships.

The violence perpetrated towards boys who harass or try to control girls marks a distinction between traditional and modern femininity. Bhana (2008) argues that whilst girls' engagement in fights works to challenge or subvert dominant constructions of gender, their engagement in verbal abuse is not advantageous for their femininity. This is because toughness does not equate to femininity and desirability, and bossy and aggressive girls are generally avoided in schools (Eliasson et al, 2007). However, Bhana challenges the dichotomous placing of girls on one end of a continuum of gender and sexual violence, pointing out that the recognition of girls' agency is critical as it displaces notions of girls as passive victims of sexual violence.

While school girls' aggression and their transgressions are often regarded as non-compliance, it is worth considering such behaviour as a resource that allows them to self-advocate and to assert their rights. Flouting school rules, in other words, can be seen as the exercise of agency, and this lends itself to the construction of young girls as active sexual beings rather than blank slates onto which only authorised knowledge can or should be inscribed. Considering self-advocacy as a way of rejecting inequitable treatment thus offers a new lens through which to view primary school girls' aggression. In another shift, Ranganathan et al (2016) and Mojola (2015) studies demonstrate how girls challenge the construction of femininities as monogamous and acquiescent, electing to engage in multi-partnering heterosexual relationships often linked to the 'benefits' that such relationships generate. Given the link between unsafe sexual practices, violence and sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV, it is essential to consider the particularities of young girls' sexuality and the role of the school in its contribution to the subordination of primary school girls.

In the following section I provide an overview of my research context, Reservoir Hills and Westhills Primary School. I then discuss the research aims and objectives and conclude with an outline of each chapter of this thesis. But first, I begin by situating myself within the research context.

1.6. Me – a teacher and a researcher

I have been a school teacher for 27 years, and have taught at Westhills Primary School since June 2003. In 2009 I was appointed Head of Department of the Foundation Phase (FP). Prior to taking up my appointment at Westhills Primary School, I taught at two well-resourced and well maintained schools for fifteen years. I believe I was privileged to have had such an opportunity. Westhills Primary lacked almost everything my old schools had: there was a small playground, no functional library, no computer centre, poorly maintained buildings and toilets, no shady areas for the children during breaks, few teaching resources and overcrowded classrooms.

I was told that this had not always been the case. Dwindling financial resources (especially owing to unpaid school fees) had contributed to the weakening of the school. One of the first things I noticed at the school was the age and relative wealth of the educators, which was in sharp contrast to the children. Most of the educators were very senior (over 45 years old), and almost all drove expensive cars and, as I later found out, owned expensive homes in desirable suburbs such as Westville, which was formerly Whites' only suburb.[4]

The first class I taught comprised 44 learners in grade two. I experienced many teaching challenges that year, but one of the biggest was being seen as an outsider. I later learnt that the general perception of the teachers in the school was that the vacancy should have been filled by a different teacher. Furthermore, the previous teacher had often been absent due to poor health, and this meant that there were huge gaps in the students' learning. Discipline was also a problem.

In 2005 I was given a grade one class to teach. This was much better as the children and I started on new ground. I was much happier and became very close to the children. However, my happiness was short-lived. In March of that year, four of the children's mothers died. One child was removed from school and sent to live on a farm. These years of teaching experiences inspired me to focus my postgraduate studies on young children.

[4] Under the apartheid system, the Group Areas Act No. 41 passed in 1950 by the South African apartheid government, divided most of the country into racially segregated zones, whereby "Group Areas" were created exclusively for separate racial groups. This meant that only Whites were allowed to own or occupy land in these designated areas.

1.7. The research context and background

Under The Group Areas Act No. 41 passed in 1950 by the South African apartheid government, Reservoir Hills in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, became one of the many Indian only suburb (Indian Community/South African History Online). Reservoir Hills was affordable for the 'more well to do' Indians, hence the relative Indian wealth in the area as compared to other Indian designated areas hence its middle class status (Figure 1). The capitulation of apartheid in 1994 led to a gradual but large shift in the demographics of Reservoir Hills. people, especially from the neighbouring townships of Clermont and KwaDabeka and from rural areas of South Africa, moved to the suburb as the demand for cheap labour increased. Many began to build shacks known as *imijondolos* (*ijondolo* or *jondol* for short) so they could live closer to where they worked, as Reservoir Hills is less than 20 kilometres from the Durban city centre.

Figure 1: Map showing Reservoir Hills, Clermont and KwaDabeka (https:wwwgoogle.com/maps)

There are many mosques, temples and churches within the community, catering to the various religious denominations within the area, but the Divine Life Centre is perhaps the most recognisable. Founded by Swami Sivananda, the large ashram is known for engaging in over 300 humanitarian projects such as building schools and feeding schemes, and many, many more. Many of the projects are designed for the upliftment and betterment of rural communities. Swami Sahajananda was known for his kindness, gentleness, and humility. He received numerous awards, local and international, for his humanitarian work, including the

Martin Luther King Jnr. Peace Award from the centre for Non-Violent Social Change in Atlanta, USA. In 2008, the University of KwaZulu Natal posthumously awarded him an honorary doctorate in Theology.

The Papwa Sewgolum Golf Course is also a place of note, with golfers from the surrounding areas frequenting it, the name being given to honor Sewsunker "Papwa" Sewgolum, a South African Indian Golfer who carved a niche in history for himself by being the first golfer to win a Provincial Open in South Africa, beating over a hundred other golfers including Harold Henning and Gary Player. He became a symbol of the sports boycott movement during apartheid, with pictures of him receiving his trophies out in the rain because he was denied entry into sports houses.

The University of KwaZulu Natal (Westville Campus) also borders Reservoir Hills. Opened in 1972 it was initially built for Indian students due to the low numbers of people of colour admitted into other universities prior to 1994. Westville Campus formed a hub of action and protest for many anti-apartheid political rallies. In 2004 the university merged with the University of Natal to create the present University of Kwazulu Natal.

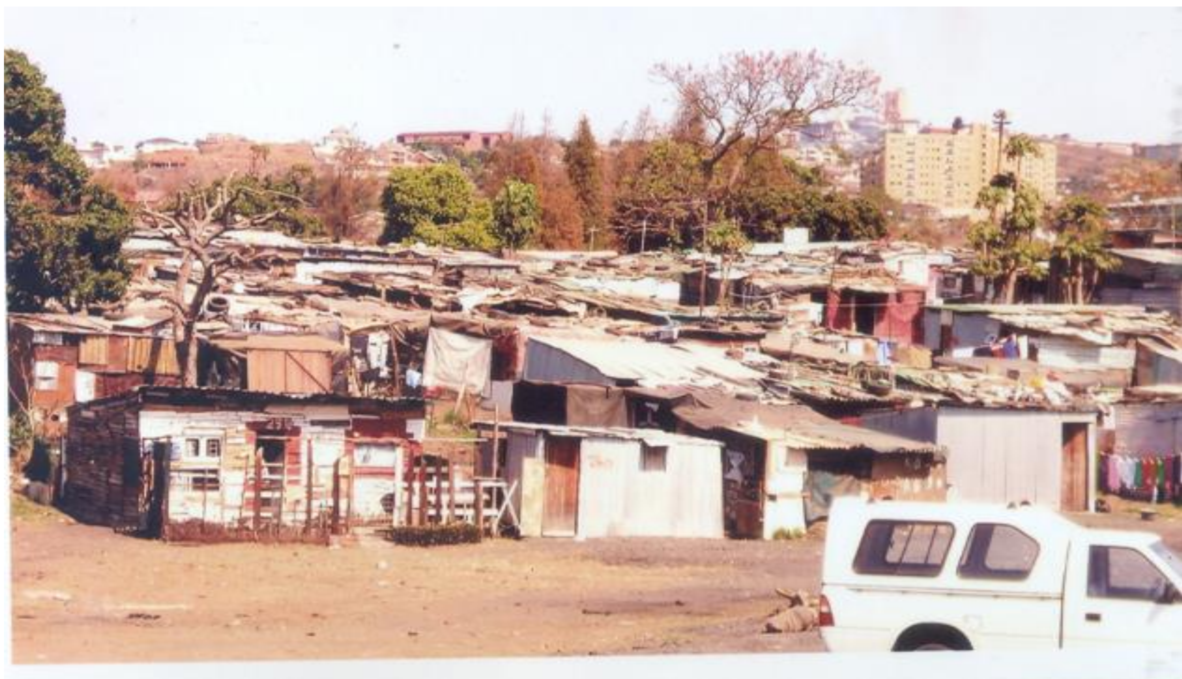
The crime rate in Reservoir Hills is relatively high, and the most prevalent kinds of crime are domestic burglaries, assault—a large part of which is gender violence and harassment—and motor vehicle theft (Sydenham Police Forum, 2015). A billboard welcomes people to the suburb. It used to read "Rotary Reservoir Hills Welcomes you" but has been overlaid by a poster decrying the abuse of women and children, highlighting the broadening awareness of the seriousness of the situation, not just in the community, but in South Africa and the world as a whole. It reads: "STOP! STOP! STOP! The abuse of women & children NOW!" (Figure 3).

Figure 2: Reservoir Hills: Middle class housing

Figure 3: Creating gender violence awareness.

There are three informal settlements in and around the suburb. Macaranga (Figure 4) and Mopane Informal Settlements (Figure 5) and are located near the entrance. Canaan Informal Settlement (Figure 6) stretches along the upper banks of the Palmiet River. The informal settlements are made up of *imijondolos* (shacks).

Figure 4: Macaranga Informal Settlement



Figures 5: Mopane Informal Settlement

Figure 6: Canaan Informal Settlement

Imijondolos are built from materials such as corrugated iron and scavenged pieces of wood and cardboard. Some are constructed from mud and wattle. Plastic sheets weighed down with rocks and rubble are often placed on roofs to prevent water leaking in when it rains. The shacks are built close together, achieving a degree of support from each other against heavy downpours and strong winds *(Figures 7, 8 and 9).* These are the areas in which many of the learners in this study reside.

Figure: 7 Imijondolos at Canaan Informal Settlement

Figure 8: Imijondolos at Mopane Informal Settlement

Figure 9: Imijondolos at Macaranga Informal Settlement

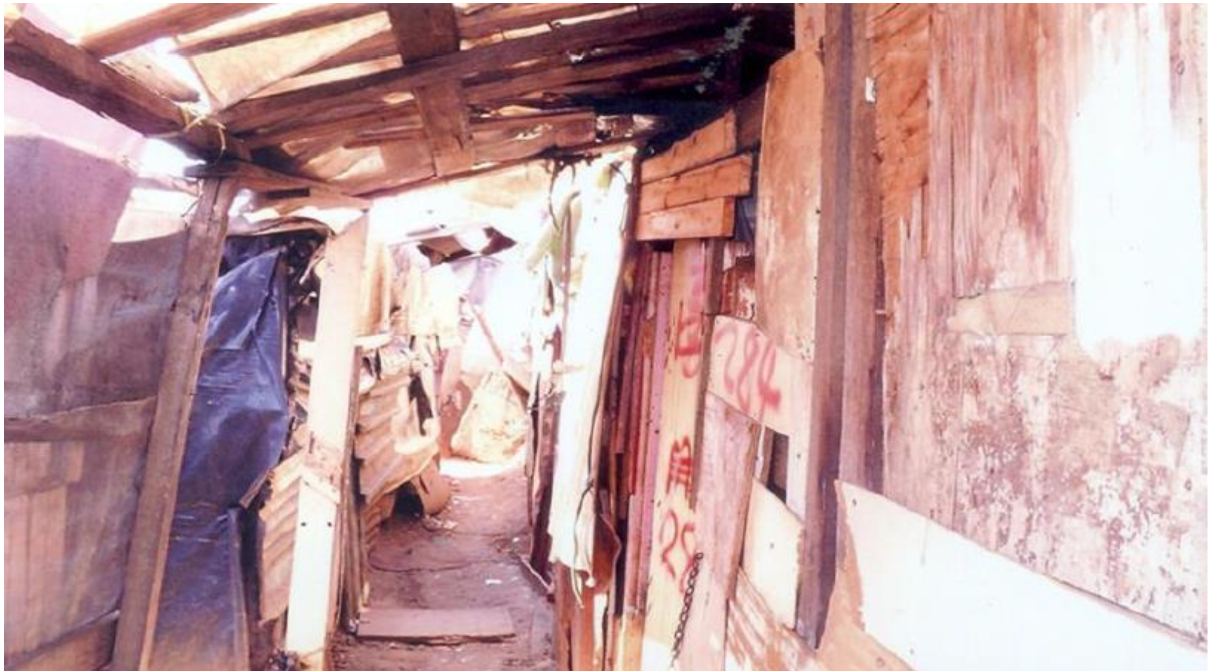
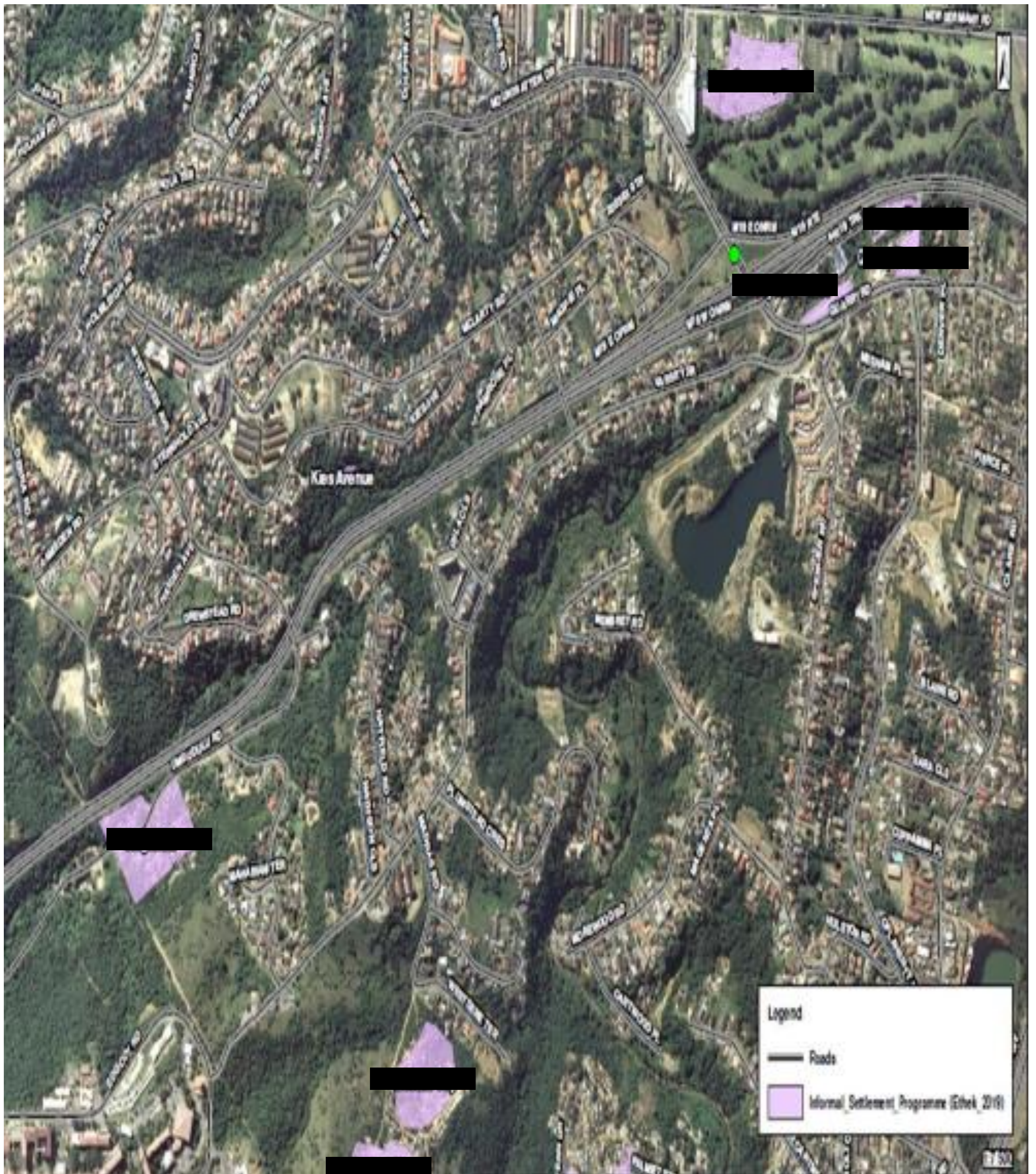


Figure 10: An aerial view of the research context. Google Satelite Maps. https://.pro



1.8. Aims and Objectives of the study

Sexual harassment by boys towards girls is often obfuscated or confused by the context of initiating relationships (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Cobbett & Warrington, 2013), a situation that is highly contested by feminist researchers who argue that sexual harassment is always an exercise of power that boys and men engage in to subordinate girls (Gadin, 2012). When girls do not capitulate, sexualised verbal abuse, taunts and teasing become conduits through which boys assert themselves to display dominance. Girls who repudiate or reject sexual overtures are labelled frigid—*uyabanda* in isiZulu—and this simultaneously calls into question girls' sexuality whilst also suggesting an absence of agency. Such misogyny is part of the enactment and pursuit of hegemonic ideals since it works to destroy a girl's concept of herself, eroding her sexuality and dignity and causing her humiliation. However, girls, too, are invested in heterosexuality, and a central aim of this thesis is to show the agency that young girls' exercise through their experiences of gender and sexual violence.

This aim was drawn from my compulsion to explore young girls' experiences of sexual harassment within the school, occurrences I became aware of through talk in the staffroom about arguments and fights between boys and girls in class. Girls' found to be dating boys were viewed negatively by the principal, by the heads of department and by some teachers. They were stigmatised and discriminated against by some teachers, for example: 'she is boy crazy,' 'this one has big ideas' and 'they know everything'. Such language made me curious as I wondered how the teachers arrived at these conclusions. More so, I was troubled by the knowledge that teachers discussed the girls so openly with one other. When I discovered that the girls (and boys) were called out at a special assembly in the school hall and made to stand on the stage, I was both horrified and saddened. This awareness underpinned my second central aim, which was to explore girls' experiences and perceptions of their teachers' attitudes and behaviour towards them. Broadly, the research questions that underpin this study are:

- How do primary school girls experience gender and sexual violence?
- How do primary school girls navigate their sexualities within the context of gender violence?
- How do teachers' attitudes contribute to girls' experiences of gender violence and sexual violence within the school?

1. 9. Outline of the study

In *Chapter two*, I provide an overview of the theoretical frameworks that shaped my analysis of the data. I explain the importance of post-structural feminist theory to the study and draw on feminist literature to explore gender, sexuality, heterosexuality, violence, power and girls' agency. These theoretical underpinnings shape my analysis of the data.

In *Chapter three,* I draw on recent literature from South Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and globally to support my argument in the study which is that girls experiences of gender and sexual violence is driven by unequal gender norms that are situated within a heterosexual discourse. By drawing on this emerging body of work from South Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and overseas countries, I make the case for girls as both vulnerable to and agents of sexual harassment and sexual violence.

In *Chapter four*, I give a detailed description of the ethnography. I explain the research methodology, the research methods and the research process that I engaged with in order to answer the key research questions in this study. This chapter is important as it also speaks of the ethical dilemmas that beset me both as a researcher and a teacher in during the course of this study.

Chapter five is largely descriptive, providing the background and insight into the research site and the school community gleaned from my observations. It is however, an important chapter as it provides the context in which the girls experience gender and sexual violence and offers the reader an opportunity to situate and understand the girls' experiences within such a context. I also offer the reader a macro-view of the school before I undertake my micro study with a group of 12 girls

Chapter six is the first of three analysis chapters. In this chapter, I focus on the girls' accounts and experiences of sexual harassment and sexual violence within Westhills Primary School. Significant to this chapter is the recognition that primary school boys have already accrued cultural capital accorded to males and masculinity. In this chapter, I also trouble and dislocate the binary between victim and perpetrator to create spaces to address sexual violence. I also examine the girls' experiences of sexual harassment and sexual violence within the context of heterosexuality. I ground the discussion in jealousy, conflict and violence and I show that

girls' ambivalence towards naming and identifying sexually harassing behaviours create much confusion and even ambivalence regarding their experiences of sexual harassment and sexual violence. The discussion supports the major argument in this chapter which was that the school is the key site for the production of violent gender relations where girls are not just victims but also are also agents of violence.

In *Chapter seven,* I focus on one participant, Azande, who presented an opportunity to show to ways in which 'in school' and 'out of school' are interconnected with violent gender relations. It talks about Azande and her sexual relationship with an older male who is 'twenty something'. In this chapter, I invited the reader into her life and showed how gender and sexuality are influenced and compromised by structural and socio-economic disparities. By positioning Azande's sexuality at the forefront, this chapter illustrated how agency and power are intricately woven and how Azande's tenuous power was eroded by male sexual entitlement.

In *chapter eight,* I explore how some teachers in the school contribute to the girls' experiences of gender and sexual harassment within the school. I explore how the girls' sexuality is marginalised, discriminated, subordinated and tainted by their teachers.

Chapter nine concludes the study. I provide an overview of the study, discuss the findings in each chapter and finally, I provide recommendations based on my findings which I believe will support the notion of moving forward in our effort to eradicate primary school girls' experiences of gender violence, sexual harassment and sexual violence more broadly. I end the study with my final thoughts and my final field notes.

Chapter 2

Theorising girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence

2.1. Introduction

The central aim of this study is to investigate 12 girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence within Westhills Primary School. This chapter provides an overview of the key theoretical concepts and perspectives that, collectively, form the framework for my study. Throughout, I have adopted a feminist lens and drawn on poststructural feminist ideologies to help me analyse the girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence. Foucault (1972) has helped me to understand power, and Butler (1990; 1993), to understand gender, sexuality, gender performativity and the heterosexual matrix. I also engaged with Gavey (1989) to understand how language allows for the subjective definition of experiences, thus giving the girls agency in their interpretation and response to their experiences. Finally, Connell (1995; 2002) helped me to understand gender and the relational nature of masculinity and femininity.

These eclectic influences have allowed me to structure a theoretical framework that has helped me to conceptualise and analyse the girls' experiences as both agents and victims of sexual and gender violence. Through approaching my analysis from the girls' own standpoints and experiences I have been able to think differently, and thus shed new light on teenage sexuality. Indeed, poststructuralist notions of power and authority have served to authenticate the young girls in my study as active sexual beings who are deeply invested in a heterosexual culture.

Research has shown that sexuality is integral to our being and that active engagement with our sexuality contributes to our Happiness. Bhana's (2018) study, in particular, has influenced the theoretical framing of my own study and has thus helped me to understand the nuances of gender and sexual violence within a South African schooling context and more broadly. Bhana's work has broadened the focus of studies on gender, sexual violence and heterosexuality among teenagers and has highlighted neglected aspects of primary school girls' sexuality—particularly their active agency. Bhana (2017) uses the concept of 'lite' agency to show how young girls' sexuality is disproportionately shaped by the rules that govern heterosexuality. This resonates with Allan's argument (2013) that it is necessary to

recognise that primary school girls are active sexual beings, and to avoid viewing this merely as a problem that needs to be solved. This is important in my study: sexual violence and sexuality are inextricably connected, and discussions about sexuality and young girls thus have the tendency to be intensely uncomfortable. Feminist methodologies and tools from the toolbox of poststructuralism have allowed me to circumvent this, and have enabled me to access and present detailed descriptions of the girls' experiences and perspectives, and in this way to challenge dominant discourses of gender, sexuality and age that serve to silence primary school girls and the sexual violence that is part of their lives.

Throughout this study, I discovered that the construction of gender and sexuality is a vibrant and dynamic process that both influenced and contributed to my respondents' experiences of gender and sexual violence. This forced me to recognize how incredibly complex the concepts of gender and sexuality are within the context of heterosexuality. It is worthwhile then to first begin by outlining essentialists views on sex and gender, followed by an examination of the socialisation theory to show how the family and the school work as socialising agents, playing both an enforcement and a deterrent role, to shape and reshape girls [and boys] gender and sexuality. Through a critique of the socialization theory I draw attention to its problems, showing how the problems outweigh its usefulness in feminist theory. Key to this discussion is Connell's critique of the conceptual framework of the socialization theory to illustrate how gender inequality is perpetuated (1985; 1987).

2.2. Essentialism: sex and gender as a biological construct

Essentialism as a theory is underpinned by the belief that an object has a fixed set of characteristics that define its existence, essence or identity. The characteristic or characteristics of the object is seen as unalterable and therefore eternal (Smiler & Gelman, 2008). Essentialists' views on gender and sexuality are intrinsically interwoven with biological essentialism which pins biological characteristics to sex categories (male and female), thus gender differences between males and females are seen as fixed at birth (Gelman, 2004). Gender constructs thus become conclusively male or female, with characteristics being deployed in stereotyped binaries. For example, characteristics such as a brave, strong, fearless are used to characterise boys and men [masculinity] whilst girls and women [femininity] are characterised as fearful, passive and weak. Furthermore, essentialism assumes that the essence of women (females) is universal and therefore identifies women

according to specific characteristics that are specifically feminine and biological, for example women are essentialised in terms of their ability to give birth and as such they are accorded essences such as caring, nurturing, emotional which separates them from the essence of men. In the same vein, boys who exhibit feminine characteristics are ousted from traditional constructions of masculinity, and this further supports the biological divide, exalts traditional constructs of masculinity and reinforces gender stereotypes (Connell, 1987). Connell, is clear that the essentialist view of gender does not sit well with the construction of masculinity because boys and men constantly have to prove, confirm and reaffirm their masculinity in order to claim top spot within the gender hierarchy. Stereotypical notions of gender thus advantage men's superiority over women and over men who display alternate characteristics. Stereotyping separates gender on the basis of core attributes or essence, thus limiting any fluidity in gender and sexual identity construction. Thus essentialist constructions of gender can be seen as an obstacle that thwarts efforts to challenge and overcome gender inequality because essentialism neglects how structural inequalities such as race, class, gender, sexuality, age and culture shape the essence of both men and women. In the next discussion, I examine the socialization theory in relation to essentialism.

2.3. The socialisation theory

Historically, an individual's sex was critical to his or her socialization into society. Laws, customs, traditions, beliefs relating to an individual's biological sex determined the induction process, the ultimate goal was to socialize and induct the individual to take his or her place in society. The key agents identified in this socialization process are the family, the school, peers, media, and religion. In the following discussion, I focus on the family and the school to discuss the ways in which children were conceptualized in terms of their sex which was further conceptualized in terms of binaries.

2.3.1. The socialization of sex and gender

Socialization theorists advocate that behaviours are learnt through the intergenerational passing down of norms and values into socializing agencies such as the family, the school and society (Giddens, 1993). From the onset of birth, the domestic space emerged as key to the induction of the child into his or her social world. Core to the socialisation process is identity construction in relation to one's sex and gender, thus values, norms and beliefs

espoused in a particular society are indoctrinated into the child from the onset of birth. The family groomed the child into a gendered role through the differentiation of clothing choices, colours, toys playmates, tasks and later in life, even career choices. Prescriptive language was also deployed as a tool, to both reinforce biological [sex] differences and police gendered behaviour to reconcile with gender norms. Binary characteristics for example, quiet girl, rough boy, weak girl and tough boy, clean girl and untidy boy become markers of both sexes at an early age that develop into more restrictive boundaries as children grow (Doyle & Paludi, 1991). However, despite these binaries, the socialization process worked on a complimentary relationship between male and female. An important aspect of the socialisation process was therefore to ensure gender as a stable construct which meant that both males and females abided with the socialisation process. Conformity or respect for gendered expectations was key to the success of socialisation hence non-conformity was judged as disrespectful, rebellious and therefore a punishable offence.

Since the schools functions as an extension of the family it worked as an intermediary to extend the socialisation process. Given that children spend long hours at school, teachers and peers have been identified as important agents to shape and if necessary, reshape the young child [learner] according to the values and attitudes in keeping with society's expectations. Since schools are expected to contribute to the overall development of the child, the school is also expected to groom the child to become a valuable contributor to society. Importantly, teachers are supposed to be role models to facilitate and enrich the socialization process. Connell explains that the emphasis on adherence to gender roles throughout the socializing process cultivates psychological mechanisms within the individual that inadvertently policed the self (Connell, 1985). Thus the agents of socialization are seen as reinforcing gender differences, and proliferating gender stereotypes. Connell recognizes that whilst some children do adhere with the socialization process and eventually assume roles that they are groomed for, Connell sees this as a superficial process. She explains that this superficiality is underpinned by a false sense of accuracy since contestations within the social agencies [family, school, and society] are unrecognized, giving the impression the socialization process is a smooth one. As a result power relations that surfaces between relationships such as those parents and child, teacher and learner, husband and wife remain silenced. In the next discussion I focus on the deficiency of the socialization theory in theorisng gender and sexuality. I draw mostly on Connell (1985; 1987) to discuss and show how the shortfalls render this theory incompatible to examine gender and sexuality and violence.

2.3.2. A critique of the socialization theory

Connell argues that the norms and values passed into society via the socialisation process raises the questions of whose behaviour is deemed appropriate to organize society given that societies and cultures are diverse. According to Connell, the socialization process, in appearing universal, fails to acknowledge the particularities of each and every country and therefore different societies. This raises the concern that since people are socialized according to the most dominant understanding of accepted roles in society, diversity in gender, sexuality and culture is rendered invisible. Furthermore Connell argues that norms and values given to individual roles in society are actually norms and values espoused by and 'old- school' beliefs, therefore does not cohere with reality and are therefore not universal. Rather, in questioning the socialization process, Connell contends that the socialization process is driven by socio-political structures that actually benefit populations in society claiming that normative ideologies are actually perpetuated by those in power to maintain a social cohesion and to restrict alternate forms of behaviour.

Connell disagrees with social theorists analysis that individuals who resist the socialization process and who resist normative roles are in conflict with their purported role, arguing instead that non-conformity or maladaptiveness must be recognised and accepted as a sign of resistance. Connell notes that within the socialization process, individuals that display or engage in maladaptive behaviours are judged to be in conflict with a specific role thus interventions, such as therapy is prescribed to reshape the individual into his or her designated role in society. Since maladaptive behaviours are seen as a result of insufficient or incorrect socialization into a role, it is seen as an individual problem that can be reshaped through support and intervention. Another criticism of the socializing theory regards the static and segmented description of human activity. Women have multilayered customary occupations that overlap for example, caring, domestic chores, working outside the home part time or full time whilst children's roles remain largely undefined. Such segment activity is often evidenced in schools. Learners are usually engaged in differentiated tasks, with boys taking on more arduous tasks, whilst girls wash dishes or assist in cleaning the kitchen and other domestic related tasks.

According to Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1987) within the family, masculinity was treated as a social construct, meaning that it was awarded powers socially through meanings assigned to gender roles as opposed to one of power. According to Connell, the socialization process

reinforces a hegemonic masculinity and an emphasized femininity. Holland, Ramazanoglu, Sharpe and Thomson (1998) also contend that heterosexuality is actually about masculinity. Girls and women are expected to adhere to heterosexuality and live their sexuality in the service of the male gaze. Girls and women are urged to be passive, in their dress, their demeanor, their character and in their sexuality, all of which reinforce them as physically weak, altruistic, caring and subdued.

The socialization theory thus attributes violence in society to non-conforming or maladapative behaviours and therefore fails to recognize how gender sterotypes become implicated in gender violence. It does not recognize that gender roles are designed to police females rather than men, hence violence against women who stray from gender roles. The stereotypes are harmful as they incite violence. People who don't conform are punished. It is worthy to note that although new theories have been developed to understand and explain gender and sexual violence in society, stereotypes persist. Women are blamed for the violence perpetrated against them and children endure corporal punishment at home and in school for daring to challenge their roles. The truth that emerges from socialisation theory is one that demonstrates middle-class power over the working class. Its main goal was to socialize men, women and children into their respective roles to create and maintain a superficial society. I have demonstrated this point by drawing on Connell to show the shadows that operate within the socialisation process to create hierarchies of power.

Today, we find that gendered expectations are still shaped by gendered social and cultural norms and values attributed to gender and sexuality. The 'male in the head' still exists in society (Holland et al., 1998). Holland et al explain that women [girls] who express their sexual desires are seen as resisting gender and sexual norms, face discipline since female sexuality is supposed to be restrained. Hence Connell maintains that if the ideology of masculinity is unmasked, then one would see that the ideology is masked by power. Men are given that power. The idea of masculinity endows men with power which subordinates women. Connell therefore argues that power relations that circulate within the socialization structure remains undertheorized because it is underpinned by biological essentialism rather than gender relations. In doing so, the socialization theory tends to assume a relationship of complementarity between the men and women as opposed to one of power.

Within the socialization theory, an individual's resistance to oppression is unrecognized, and therefore does not account for agency. It instead addresses opposition to social norms as deviance rather than resistance on the part of the individual. Thus how human agency works is ignored therefore how people engage in creative ways to adapt to their situations or environments and how they improve to reach their goals given their constraints becomes invisible. Thus in socialization theory, discussion is missing on how human agency comes to the fore as individuals negotiate and shape their actions and behaviours against a patriarchy and traditional society. Socialization theory does not provide a framework to analyse this.

In this study, it was necessary for me to draw on social constructivism theory which challenges the child as devoid of constructive thought. Social constructionists argue for the positioning of children as active social beings who have the capacity to think and do. My study challenges passivity or sexual innocence in young girls. Rather than simply viewing girls (and boys) as empty vessels waiting to be filled, my study authenticates the girls (my respondents) as active sexual beings. The next discussion focus on the social constructionist theory and its relevance for my study.

2.4. The social constructionist theory

The focus of the social constructionist theory is to uncover the ways in which people, individually or collectively, join in the construction of what they perceive as reality. In this study, I engaged with the social constructionist theory since it provided a framework to analyse how these girls' constructed their sexuality in relation to sexual violence. In doing so, I was able to explore how their understanding and lack of understanding of sexual violence underpinned their negotiation of their gender and sexuality. The social constructionist theory also proved useful as it allowed me to locate their sexuality within a sociocultural milieu meaning that they learnt about sexual behaviours and how to interpret sexual behaviours within a social context. The social constructionist theory also places greater emphasis on a person's location within a social structure as the primary force influencing the social construction of reality, including conceptions and experiences of sexuality (Delamater & Hyde, 1998). Holland (2004) explains this well. She explains that the social constructionist theory places more emphasis on the individual's role in constructing reality being guided by prevalent discourses in their societies and cultures. This showed to be true in this study as the participants appropriated forms of acceptance that was socially upheld for example active

femininities to ensure 'passivity' in relationships. Social constructionist theory thus emphasises that sexuality is a social construction. Similar to Foucault's theory on the fluidity and the circulation of power, Kimmel (2002) contends that the social constructionist framework allow for transformations of gender relations that would support the safety and security of women and girls. It becomes explicable then that by also adopting the social constructionist framework, it created a space for gender to be challenged as a fixed construct without losing sight of the contextual considerations within which gender identities are constructed. This theory has been used by many pioneering 'childhood' researchers for example Bhana (2002), MacNaughton (2004) and Renolds (2005) who have highlighted children's capacity to act, think and give voice to gender and sexuality. Bhana, a leading South African researcher in Early Childhood Development (ECD) ventured bravely into unchartered territory, pushing the boundaries in ECD research by researching gender and sexuality in six and seven year olds in four schools in KwaZulu Natal. The social constructionist theory allowed her to explore how boys and girls claimed, negotiated and resisted power within the school setting. Paechter (2017) also argues for the recognition of children as sexual beings. She argues that children are invested in their sexualities and contrary to the moral panic than encompasses children's active displays of their sexual selves, research has illustrated that children are active sexual beings who are invested in their sexual identities. She supports that children are inscribed in the heterosexual word in numerous ways. For example, she points out the family, the school and society support gender binaries that reify and support male and female sexualities. In schools, she demonstrates this by drawing attention to separate uniforms for boys and girls, the gendering if tasks [as Connell does too], school formals such as lining up and school dances that pair boys and girls as partners. Thus by following the school's lead, boys and girls inscribe themselves into discourses around normative sexualities. Paechter argues that construction children as asexual or less sexual is dangerous because it can expose them to danger. However, she notes that whilst this is so, there is rejection of alternate sexualities. She explains that when for instance girls hold and kiss each other is viewed as okay, boys seen kissing other boys raises contradictory behaviour and is frowned upon. In this way, she explains how boys and girls, even from a very young age become invested in a heterosexual culture.

Distinct from gender yet intimately linked to it, sexuality is the social construction of a biological drive, including whom to have sex with, in what ways, why, under what circumstances, and with what outcomes. According to Dixon Mueller (1993) and Zeidenstein

and Moore (1996), sexuality is influenced by rules, both explicit and implicit, imposed by the social definition of gender, age, economic status, and ethnicity. What is fundamental to both sexuality and gender is power. Connell's (1994) theorisation of masculinities and gender power relations was also chosen as it provided a clear theoretical basis for this study to explore how these girls construction of gender power advanced their experiences of sexual violence. This framing also supports the essence of and the fluidity of masculinity and femininity in the various contexts such as material poverty, urbanisation and globalization all of which contribute in one way or other to women and girls vulnerability to male violence. The unequal power balance in gender relations that favours boys (men) translates into an unequal power balance in sexual interactions. In exploring girls' construction and negotiation of gender and sexuality, this study seeks to understand how gender and sexuality is constructed and influenced by structural forces such as race, class, age and society which determine the distribution of power.

Thus it makes sense to draw on both these theories as they recognised that power was multi-dimensional, relative to the situation in which one found one's self and that power was not exclusive to age or gender. It is also important that I explain my decision to move away from the socialization paradigm. Vance (1984) called for a social constructionist approach to sexuality as she believed that it would allow for the examination of a range of behaviours, ideologies and subjective meanings that are accorded to sexuality but which are implicitly mediated by culture and society. According to Vance, the utility of social constructionist theory can also be found in its emphasis on the meaning that is attached to sexual behaviours. She argues that physically identical sexual behaviours may have different social and personal meanings depending on how they are defined and understood, and from whose perspective. This resonates with Gavey (1989) and Harris and Dobson (2015) who also recognise the plurality of meanings that girls attach to their experiences of gender and sexual violence. Prout and James (1990) also support that children are active social beings who are able to construct knowledge to shape their behaviour and thinking. This suggests, then, that the fluidity of gender leads to capricious behaviour in individuals, including children. Likewise, Connell's notion of gender as mutable and socially constructed resonates with social constructionist theorists who see children as agents and in control of their gender identities (Butler, 1993; Connell, 1987; Prout & James, 1990).

2.5. Poststructuralist theory

Power relations are steeped in subjectivity, since emotions are key to contestations in any form. Connell therefore maintains that in reality, a person beliefs defines their acceptance, rejection and or contestation of the socializing process. Connell's view challenges the construction of gender and sexuality as monolithic and individuals as passive recipients in the socialisation process. Instead, in calling for a recognition of agency, Connell's message is clear in that a person's behaviour is influenced by his or her own beliefs, therefore behaviours are intrinsically motivated and agentic. This recognition of subjectivity links to poststructuralists' conceptualization of power, gender and sexuality as fluid and contestable. The concept of power and therefore agency is central to poststructuralism theory. Poststructuralists argue that expressing one's voice and taking action are key to emancipation and empowerment. It's a way of recognizing that we exist in a dynamic context and that everything, for example laws, policy, the constitutions and norms, can change. The remainder of this chapter focuses on poststructuralists notions on power, gender and sexuality. Foucault's philosophy of knowledge and power in relation to the body which has been particularly useful in this study as it offers a framework to theorise and understand how power shapes knowledge and experience in relation to sexuality. In the following discussion, I focus on Foucault, exploring his views on sexuality, power and knowledge.

2.6. Foucault's thoughts about sexuality

According to Foucault (1978), sexuality is a historical construct that is given meaning through the separation of sexuality into different components that can be applied to describe a person's sexuality. Foucault explains that women's sexuality is hypersexualised. He explains that a woman's sexuality lay in her objectification, meaning that women were seen as objects: as objects of sex, as objects for scientific medical study and as objects in relation to social life which encompassed, family life and children. Foucault also identified the Malthusian couple [husband and wife] that centred on monogamy and birth [ibid].

Foucault also identified children as sexual beings. He maintained that adults saw children as hypersexual beings who experienced and engaged in their sexuality for pleasure. However, since children were viewed as sexual nonentities, their engagement in their sexuality was

considered unnatural and therefore dangerous, resulting in the policing of children by adults and the medical fraternity.

Foucault identified the ‘perverse adult’ as a further unit of sexuality. According to Foucault, this unit of sexuality was central to those adults that displayed abnormal sexual orientations which then became the subject of medical and psychoanalysis. Foucault’s views on sexuality has demystified sex as a privileged heterosexual activity which posits sex as a procreative and thus adult activity. In doing so, Foucault has called for the recognition of marginalised sexualities [women, children, lesbian, gay, transgender and bisexual].

Viewing my respondents as sexual beings is important in my study for many reasons. Firstly, the recognition of my respondents as sexual beings allowed me to analyse their experiences of gender and sexual violence from their own points of views. Secondly, Foucault’s notion of power as a form of resistance to oppression facilitated the analysis of the data to show how my respondents claimed their sexual identity, reconciling their sexualised experiences with both pleasure and oppression. Lastly, Foucault’s conception of power as non-egalitarian, opened the discourse on sex, creating a platform for discussion and the display of different sexual cultures that shaped the behaviour of my respondents.

2.6.1. Power, gender and sexuality: a Foucauldian perspective

In analysing my respondents’ experiences of gender and sexual violence I have drawn on Foucault’s (1982) conceptualisation of power as ubiquitous, fluid, malleable and volatile. His argument that power can always be contested provides an important theoretical resource for this study. Foucault deals with questions about knowledge, power and the subject, not one after the other, but concurrently. He is interested in the relationships among them. He is concerned with subjectivity, a theme which runs through his work, and is important in my study because it immediately locates power as a subjective expression which challenges and blurs the binaries between perpetrator and victim or ‘oppressor and oppressed’. In the discussion that follows, I probe into Foucault’s thinking on power and explain why his ideas are so illuminating for my study.

Foucault (1982) disowns power as exclusive to certain dominant groups to oppress and marginalise other groups. Rather, he asserts that by engaging in relationships with others, everyone is a part of some power relation. Foucault’s view decentralises power, meaning that

power is egalitarian, and that it is most visible in the interactions between the individual and society, especially its institutions, which in this study is the school. Hence he views power as more of a conscious act than a possession. The implication then is that since power functions in unrestricted ways, individuals are not just the objects of power but are the locus where power and resistance are exerted. Foucault was concerned less with the oppressive aspect of power than with the resistance of those the power was exerted upon. Foucault (1972) also argues that we must review power as oppression because, oppression generates action, which leads to new and even alternate behaviours to emerge. The notion of power as productive and as omnipresent is important to my study as it opens up much broader possibilities for the analysis of gender power inequalities. It allowed me to see how the girls in my study not only resisted victimhood but also how they adopted agentic behaviour to disrupt prevailing discourses relating to gender, sexuality and age.

In the next section, I draw on Foucault's (1991) treatment of discipline as a type of self-regulation to illuminate how the school (institution), worked as an intermediary to instill discipline and self-regulation to align with prevailing discourses around gender, sexuality and age.

2.6.2. Foucault's perspectives on discipline and power

Foucault (1977) defines discipline as a set of strategies, procedures, and behaviours associated with certain institutional contexts that then pervade the individual's general thinking and behaviour. His examination of how discipline, as a type of self-regulation encouraged by institutions, is useful in this study. In schools, for example, individuals (learners and teachers) come to know their place in the context of space associated with power. However, an important concept within poststructural theory is the recognition of the ubiquitous nature of power within which resistance to long standing discourses around normative constructions of gender and sexuality enables the recognition of agentic behaviour. Poststructuralist ideologies made it possible for me to show how dominant discourses around school girl passivity and primary school girls' purported sexual innocence become demystified and undermined. The idea that power is mutable enabled me to recognise and understand how power operated in day to day interactions between the girls and the school. Foucault's view of power also decentralises power, meaning that power is not concentrated on any single individual or cohort of people. This view of power is strongly evident in

poststructural feminist research where power is seen as a volatile, unstable element that can be always contested. Therefore, power relations must constantly be renewed and reaffirmed. Thus, the poststructural framing of my study recognises the multi-directionality of power, meaning that it does not flow only from the more to the less powerful but rather “comes from below”, even if it is nevertheless “nonegalitarian” (Kelly, 2009).

Foucault conceives of power as something which goes around, like a circle or chainlike, it has no beginning or end. He maintains that “Power is employed and exercised through a netlike organisation….[and that] individuals are the vehicles of power” (1980:35). This conception of power as a network, and as operating through discourses, institutions, and practices is important as it allowed me to see how my respondents resisted victimhood. However, it is important to note that Foucault’s views on power are not unproblematic. I examine this next.

2.6.3. A critique of the Foucauldian notion of power

Foucault’s conception of power has received criticism by feminist critics such as Hartsock (1989), who argues that because Foucault writes from the perspective of the coloniser/dominator, he does not recognise or acknowledge unequal relations of power and hence fails to provide a theory of power for women. She says that Foucault’s view of power as emanating from oppression that stems from specific structures in society normalises the subordination of women thereby also failing to provide a theory to analyse unequal gender relations. According to Hartsock, Foucault’s idea of power leaves little room to explore how women (and other marginalised groups) contest power, or to recognise their strengths, abilities and capacities. She claims that his conception of power as ‘everywhere’ leaves no way to distinguish the difference in power between the dominators and the dominated. Feminist critics also worry that Foucault’s account of subjectivity does not allow for agency and resistance. They argue that people cannot exist outside of power without individual agency, that it is impossible to resist domination. In other words, there can only be agency if human beings are given the causal ability to create, affect and transform power, knowledge or discourses. Ramazanoglu and Holland (1993) argue that Foucault’s view of power is itself gendered since he focuses primarily on a masculine accounts of sexuality. For them, Foucault’s neglect of femininity and female sexuality is at odds with sexuality since women

are implicated in men's desire and /or objectification of them. Furthermore, his focus on desexualising the body misses how women experience their bodies.

Although Foucault's perspective of power has been critiqued for his lack of attention to gender, Bartky (1990) argues that the panoptican, a self-surveillance method that prisons used to keep inmates in check, is valuable for analysing gendered practices. She discusses how self-surveillance is also gendered as women and girls custom themselves to align with gendered expectations of femininity. This idea of the panoptican was critical in my analysis of the data as it allowed for the recognition of agency. According to Bartky, the use of cosmetics, dieting, the ways in which one talks, behaves and responds are acts of compliance with unequal gendered norms that position women as obedient servants of patriarchy. However, Bordo (1995) contests this, arguing that because power relations are unstable and not monolithic, self-surveillance also empowers one with self-confidence, autonomy and satisfaction. Power is thus used subjectively in behaviour that is intended to produce a specific or desired outcome.

These perspectives helped me to see that my respondents' varying and sometimes contradictory responses to boys' sexually harassing behaviour lay in their own investments in craving desirability within discourses of hetero-femininity (Cobbett & Warrington, 2013). Other studies have similarly drawn attention to this aspect of sexual harassment by indicating the fine line between acceptable and unacceptable sexualised behaviour and bringing to the fore the complex relations between gender, sexuality, sexual violence, power relations and identity constructions (Reddy & Dunne, 2007; Wood, Lambert & Jewkes, 2007). In their study, Reddy and Dunne described how girls desired to display active sexualities which could be seen in their aspirations to present a desirous sexual identity instead of simply being sexualised female objects, and that this demonstrated their desire to claim their place within the heterosexual matrix and to lay claim to their own sexual and bodily pleasures. However, Reddy and Dunne also posit that the focus on displaying a heterosexual desirability subverts their agency because girls then begin to see themselves through the male gaze, which works to reproduce dominant ideologies about gender identities.

2.7. Using a poststructuralist framework to explore young girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence

An important component of poststructural feminist ideology is subjectivity. This means that how one relates or talks about ones' experiences will determine the meanings that one attaches to these experiences. To merely relate an experience is not enough. Furthermore, the ways in which language is used to relate an experience also determines how the intensity and the effect of that experience is understood. I drew on poststructural feminist ideologies throughout the design and fieldwork stages of my study, yet when it came to the analysis and writing I found it extremely difficult. One of the main reasons lies in the fact that research on sexual violence has ignored how sexual harassment may be seen as acceptable by girls. Before I explore these poststructural ideologies in relation to my respondents' experiences it is important that I first try to define sexual violence. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) it is:

> Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic or otherwise, directed against a person's sexuality using coercion (i.e. psychological intimidation, physical force or threats of harm) by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work (WHO, 2002:149).

This definition is important as the word 'unwanted' allows for the subjective reading of ones' experiences. However, this definition does not fully cohere with my study because it misses how gender and gender power becomes implicated in the girls' experiences of sexual violence within the context of heterosexuality. I include gender violence in my definition of sexual violence because it encompasses behaviour that is aimed at violating the girls' sexuality, their experiences of which are located within the domain of heterosexuality. The definition of gender and sexual violence that I use is thus informed by what the girls raised as problematic, wanted or unwanted behaviour.

In this way, my study raises questions that challenge any fixed meaning of sexual violence. This is important for several reasons. First, acknowledging that gender and sexual violence is directed towards punishing one's sexuality allows for the recognition that violence is indeed gendered. Second, it allows for a subjective definition of experiences thus giving the girls

agency in their interpretation and response to their experiences. Throughout my study, I emphasise agency and resistance as critical for displacing the girls from a static victimhood discourse. Whilst I do not propose or advocate that gender and sexual violence is acceptable, I believe that my findings are testimony to the complexity and contradictions that emerge when primary school girls negotiate their sexual selves within a dynamic heterosexual sphere. For example, when boys did not touch them, some girls became worried that they were sexually unattractive (Chapter 6, p. 146). Third, within the context of schooling, young girls' subjective interpretations of their sexualised experiences challenges constructions of them as sexually passive.

For me, these gaps in the WHO definition of sexual violence created a mistiness that shrouded the girls' sexuality which was deepened because of their ambivalence regarding wanted and unwanted sexualised performances and attention from boys. I believe that questioning the WHO's definition gives power to the girls and to others who experience gender and sexual violence. Hence it was important that the theoretical framing of my study enabled a comparison between patriarchal notions of power and authority and the girls' destabilisation of power, authority and socially ascribed gender norms. Poststructuralist accounts of gender and power allow for the recognition and celebration of agency and resistance—and this is key to my study.

2.8. Subjectivity and discourse: voice, experience and language

Gavey (1989) maintains that giving a voice to individuals allows their interpretations of their experiences to become more valid and therefore more meaningful. In expressing their thoughts surrounding their experiences, individuals' subjectivities come to the fore, grounding their agency in often contradictory ways as they make meaning of their response to their experiences. Gavey also believes that to let people speak of their experiences positions them as authorities of the phenomena being studied, and that power is thus shifted to them rather than remaining with the researcher. Language thus becomes a conduit through which experiences are translated, hence the plurality of meanings that emerge.

According to Gavey, engaging with girls in such a way sheds light on the forces behind girls' experiences and the incentives that motivate their often seemingly ambivalent behaviour. Gavey's views are important as they, too overturn notions of girls as passive victims,

showing instead that how girls negotiate their gender and sexual identities is in fact a vibrant and subjective process. These complexities and contradictions are important for my study as they give credence to my respondents' agency in their opposition to patriarchal discourses that seek to stymy their sexual autonomy. By privileging the girls' voices, my study is thus able to demystify and call into question dominant discourses surrounding age, gender and sexuality.

Gavey grounds girls' resistance and agency in language, but Butler (1999) posits that individuals attain their freedom through performances of gender that are context specific at a specific moment or time. An important component of Butler's theory is that gender performance is not related to language, but rather it is contingent on bodily performances and is therefore non-linguistic. Butler's theory on gender performativity is important to my study and is thus the focus of the following section.

2.9. Butler's Theory on gender and gender performativity

Butler (1990) argues that Foucault's philosophy on power is useful and adaptable to understanding how gender is discursively constructed. Locating the body as the central or primary source of control is fundamental to understanding gender, she says. In *Gender Trouble* she proposes that as the body is core to power, or vice versa, the body is granted subjective status because it has the power to do, act and perform subjectively. This is important as it allows us to recognise alternative sexualities and resistance. This view also highlights the fluidity and multiplicity of both power and gender.

Butler believes that doing gender is simultaneously doing sexuality (1990; 1993). Hence, her argument that gender and sexuality are social and cultural constructs holds her views on knowledge-related behaviours as gendered performances. Knowledge of, and the probability of, the rewards for expected behaviours, such as social inclusion and societal sanctions, motivates individuals to behaviour in ways that align with a desired outcome or create a desired effect. From reading Butler, one can conclude that as gender is performed, it is imitative and a mimicry of what is observed and learnt within social systems. This suggests that girls' (and boys') gendered performances are strategic and therefore agentic. Yet Butler argues that performativity is repressive and oppressive: because gender is performed, it is not

a choice, but a performance, an act that has to be performed every day to clarify one's gendered position and to adhere to gender roles and gender constructs.

According to Butler, the policing of gender equates to the policing of sexuality. She asserts that, in policing gender, it is heterosexuality that is ultimately policed. Butler's emphasis on heterosexuality as a hegemonic construct of gender also points to the frailty of heterosexuality in that although heterosexuality is an exalted social construct, it is unstable and therefore contestable. This is evident when, for example, the girls (my respondents) challenge their subordinate positioning in gender relations and disturb or fracture normative discourses within the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1993).

While behaviour that is transgressive of gender norms (including homosexuality and lesbianism) point to the instability of gender constructs, Butler warns against reading nonconforming or alternate gender performances as wholly subversive. She maintains that although challenging or resisting dominant constructions of gender points to the instability of gender constructs, it also works to reinforce dominant and traditional constructs of gender. Thus, the desire or the compunction to police gender and heteronormativity also suggests that both gender and sexuality are illusory in that transgressive behaviours are feared and punished.

Ever so often I have found myself 'talking' to Butler and mulling over the concepts of gender performativity, gender performance and gender positionality. These concepts were especially challenging to me because the idea of the girls performing gender positioned them as actors impersonating female personas, suggesting that their behaviours were impersonations or mimicries derived from knowledge, yet the ways in which they positioned themselves were contingent upon the discursive positions that they occupied, for example, learner, girlfriend, friend, peer or foe. Whilst these discursive positions might seem mundane, nothing extraordinary, my study showed that the choices the girls made in performing or adopting conforming or nonconforming behaviours determined the outcomes of such positioning. For example, in order to maintain relationships with boyfriends, they adopted a subservient position, agreeing that physical punishment (being hit, for example) inflicted by their boyfriends was related to discipline and love, which is consistent with Wood, Lambert and Jewkes (2007) findings.

Unbeknown to their boyfriends, girls sometimes also sought concurrent relationships because of the gifts that such relationships generated. South African studies (Hunter, 2010; Ranganathan et al., 2016), as with studies conducted in sub-Saharan Africa (Mojola, 2015), have shown that such concurrent relationships are ultimately linked to a provider masculinity that reinforces girls' subordinate status in heterosexual relationships and increases their risk of disease and danger. Studies show that girls are able to negotiate heterosexual relationships and that some seek to secure multiple boyfriends for the rewards (financial or material) that such relationships may generate, such as presents and money to purchase items like cool drink and pies in school, for popularity and for self-satisfaction (see Ranganathan et al., 2016; 2017). This recognition of exchange or gift-giving also raises questions as to how to define such relationships. Hunter advocates a comprehensive understanding of the nuanced gender dynamics that are present in such relations (Hunter, 2005; 2010). He argues that they are agentic for both men and women as they allow men to display a provider masculinity (*isoka*) that elevates a man's status through his ability to provide, whilst simultaneously creating opportunities for women to secure financial and material resources in the context of poverty. Hunter's study was in Mandeni, a north coast town in KwaZulu Natal that was undergoing industrialisation at the time of his fieldstay. His analysis of how masculinities and femininities were constructed in the midst of an emerging HIV pandemic forces us to review the stigma and discrimination that shadows transactional sexual relationships in contexts of poverty. The increasing attention being given to the diverse constructions of femininities creates, as I discussed in chapter one, a space for the shift (and even for the rupture) of the victim–perpetrator discourse that exists in heterosexual relationships. However, the adoption of traditional or hegemonic femininities also exacerbate girls' (and women's) susceptibility to risk, especially with regards to sexual decision making—particularly the negotiation of condom use and safe sex—sexual violence, sexual coercion and sexually transmitted diseases (Jewkes & Morrell, 2012). This again highlights the lopsided power that circulates within heterosexuality.

A key element of poststructural feminist theory hinges, as I have said, on researcher reflexivity. It was thus important that throughout my analysis of the data I recognised and reflected on my own experiences as a primary school girl and my current position as a married woman. Analysing this trajectory from school girl to married woman, I found myself thinking about how the exercise of power keeps girls and women (and kept me) subordinate. Many of my experiences with gender and sexual violence were, like the girls in this study,

linked to a desire to establish and achieve autonomy from society rather than an act of resistance. I could see that my position as a female, a teacher and a Gender Studies doctoral student was embedded in my attempt to provide an anti-essentialist reading of the girls' experiences of sexual violence as a way to declassify and disrupt dominant discourses around young girls' sexuality. This is why I am so drawn to post-structural feminist theory that acknowledges how age, class and gender influence female subordination, but also acknowledges strength, resilience and agency, and therefore advocates for the recognition of female empowerment and self-determination. Feminist studies deploying a poststructuralist framework, have challenged stereotypes and discourses on violence and gender showing, instead, how girls contest their positioning as physically weak and passive—which challenges stereotyped feminine behaviours and therefore also biological essentialism. Bhana (2008), in her study focussing on young primary school girls, showed that their agency comes to the fore when they take on violent femininities to claim power, respect and also to instil fear in other girls at school. Bhana pins this arrogated femininity to race and class which, she asserts, shapes gender and gendered behaviour. For example, girls' lack of compunction for demanding lunch from other girls is underpinned by huge structural inequalities such as poverty and deprivation and is thus linked to survival strategies. Morojele (2011), too, challenges the construct of primary school girls as fearful and retreating in the face of looming violence from boys. His study showed how girls contest their subordinated positioning by retaliating and even conquering boys in fights. However, both studies also note that femininities are always in transit, meaning that enactment or performance of different femininities is underpinned by rewards which may be associated with status, popularity and resources. I explore both these studies in depth in chapter 3.

Poststructural theories such as those put forward by Butler, Gavey and Bordo force us to recognise agency and resilience which are critical to contestations of gender inequality and gender violence. Thus we come to value the interpretations of experiences as constituting authenticity. I now move on to discuss how the school is a site for the production of gendered experiences and gender inequality.

2.10. Schooling as a gendered experience

The school is a key site for the production of femininities, masculinities and sexualities. Girls and boys are expected to adhere to a socialisation process that is underpinned by gender role

constructs in which girls are soft, meek and amicable, interested in their education and books, and always display the sexual passivity which is associated with respectful behaviour. These are seen to be the key markers of femininity, and feminine conduct is rewarded by complimentary labelling ('good girls', etc.). Any indication of alternate femininities, including (particularly) displays of active sexualities, are thwarted and punished also through labelling ('bad girls'), as well as sexualised verbal harassment and hostility from teachers as well as boys and peers, which is intended to oppress and subordinate girls. Punishment is intended to play a deterrent role, warning girls to refrain from behaviour which challenges constructions of traditional femininities.

Given that agency is the ability to act within sociocultural contexts (Ahearn, 2001), a great number of studies have pointed to girls' ability to contest and challenge unequal social relationships (Bhana, 2016; Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Reddy & Dunne, 2007). The girls in my study, as with many other girls, navigate schooling against the backdrop of major structural inequalities such as poverty, unemployment and normative and cultural understandings of gender that significantly reduce their opportunities for improving life chances. Yet, despite these social conditions, girls are not passive victims of patriarchy, poverty and culture, and schools emerge as dynamic spaces where girls, through contesting and challenging gender inequality, gender violence and sexual harassment, can reflect on their individual empowerment and self-advocacy.

For me, it was important to understand how agency and resistance played out in Westhills Primary School, but I was also cautious about using concepts of choice, empowerment and voice to describe my respondents' agency. For example, girls' rejection of gender inequalities must be understood as a means to vindicate themselves for what they believe are unjust and unfair practices. Whilst this rejection challenges the patriarchal context of the school and gender relations, girls' resistance to perceived injustices should not be romanticised or muted with agency since resistance can create opportunities for both physical and systemic violence to emerge. This is because self-assertion on the part of primary school girls is viewed negatively as it is seen as challenging both authority and power within the school. This can (and did) lead to girls being ostracised, being punished both verbally and physically, and even being compromised academically. The heterosexual domain of the school thus becomes a powerful site for struggles over power and authority—amongst authoritarian figures as well as learners.

There are limits to what primary school girls can achieve within an environment where hegemonic notions of masculinity are normalised and culturally sanctioned, and where boys are under pressure to perform sexuality in ways that grant them status and power. This patriarchal system, as my study illustrates, seeks to regulate and capture girls' sexuality for the reinforcement of gender inequality—at the cost of girls' development and growth, which generally only becomes visible later when, as adults, their decision making ability and autonomy can become compromised. In this way, the school emerges as an obstacle to levelling the playing field between boys and girls, an intermediary that works both explicitly and implicitly to enable prevailing discourses around gender inequality to thrive.

In the following section I turn to the broader social context and focus on how normative gender linked to social and cultural beliefs influence constructions of masculinity and femininity, and how this, in turn, also contributes to girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence within the school.

2.11. Masculinity and gender violence

Connell (1995) recognised that it is important to consider the relationship between masculinity and femininity which presents gender binaries as rigid. Gender is a social construct that is given currency and legitimacy through social and cultural values that ascribe gender scripts to males and females. Embedded within these gender constructs are characteristics that boys must display in order to achieve hegemonic masculinities. Connell envisages the ideology of masculinity as one that shows heterosexual dominance, risk taking, entitlement to sexual experiences, objectification of females, aggression and misogyny. Boys are expected to be strong, tough, loud, fearless and champions of hegemonic heterosexual behaviour. Deviations—any display of opposing characteristics or qualities such as passivity, obedience and sexual restraint—are seen as markers of femininity and are punished. In schools, boys draw on the power accrued to masculinity to pursue heterosexual experiences, show dominance and police gender boundaries to achieve an exalted masculinity.

Yet Connell is firm that within masculinity itself, hegemonic masculinity is constructed in relation to other masculinities and femininities through the structure of gender relations. For example, Connell notes that not all boys are perpetrators of sexual violence, although the compulsion to display heterosexual masculinity comes into effect when boys gather in their

support for hegemonic displays of masculinity, such as being bystanders and condoning or ridiculing girls' experiences of sexual harassment. This is also evidenced in their monopolising of school space, both in the classroom and in the school playground. To enter into boys' space ultimately means that girls have usurped their place, disturbed the 'rules' and disrupted the norms that govern feminine behaviour.

In school, boys' identity is thus caught up in demonstrating a hegemonic masculinity in heterosexual relationships which often translates into an exercise of power over girls. This is a key finding in studies by Butler (1993) and Conroy (2013), who show that the performance of dominant masculinity is often nested within the context of a relationship with a girl (woman). Past and emerging studies highlight the direct link between the pursuit of this idealised form of masculinity and the subordination of girls by pointing especially to how heterosexual relationships are unduly shaped by gender inequalities that are supported by normative gender roles, race, class, age and economic factors (see, for example, Bhana and Pattman, 2011; Mojola, 2015; Ranganathan, 2016; Wood et al., 2007; 2008). Thus, in the construction of an idealised masculinity, subordination, domination and sexual violence becomes a 'legitimate' means through which boys (and men) seek to display their position within the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1993). However, competition to achieve an exalted masculinity is constant. Boys' and men's engagement in the perpetration of gender and sexual violence can therefore be seen both as a means to reinforce a dominant masculinity and also as a response to envisaged threats to male power. This is supported by research that consistently highlights how sociocultural beliefs surrounding gender, sexuality and age underpin school girls' experiences of sexual violence (Dunne, 2007; Parkes & Heslop, 2015; Mirembe & Davies, 2001).

Mirembe and Davies, in their study in Uganda, showed that cultural variants on gender and sexuality influenced how gender and sexual violence is understood. They found that both the informal and formal school environment demanded that both boys and girls adhere to normative gender and heterosexual scripts. Boys and girls who displayed a lack of interest in the opposite sex were ostracised and labelled as homosexuals or lesbians. Furthermore, their study showed that boys' sexually harassing behaviours were normalised as "pupils having fun" (2001:409). In other instances they found that girls were blamed for tempting boys through their dress and appearance, and hence argue that the heterosexual domain of

schooling is a risk for both boys and girls as it diminishes girls' self-worth and exacerbates the power differentials accorded to male and female.

Sexual harassment by boys towards girls is often placed within the context of initiating relationships (Cobbett & Warrington, 2013). This notion is supported by Gadin (2012) who found in her study in Sweden with girls aged 7-12 years that when girls did not capitulate, sexualised verbal abuse, taunts and teasing became conduits through which boys inserted themselves into the heterosexual matrix to assert their heterosexuality. Boys' engagement in sexualised verbal harassment towards girls usually points to the objectification of girls' sexualities and their bodies (Gervais & Eagen, 2017). For example, being called 'bitch', 'ho' and 'slut' are powerful slurs that seek to taint and stain girls' sexualities. Verbalised sexual abuse is generally aimed the sexual objectification of girls' bodies, and it can cause girls to experience much anxiety and loss of self-worth (Garrido & Prada, 2018; Gruhn, 2016). Furthermore, girls who are deemed unattractive by boys are targeted and become 'opportunities' for them to engage in misogynistic behaviours which can also be interpreted as a means to punish girls for deviating from the proscribed belief that girls should be sexually alluring in order for boys to secure heterosexual experiences (Eliasson et al., 2007; Shute, Owens & Slee, 2008). In addition, girls who repudiate or reject sexual overtures are labelled frigid or *uyabanda* (cold), which calls into question girls' sexuality whilst further suggesting an absence of female sexuality.

Mncwango and Luvuno (2015) examined how discrimination and sexism against women is inserted in the isiZulu language whilst simultaneously recognizing that isiZulu is not the only language that encompasses discriminatory and sexist language for women. Mncwango and Luvuno point out that when sexualised words are used in the learners' mother tongue (isiZulu in the case of my respondents), they are even more powerful because the derogatory message that such words seek to convey is embedded in society's perceptions of the morality of girls and women. These authors also stress that sexualised verbal abuse equates to hate speech as it works to reinforce gender inequalities that seek to keep girls (and women) in a subordinate position. However, these authors also maintain that when boys use hate speech and derogatory cultural slurs towards girls, it is often with the aim of shaming girls for daring to challenge the sociocultural valence accorded to boys and masculinity— rather than being a reflection on the girl's sexual behaviour (Mncwango & Luvuno, 2015). This also suggests that boys believe that they have natural dues over girls. Such misogyny is part of the

enactment and pursuit of hegemonic ideals since it works to destroy girls' self-image, erodes their sexuality and dignity, and results in humiliation and tension within girls—especially as they, too, are invested in heterosexuality. School boys' identities are thus caught up in an exercise of power that is central to displaying and achieving a sexualised masculinity. This is not to suggest that boys (and men) only have sexual power—a point to which I return below.

I now turn to femininities in order to show that girls are active sexual beings who are invested in heterosexuality—an argument which is illuminated by the Foucauldian notion of power as unstable (Foucault, 1978).

Femininities are also fluid and unstable, thus discourses around masculinity and femininity are mutable. This concept is fundamental to addressing gender inequalities and gender and sexual violence in the school and beyond, and also suggests that change is indeed possible. Furthermore, recognising femininities as fluid creates opportunities for defining power as something that circulates (Foucault, 1998).

2.12. Young girls' sexuality and sexual agency

The concept of girl power and girls' agency incurs many challenges that are brought about by social, cultural and material influences. Black South African girls, often characterised by limited social power, generally construct their gender and sexual identities in relation to particular meanings available to them in their social world—a world crowded with pre-existing social structures and meanings. Besides having to deal with poverty, their lives were complicated by the intrusion of social and cultural norms surrounding gender and sexuality.

The belief that girls' sexuality must be controlled and regulated positions it within a context of danger and disease that conflicts with male sexual entitlement and draws attention to the double standards surrounding male and female sexuality within the heterosexual matrix. Furthermore, girls who display active sexualities in their behaviour and attire are seen as transgressors of social and cultural norms, and endure punishment in the form of denigration, marginalisation and vilification within the school by both teachers, peers and boyfriends. However, through the process of expressing their sexualities, it can also happen that girls develop a positive attitude to their sexualities, enjoying the attention and pleasure that is

brought about by their efforts to have an attractive physical appearance whilst simultaneously debunking notions of their sexual passivity.

However, the other side of this is that the use of physical appearance can also become a point that is used to assign blame to girls' experiences of sexual harassment within the school and their subordination within gender relationships. This has motivated researchers undertaking studies in sub-Saharan Africa and South Africa to question the concept of girls' agency (Altinyenlken & Le Mat, 2018; Bhana, 2017; Gevers et al., 2013). Indeed, Bhana has shown that agency is actually an idealised feminist response to oppression, arguing that although a girl's agency is often context specific, it is stymied or thwarted by social and cultural influences and beliefs that perpetuate gender inequality (Bhana, 2017). Similarly, Altinyenlken and Le Mat and Gevers et al found that whilst girls are able to subvert their behaviour and desires in relationships, they subordinate themselves because they are subordinated by society in their contradictory responses to heterosexual violence. These researchers highlight how when girls challenge and reject traditional constructions of femininities, their disruption of sociocultural norms is punished. Renold and Ringrose (2008) thus advise caution about romanticising girls' agency.

Resistance and agentic behaviour can also exacerbate girls' experiences of sexual harassment that may contribute to their overall discrimination within the school whilst simultaneously reducing and even threatening to destroy their agency. In my fieldwork I found that the different stances girls took was suggestive of both, they were a form of resistance and of agency, two pathways to securing alternate femininities that were often stymied by the social and cultural discourses that underpin gender inequality.

2.13. Femininities, sexuality and heterosexuality

In theorising masculinity, Connell (1995) explains that emphasised femininity refers to female behaviour that compliment and support hegemonic masculinity. Connell explains that emphasised femininity, like hegemonic masculinity, is a cultural construct that benefits patriarchy. According to Connell, emphasised femininity are underscored by practices characterised to accommodate masculinity. Thus for hegemonic masculinity to exist, femininity has to be subordinated. Whilst masculinity is synonymous with power and sexual virility, femininity is constructed as the other, hence Connell does not accord hegemony to

femininity as he does to masculinity. As a result, Connell maintains that there is no hegemonic femininity (1978; 1995; 2002). However Paechter (2017; 2018) argues that Connell's conceptualisation of emphasised femininity is unduly shaped by patriarchal notions of masculinity which treats femininity as the 'Other' in relation to masculinity. As such, she maintains femininity is defined entirely in opposition and subordination to it such that femininity cannot be conceptualized at all without a masculinity. Paechter also stresses that the construction of hegemonic masculinity is in keeping with Butler's heterosexual matrix which demonstrates heterosexuality as a key component of masculinity. Thus she maintains that in the context of heterosexuality, gender relations are governed by hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity. Within the heterosexual matrix, it therefore becomes constitutional that females are compliant with the laws that govern gender relations. Paechter argues that Connell's conceptualisation of emphasised femininity erodes the power and dignity of females because moral discourses as well as the threat and use of violence constrain the element of choice for women. Hence she argues that Connell's conceptualisation of emphasised femininity reifies, reinforces and re-inscribes the heterosexual contract and is therefore both restrictive and draconian. Paechter recognises that Schipper's (2007) argument for hegemonic femininity rather than emphasised femininity hardly disrupts Connell's concept of emphasised femininity. Schipper put forth that just like there is hegemonic masculinity, there also is hegemonic femininity. She explains that rather than emphasised femininity, hegemonic femininities must be recognised alongside hegemonic masculinity, since like male adherence and aspirations for hegemonic masculinity, females also draw on constructs of femininity that are revered and upheld, therefore, hegemonic femininity. Paechter, in noting that gender is not monolithic, conceptualises femininities, like masculinity, as fluid. This recognition of diverse femininities implies different constructions of femininities come into play to accommodate, resist and negotiate gender and power. This acknowledgement of diverse femininities is significant as it creates a space for the shift from the victim-perpetrator binary, thus opening up avenues for addressing gender and sexual violence. By recognising the multiplicity of femininities, Paechter, like others (Bhana, 2018; Renold, 2005; Renold & Ringrose, 2008) stress the importance of moving away from the oppressor-oppressed discourse, thus acknowledging that females are not simply powerless beings. The recognition of a multiplicity of femininities also signals a shift from treating all women and girls as victims of male violence.

This recognition of alternate femininities is significant as it reinforces the conceptualisation of gender as fluid whilst also suggesting possibilities for both the shifting and disruption of normative gender beliefs around young girls' sexualities. This recognition of alternative femininities is central to the recognition of my respondents' sexual autonomy and agency. In the context of heterosexuality, it suggests that girls will either contest or engage in a multitude of femininities in response to hegemonic displays of masculinity (Jewkes & Morrell, 2012). South African studies (Bhana, 2018; Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Gevers et al., 2013; Jewkes & Morrell, 2012; Reddy & Dunne, 2007) have drawn on the concept of shifting femininities to dislocate South African girls from the trapped positioning of 'victim'. The studies illustrate, instead, how the decisions and choices that girls make in their heterosexual relationships are influenced by their own conceptualisations of what constitutes a good relationship, what an ideal boyfriend should be (and look) like, and by their desire for gender equality in relationships.

In my study, I also contend that the girls were critical and selective about which identity or femininity was most advantageous to them at any particular moment, and that this gave them power and influenced their (often ambivalent) attitudes to interpreting sexually harassing behaviours. Their challenge was not situated in being bad girls or being disrespectful or even disinterested in academic work, rather it was situated in their active engagement in their sexuality which also challenged their teachers' construction of them as 'bad girls'. I found that the girls knew to how to position themselves in relation to both traditional and modern femininities because they knew about the meanings that the boys give to these categories. For example, they knew that boys like girls who comply with normative heterosexual behaviour, and harass girls who do not. In many instances, however, the girls conceded their power because of the discourses around the construction of masculinity and femininity. However, their agency lay in determining which type of femininity offered them more power both in their response to boys' sexually harassing behaviours and in their heterosexual relationships.

Furthermore the girls' responses showed that they were also emotionally invested in the position they took: they recognised their desires and acted accordingly. Their resistance to and negotiation of their identities suggests that their resistance can be very powerful in reducing the violence that they experience in school. Such plurality of femininities is well illustrated in global studies. For example, Ringrose and Harris (2004) and Maxwell and Aggleton (2013) show how girls reject conservatism and acquiescence by framing their

sexualities around a female sexual empowerment that centred on a desire to be free. Dworkin (2009), too, supports that whilst girls are regulated by hegemonic codes of gender, class, race, age and sexuality, they destabilise, challenge and topple the same. Bhana (2018) has similarly shown that primary school girls are agentic in constructing and reconstructing different forms of femininity. This concept of agency that girls play out in exerting power and producing effects in their lives is central to Butler's theory of gender performativity. Indeed, girls' sexual agency is most active in these moments of slippage.

Reddy and Dunne (2007) argue that whilst girls' desire for recognition, attention and relationships with boys suggests that they concede their power, it actually masks how power is reclaimed in other places, for example, a 'cool girl' status amongst peers. In this way, their agency to determine which category they choose offers them more power. Agency is choice. Girls may have to give up what they enjoy—for example, being leaders or playing exciting games—in order to get it right with the boys, and they thus have agency, even if their choices are restricted. Thus, girls learn that power is negotiable. I found that my respondents faced rejection, injustices, sexual harassment and sexual violence, but this did not quell their desire to hang out with the boys. Why? Because girls are subjective. They know about being bossy and they know about how to be a girlfriend. This knowledge formed the base from which they performed their behaviours.

2.14. Femininities, violence and heterosexuality

Heterosexual violence cannot be assigned to gender (boy or girl). In the context of heterosexuality, girls, like boys, are motivated by jealousy, control, self-defence and anger. Whilst boys' aggression correlates with a desire to achieve hegemonic forms of masculinity, girls' aggression must be located within shifting femininities since it seeks to repudiate and challenge boys and other girls who seek to subordinate them. This has been especially documented in global studies (Haavind, Magnusson & Hollway, 2014; Sanhueza & Lessard, 2018; Farvid, Braun & Rowney, 2017) that have shown how girls' increased sexual assertiveness is also visible in their fights with other girls over perceived injustices such as dating another's boyfriend, and being called sexualised defamatory words such as 'bitch' and 'slut' that seek to stigmatise the other's sexuality.

The other side of this causality direction is that girls' engagement in fights with other girls reworks them into a subordinate position as it reinforces the double standards that plague heterosexuality. For instance, whilst sociocultural norms dismisses boys (and men's) multi-partnering, girls, in blaming other girls for enticing and distracting their boyfriends, re-inscribe themselves into the dominant discourse around a complicit femininity that mitigates against their agency. Conversely, this also brings on moralistic discourses around sexual innocence as fights to reinstate their sexual reputations place girls' sexualities within the dichotomy of the virgin–whore discourse that reinforces the sexual double standards for males and females.

In expressing sexual agency, girls experience damage to their sexual reputation within the school. Thus, sexualised verbal abuse also become an instrument of violence that girls use to subordinate other girls. In my study I found that the girls took huge exception to being called *ifebe* (bitch) because of their investment in being considered 'virgins'. This suggests that submissiveness, passivity, innocence and agency are extremely complex, and forces us to recognise how incredibly complex the gendered landscape in fact is for young primary school girls. The different stances that my respondents took reflected both a form of resistance to gender power inequalities and to their agency in finding pathways to secure alternate femininities.

2.15. Conclusion

This chapter has explored a range of theories that I draw on to explain how power is negotiated, claimed, resisted, diminished, reduced and destroyed not only by boys, teachers and other girls but by the girls themselves. It becomes clear that violence is an act of power and that this power operates at different levels and in different contexts, and is exerted by both teachers and learners. Key to this is the recognition that power is neither fixed nor uniform. Viewing the school as a place of violence reveals how power is something that is malleable, but which, simultaneously, resumes and regains its form. By viewing power in this way, I am able to analyse how the girls adjusted and mediated their sexualities to contest sociocultural norms that sought to regulate, reduce, capture and even destroy their sexual autonomy.

In viewing the girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence in this way, I have distanced myself from situating violence within the individual, the school or the community. Rather, the individual, the school and society become amalgamated as intermediaries or conduits through which sociocultural beliefs and values enter the school and contribute to gender inequalities that exacerbate young girls' risk of gender and sexual violence. The poststructural feminist lens I have used has enabled me to embark on a difficult journey to bring to light these young girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence rather than merely providing an outline of their experiences from an exogenous perspective. This required, first and foremost, that I understood that sexual violence operates in parallel to gender asymmetries. The fact that the study was conducted in Westhills Primary, which is a coeducational school, made it all the more possible to demystify primary school girls' sexualities and to see that the shifting and flowing nature of gender and power offers alternatives to the discussion of girls' persecution and also, more broadly, to how to combat sexual violence against girls.

However, it is crucial that primary school girls' resistance does not become muted within notions of agency, as Bhana (2017) stresses. The ways in which the girls 'do gender' is linked to their contextual realities which undergird the ways in which they negotiate, mediate, resist and succumb to gender power inequalities. My respondents' negotiation of their sexualities was a response to the reality of their everyday lives within the context of Westhills Primary school and beyond the school to the wider social context of family, community, and country. It was bounded by the sociocultural norms and values attached to what it means to be a girl in a South African primary school—or, indeed, in any school.

Viewing my respondents as socially competent gave their disclosures of their experiences of gender and sexual violence much more gravitas and validity and enabled me to see how, in rejecting, avoiding and even engaging in retaliatory violence for perceived injustices, they reshaped their gender and sexual identities. Through adopting the eclectic theoretical approach I have outlined in this chapter, I was also able to position the girls beyond the rigid perpetrator–victim binary and recognise their active engagement in their efforts to either repudiate gender and sexual violence or alternately, to subordinate their agency because of risks and vulnerabilities they perceived, such as fear of victimisation.

Importantly, too, the theoretical approaches I draw on in this study also enabled me to recognise and highlight the girls' sexuality and their investment in heterosexuality. Femininities and sexualities cannot be looked at in isolation since the ways in which girls perform femininities are necessarily positioned within heterosexual relations. This recognition is key to demonstrating that the girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence are located within a heterosexual discourse. It is within this discourse that girls (and women) are accorded social and cultural values that shape their relationships with boys (men). Key to this discourse is the particular roles assigned to boys and girls (men and women). Thus schools too become very powerful in influencing gender inequalities and gender disparities since school policies, laws and regulations can in very subtle ways define what it means to be a boy and a girl. Challenges to this discourse upsets the prevailing discourse within the social world and creates tension between the sexes and this leads to aggression and force in attempts to regain or to remind females and males of the positions of the sexes within society by boys, girls and their teachers.

In the next chapter (Chapter 3), I explore the literature around gender, gender violence, sexuality and sexual violence in schools to elucidate how girls are both vulnerable to and agents of violence.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

3.1. Introduction

My central aim, in this study, is to explore primary school girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence. This chapter provides a broad analysis of recent literature on sexual violence in schools both to contextualise my study and to orientate the reader in the field. Throughout my thesis I draw on this literature to show how school girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence are situated within a heterosexual discourse, and the impacts this has on girls' lives. The literature also supports my argument that primary school girls' experiences of sexual violence are shaped by unequal gender norms that are embedded in the hegemonic sociocultural values and beliefs accorded to gender, sexuality and age. My focus, in this literature review, is on the ways in which other researchers have framed and conceptualised girls' experiences of sexual violence.

It is often assumed that an ethnographer goes into the field without any preconceived ideas or expectations of the phenomenon being studied. An ethnographer should enter the field, conduct their observations, and then frame their study within a theoretical field of literature, all the while ensuring that the data generated is not influenced or contaminated by prior expectations (Creswell, 2009). While this assumption may be valid, I believe that it is important to read and understand former research on the topic under study. Therefore, I read widely on studies about girls, gender, sexuality and sexual violence, and found that the more recent literature defy conventions about young girls sexual innocence, shifting the focus from a one dimensional understanding of young girls sexuality and sexual violence, to recognize instead the plurality and power that underscores their reshaping gender and sexual identities. This shift, to me, was critical, as it offered new ways to read girls' experiences of sexual violence.

The body of scholarship that I draw on throughout this thesis engages in analyses that show how girls contest, dislocate and fracture discourses around female sexual passivity and victimhood. It is also important to note that there is a scarcity of studies, globally and locally, that examine sexual violence in primary schools, and particularly within the specific age

cohort of 12–14 years. Fourteen year old girls are mostly in secondary or high schools. However, in South Africa, it is not unusual to find learners who are older than the expected age for specific grades in primary schools. I have therefore included literature that has also encompassed 14 year old girls who have just begun high school, but I have been careful to focus on their voices only rather than merging their voices with older participants. The limited literature also suggests that it might have been difficult to access primary school girls' voices in sexual violence research because of the secondary trauma and the ethical issues that confronts researchers particularly regarding the mandatory reporting of sexual abuse.

Bhana (2013) which focuses on how violence, while gendered in all its forms, is also contested, negotiated and even reproduced by both girls and boys is schools and in society more generally also has relevance for my study (Bhana, 2013). Bhana's most pressing argument calls for the recognition of the nuances in girls experiences of sexual violence. Such a focus she argues, upsets the conventional construction of femininities and masculinities, and calls into question the victim–perpetrator binary so prevalent in gender and sexual violence. This argument is critical because it recognises young girls' agency—and I draw on it throughout my study, arguing that young girls are both vulnerable to and agents of sexual violence.

In addition to the literature that I have selected, I have also made reference to Wood, Lambert and Jewkes (2008) even though their study was conducted with 76 older youth between the ages of 14 and 25 since their contribution to heterosexual violence has relevance for my study. Wood et al's (2008) study revealed that girls contested beating/discipline to love. However, whilst the girls in the study agreed that violence was a necessary and justified means of resolving conflicts, the authors ascribe the girls' passivity to a loss of agency in their relationships.

In the remainder of this chapter I focus on five key studies: Bhana's (2018) *Girls negotiating sexuality and violence in the primary school,* and *'Girls hit!' Constructing and negotiating violent African femininities in a working-class primary school*; Gevers, Jewkes, Mathews and Flisher's (2012) *'I think it's about experiencing, like, life': A qualitative exploration of contemporary adolescent intimate relationships in South Africa;* Haffejee's (2006) *Waiting opportunities;* and finally, the most recent Human Sciences and Research Council study by

Lynch, Essop, Tolla and Morison (2018), *Intimate partner violence in Khayelitsha schools: A culture of silence*.

3.2. Girls' Experiences of Sexual Violence in South African Schools

I begin with Bhana's (2018) study which examined how heterosexuality shaped and influenced the ways in which girls navigated and negotiated their femininity in their relationships amongst themselves and in their interaction with boys during breaks at school. The study, which was conducted in a co-ed public township school in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, showed that the school playground was a vibrant and dynamic space underpinned by lopsided gender power relations that manifested in gender violence, sexual harassment, misogyny and sexual violence.

However, this is not to say that break time was an unhappy time for girls. Rather, Bhana documented how girls chose to go to quiet spaces where there was less risk of being harassed or having their lunches stolen, and highlighted the nuanced ways in which the girls exerted their agency, and how this was central to the shifting nature of femininities. Bhana argued that this agency, which she calls "lite agency", simultaneously reworked and reproduced girls' passivity and their fear of boys. Girls' retracting behaviours reinforced boys' positions as powerful, dangerous, and to be avoided. Girls' fear of boys, according to Bhana, is linked to the danger that they represent, and is a powerful element influencing the gendering of the school ground. For example, girls might retire from the more public spaces within the school ground, but their choice for safer spaces connects with their desire to protect their lunches from thieving boys. In highlighting this aspect of violence, Bhana explains that, in the context of poverty, scare resources such as food for lunch are coveted by boys who use their power to achieve desired outcomes which, in this instance, is stealing girls' lunches. She shows that in the competition for resources, boys were seen as fearful and dangerous, and this threat was amplified by their sense of entitlement to the girls' lunches.

Bhana also shows that by "shaping" the space of the playground, girls and boys define what it is to be a girl or a boy in school. Girls usually opted to play games that were supportive of their sense of femininity: girls played softer games while boys played rough, kicking and dangerous games that also dominated the playground space. Girls' quieter games also

reinforced the girls as soft, gentle and passive, thus reinforcing their complicity in, and subordination within, unequal gender power relations.

On a more fundamental level, Bhana described how the playground was also a space where boys and girls came together in play to pursue and secure heterosexual experiences. She used the example of the game "Spin the bottle" to demonstrate how boys and girls inserted themselves into the dominant discourse of masculinity, femininity and heterosexuality that synchronised the reproduction of gender inequality and violence. The aim of the game is to get a boy and a girl to kiss: the bottle is spun and when it stops the boy and the girl that the bottle 'points' to have to kiss. The game thus legitimated opportunities for girls to demonstrate a desirable femininity and to secure sexualised experiences, in this case kissing, without fear of being labelled as morally reprehensible or of having their sexuality tainted. It also underpinned demonstrations of hegemonic forms of masculinity, subordinate femininities and heterosexual violence. For example, boyfriends reacted violently if their girlfriends kissed other boys, and these fights were underpinned by boys' competition for "top spot" in the bid to establish both their masculinity and their position in the heterosexual hierarchy amongst boys and peers.

Boys' fights over girlfriends were also self-confirming for themselves, as girls' became objects in boys' struggle to create rankings amongst their peers. Connell (1985) supports Bhana's finding that patriarchy is not about girls, but about boys and their competition with other boys to secure a position in the hierarchal status of masculinity. Hence games such as "spin the bottle" work to capture girls' sexuality for the demonstration of masculine power. Bhana also demonstrated how other games such as running, chasing and hiding also reinforced the asymmetrical power relations and gender hierarchies amongst the boys and girls.

Bhana also explored how "Dress up Friday" at school reinforced a compulsive heterosexuality that was underscored by sexual desirability and heterosexual attraction. She maintained that these special days at school authenticated opportunities for girls to display a desirable femininity which contradicted the construction of primary school girls as sexually subdued. "Dress Up Friday" was a day for competition and policing amongst the girls to see that they were all dressed up in a stylish but morally way. The ways in which the girls dressed thus became a tool for other girls and boys to judge them, and this exposed the girls

to sexual objectification, harassment and discrimination. For example, girls who chose to wear short dresses were ostracised and perceived as promiscuous since “good girls” were supposed to be demure in dress and behaviour. “Good girls”, Bhana concluded, accommodate male power in heterosexuality by adopting respectability and niceness. “Cool girls”, she said, were also complicit in maintaining gender inequality in their competition with other girls for boys’ attention. Girl on girl gossip, name calling and physical violence demonstrated how girls policed other girls, as well as their own desirability to boys and, in so doing, subordinated themselves—just as they were subordinated by boys and by the school. It this way, both traditional and modern femininities ultimately work in favour of masculinity.

Bhana concludes that whilst girls’ agency wass enigmatic and context specific, the ways in which girls negotiated their gender and sexuality was underscored by unequal gender norms accorded by societal and cultural constructions of masculinity and femininity. Compulsive heterosexuality, she argues, is key to the ways in which girls negotiate their sexuality. It is within this heterosexual realm, as Butler (1990) points out, that gender power is most visible, particularly in the ways male sexual entitlement, misogyny and control are championed, driven by male power. Bhana’s study thus opens up a whole new research focus on primary school girls’ negotiation of heterosexual culture.

The next study I focus on is by Gevers, Jewkes, Mathews and Flisher (2012), conducted in three high schools in Cape Town, South Africa, with boys and girls, 14–17 years. The authors used focus group discussions and individual interviews to explore how young boys and girls experienced and positioned themselves in dating and intimate heterosexual relationships. Their study highlighted three prominent themes: 1) participants’ views and experiences were strongly influenced by prevailing discourses around gender norms; 2) young people’s relationships were fluid and peers played a key role in helping to initiate relationships; and 3) peer pressure propelled young boys and girls into sexual intimacy.

Gevers et al. found that normative gender beliefs prevailed in young people’s relationships, which were governed, from start to finish, by heterosexual norms—norms which reinforced girls’ subordination. They also found that girls who did not respond positively to boys’ advances were subsequently coerced into relationships through flattery, persistence and even violence. Once a relationship was established, there were different expectations: boys

expected sex whilst girls wanted love and romance. These different expectations and levels of emotional investment pointed to a lack of commitment and caring on the part of boys, emphasising characteristics of a cold masculinity that was synonymous with dominant constructions of masculinity. These findings also emphasised male sexual entitlement as key in the construction of and the bid to achieve hegemonic masculinity. These findings resonate with Wood, Lambert and Jewkes (2008) study, which highlighted how gender inequality becomes the main driver that benefits patriarchy and contributes to girls' subordinate status in relationships.

However, Gevers et al. also explored how girls redefined and narrowed the definition of their sexuality passivity by drawing attention to how they sometimes took the lead in the formation of their relationships. This 'turn' in relationship initiation, albeit in its premature stages, is important as it opens up possibilities for disrupting gender norms and decision-making within the context of heterosexual relationships. Similarly, the study found that some girls also indicated a desire for sexual intimacy, suggesting that girls were challenging perceptions that their sexual desires were absent, dormant or in the service of males. However, Gevers et al. also stated that this was rare as sexual initiation by girls compromised boys' masculinity and called into question male sexuality, since central to this is boys seeing themselves as pursuers of girls and sex rather than being pursued by girls. Gevers et al. conclude by stressing how important it is to recognise that young girls' sexuality incredibly complex.

The second theme that emerged in their study concerned fluidity in relationships. They found that there was a structure in how adolescent relationships were formed, but, once relationships were secured, the relationships transformed into casual affairs that were described by boys as *jolling (having fun)* (Jewkes and Morrell, 2012). Gevers et al. showed that by redefining their investments in their relationship, boys extracted themselves from any formal commitment which subsequently gave them room to pursue other relationships. However, the study also found that girls romanticised their relationships and hence viewed boyfriends' concurrent relationships with other girls as a breach of trust which sometimes manifested in violence as girls resorted to hitting their cheating boyfriends. On the whole, relationships tended not to be completely broken, even when boyfriends dated other girls; thus relationships were left in abeyance and boys could therefore resume past relationships if they so desired. Hence the assertion by Gevers's et al. that this informal construction of relationships contributed to girls' silences in decision-making, since boys dominated and

pursued other relationships as a rite of passage to manhood, rather than seeking serious or long-term relationships such as the type that the girls preferred. Girls' silences, according to Gevers's et al., were, however, also agentic, in that they avoided visible signs of animosity towards boyfriends, which therefore allowed them to resume relationships if they so wished. For the third theme "male sexual entitlement," Gevers et al. maintained that as sex was the norm in relationships it was expected by boyfriends, and girls therefore submitted. The authors noted however, that the girls in their study did not regard boyfriends' insistence for sex as sexual coercion, and for this reason concluded that heterosexual norms works as powerful facilitators for boys to achieve masculinity status. They also noted that peer pressure and the need to "fit in with the crowd" underpinned younger girls' relationships which consequently contributed to their lack of assertiveness in decision-making regarding sexual encounters in their relationships. This study therefore illustrates how young girls' sexuality is manipulated by boys' for sexual gratification and to display their sexual prowess, both of which link to the exhibition of a dominant masculinity and a hierarchy amongst peers.

The final theme of their study was "peer influence" in relationship formation. Gevers et al. maintain that this is an important component in relationship formation and is woven into a complex web of gender inequality, sexuality and heterosexuality. Results suggest that peers shaped "the rules of the game" through which a collective masculinity was achieved through peer assistance that helped boys to secure sexualised experiences. For example, Gevers et al. noted that peers knew about the intimacies of each other's relationships since they were instrumental in securing safe and convenient places for couples to meet and to engage in sexual intimacy.

Gevers et al.'s study is important as it showed that young boys and girls redefine and widen the definition of and their investment in their sexuality. In addition, the study draws attention to the subtleties that play out in their heterosexual relationships, and girls' efficacy in challenging their disenfranchised status within their relationships—which led the authors to conclude that adolescent dating relationships are fluid, unstable and changing. The authors also found that relationships were underpinned by girls' expectancy of gifts and money, and hence that a boy's worth was determined by his financial status; if he appeared to have money, he was seen as the ideal boyfriend. Recognising girls' agency in choosing boyfriends for financial and material gain is critical, Gevers et al. argue, to understanding why girls subordinated themselves in relationships. Other South African studies have also highlighted

girls’ agency in securing relationships, but have stressed how a focus on provider masculinity increases girls' vulnerability to sexually transmitted diseases and risk of dating violence (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Ranganathan et al., 2016).

The next study that I focus on is Haffejee’s (2006) exploratory study conducted in Gauteng, South Africa with 140 girls aged 13–17. Her study sought to understand girls’ experiences in heterosexual relationships, their perspectives on gender violence, and the gender issues that confront them within the schooling context, and she chose the range of ages in order to capture the variety of experiences that come with different stages of developmental. Key themes that emerged were: 1) gender violence at school; 2) constructions of violence in relationships; and 3) responses to violence. Regarding the first theme, Haffejee noted that the erosion of the girls’ dignity was underpinned by their exposure to a variety of sexually harassing and misogynistic behaviour which included sexualised touching, sexualised verbal abuse, threatening behaviour, and inappropriate sexual innuendos or physical sexual violence when girls resisted a boyfriend’s request for sex, for example. The study identified the school toilets as high risk and restrictive places as the girls disclosed that boys loitered around the toilets and accosted girls, asking them for sex and verbally abusing and humiliating them, for example by casting aspirations on their bodily hygiene through demeaning and humiliating comments.

The second theme addressed violence in relationships. Haffejee found that the girls were subjected to numerous forms of violence all of which centred on controlling the girls’ voices in relationships. However, the study also found that the participants oscillated between rejecting their partner’s violence and accepting it as an indication of love—in that it was corrective and therefore linked to love. These findings resonate with Wood, Lambert & Jewkes (2008) who also found that girls situated boyfriends’ violence towards them within a sphere of love and discipline. It is important to stress that in drawing attention to girls’ complicity in heterosexual violence both Haffejee’s and Gevers et al.’s studies suggest a paralysis in the pursuit of gender equality in heterosexual relationships. Haffeejee, like Gevers et al., posits that the complexities that emerge in young girls’ relationships provide the perfect opportunity to intervene and educate girls about unequal gender norms and to offer ways for them to extricate themselves from becoming future victims of intimate partner violence.

Haffejee also found that 13-year-olds were more assertive in rejecting heterosexual violence compared to older girls. This is important as it contests notions of young girls' sexual passivity and reinforces young girls' sexual agency. It is important, too, that the author has recognised that young girls are invested in their sexuality and, consequently, in heterosexual relationships, which is key to addressing sexual harassment.

Haffejee identified schools as hostile places that compromised the girls' safety. Her participants' revealed that they did not disclose the abuse they suffered as they felt that they would be gossiped about. The schools lacked proper channels for reporting sexual harassment and sexual violence, and girls' distrusted their teachers, as was evident in their preference for an external councilor to come into their schools so that they could disclose their experiences. Haffejee concluded by asking that alternate frameworks be provided by the schools to address issues around male sexual entitlement and heterosexual violence, and for girls to develop self-efficacy and self-assertiveness in order to reject violence in relationships. She suggested that workshops should be held to address gender violence in schools and to help demystify relationships and encourage non-violent ways of dealing with conflict and sexual violence.

The next study that I focus on here was conducted by Lynch, Essop, Tolla and Morison (2018) with learners aged 11–18 from both primary and secondary (high) schools in Khayelitsha Township, Cape Town. The study, which the authors identify as a first in South Africa, used surveys, focus group discussions and individual interviews to collect baseline data for a programme intervention to address sexual violence in schools. They highlighted the following themes in their report: 1) culture of silence; 2) violence in relationships; and 3) unwritten dating rules. They found that primary school girls were subjected to both physical and verbal abuse including kicking, hair-pulling, and inappropriate sexualised touching that occurred in the toilets, classrooms and in the playground. The study found that primary school learners identified older learners as the main culprits of sexual violence and that 2 in 10 primary school learners and 1in 10 high school learners named teachers as perpetrators of sexual violence. However, the report did not state whether these numbers were located in learners' actual experience or whether they were reporting on other learners' experiences as well. According to Lynch et al., some girls confided in friends or in their mothers, but most were silent due to fear of the perpetrator, a lack of institutional support, fear of being blamed or punished and uncertainty regarding the act. Uncertainty prevailed because boys were

constructed as pursuers, suggesting then girls must be pursued and forced into heterosexual sexual relationships. This links to the belief that girls mean 'yes' even when they say 'no' to sexual encounters.

Their second theme focused on heterosexual violence in dating relationships. An area of great concern expressed by the authors' centres on the discovery that intimate partner violence or dating violence was more common among primary school learners than high school learners. According to Lynch et al., physical and verbal violence, sexual coercion, and being forced to perform shameful and humiliating sexual acts underscored girls' experiences of relationship violence. Similar to Gevers et al. (2012), Lynch et al. reported that gift giving was tied to sexual exchange and that a girl's refusal or rejection of sex often resulted in physical violence.

Their third theme centres on unwavering sociocultural norms in heterosexual relationships, which the authors term "unwritten dating rules". Lynch et al. explain that a girl's refusal of sex was often misinterpreted as normal scripted feminine behaviour whilst boys were constructed as sexual pursuers. The authors link the pursuer/pursued to the context of romantic relationships, explaining that boys were seen as more invested in sexual conquests, which they engaged in to win girls over. The authors also noted that girls constructed boys' sexualised verbal innuendos as signs of attraction towards them, which confirmed them as desirable sexual subjects and led to them accepting boys' proposition for relationships. Furthermore, the authors noted that the girls scripted refusals for relationship formation and sexual intimacy were embedded in the cultural scripts accorded to young girls' sexuality, and that persuasion and force were thus seen as normal: boys sought to flatter and coerce girls into relationships, including sexual relationships, which the girls accepted or didn't accept sometimes.

The final theme focused on changing norms in relationships and resonates with Gevers et al.'s (2012) finding that some girls challenged boyfriends' insistence on sex, believing rather that sex is entwined in love and patience. Lynch et al. recognised that this different femininity is fundamental to addressing sexual violence in dating relationships as it suggests new norms in heterosexual relationships.

Whilst the study provides vital statistics and information regarding the prevalence of violence in primary school girls' lives, and their engagement in heterosexual relationships, a deeper, gendered analysis focusing on the sociocultural beliefs and values attached to gender would provide a more nuanced understanding of the girls' experiences of sexual violence rather then reifying girls' subordinate status within the victim/perpetrator binary. Lynch et al. conclude by identifying the school as a key site for addressing sexual violence, and recommend that schools institute proper channels for reporting sexual violence. They also suggest that learner awareness be generated through teaching and discussions, especially in the Life Orientation subject, to provide opportunities for recognising, addressing and eradicating harmful gender norms and their contribution to sexual violence. They also champion the need to recognise primary school girls' sexual agency if interventions are to be successful in countering stereotypical notions of femininity and masculinity that endanger girls' equality and efficacy in heterosexual relationships.

Research in South African schools into the production of violent forms of femininities in education remains sparse due to the focus of studies on male violence—but it is clear that schools are not only sites for the making of violent masculinities (See Bhana, 2008; Bhana and Pillay, 2011as exceptions). Girls are generally perceived as victims of sexual violence and dominant understandings of femininity do not associate girls with sexual violence, as Haffejee (2006) and Human Rights Watch (2001) both note. Bhana (2008), however, contested the "girls as victims" discourse and situated sexual violence in an area of schooling that has not featured in research around gender and school violence. She argues that a multitude of femininities exist, as does Connell (1995; 2000) and Morrell and Jewkes (2013). I explore Bhana's study next.

Bhana (2008) examined the ways in which 7–8-year-old African girls contested, navigated and mobilised violence in primary schools. She challenges the dichotomous placing of girls on one end of the continuum of gender and sexual violence. This is critical to constructions of masculinity and femininity as it upsets notions of girls as passive victims of sexual violence and suggests that gender combines with other factors such as race, class and sexuality, to shape sexual violence. By shifting the gaze from male violence to female violence, Bhana contests the positioning of primary school girls as passive victims and shows how they transgress idealised gender norms such as passivity, docility and sweetness through active participation in cultures of violence, both verbal and physical, that were complexly

intertwined with gender, sexuality, race and class. Accounts and experiences of violence in the study highlighted alternate forms of femininities that disrupted gender norms. Bhana argued that gender violence must no longer be conflated with male power.

Other studies, too, have shown that violence is not enacted by boys alone but that girls can and do engage in acts of violence (Morojele, 2011; Renold, 2005; Ringrose and Harris, 2013). Bhana, however, showed that while girls' engagement in violence worked to challenge or subvert dominant constructions of gender, it was not advantageous for their femininity because accepting subordination to hegemonic masculinity and having as many friends as possible were key to girls' popularity.

These five studies all highlight how research that explores sexual violence in South Africa tends to focus on older girls and boys and that, in most instances, when younger participants are included in studies, their voices are subsumed by older youth. Bhana (2018) and Lynch et al. (2018) are notable exceptions. The literature is consistent in that it shows that sexual harassment and sexual violence are extreme manifestations of gender power inequalities and powerful influences supporting the hegemonic forms of masculinity, normative gender roles, and heterosexual norms that shape primary school girls' schooling experiences. The gender violence that primary school girls are subjected to overwhelmingly centres on sexualised verbal and physical harassment generally aimed at diminishing girls' their power. The literature highlights how girls thus challenge disempowering constructions of them as sexually innocent, and how they are invested in their sexuality and desirous of heterosexual relationships. However, sociocultural beliefs accorded to gender and young girls' sexuality renders their negotiation of their sexuality complex and contradictory.

In the following section I explore international studies on how sexual violence features and is constructed in schools, in order to give the reader an appreciation of the global scale of this phenomenon.

3.3. Sexual violence in schools: a global phenomenon

Sexual harassment and sexual violence is recognized as a common phenomenon in schools throughout the world (Pinehero, 2006). The increasing attention it is receiving globally shows that it is not a recent problem. I focus on studies conducted in America (Ashbaugh & Cornell,

2008; Espelage, Hong, Rinehart & Doshi, 2016; Gruber & Finneran, 2008; Haavind, Thorne, Hollway & Magnusson, 2014; Hlavaka, 2014), Australia (Robinson, 2005), Jamaica (Cobbett &Warrington, 2013), the United Kingdom (Renold, 2005), Spain and Italy, Sanchez (2010) and Sweden (Shute, Owens & Slee, 2008). Ashbaugh and Cornell (2008) found that sexualised teasing, taunts and jokes created distress and emotional anxiety in American school girls. Sanchez (2010) also found that school girls were subjected to sexual harassment and sexual violence in the form of verbal abuse, sexual graffiti and exposure to pornography, but that it is important to consider these behaviours in relation to heterosexual attraction since sexual harassment emerging out of heterosexual attraction can normalise sexual harassment and violence in intimate partner relationships.

The following themes dominate global literature on which I focus:

- Sexual harassment: mis-identified, mis-labeled, minimised or ignored by school personnel
- Girls' experiences of sexualised verbal violence perpetrated by boys
- Girls as perpetrators of sexualised verbal violence
- Girls' experiences of sexualised physical abuse perpetrated by boys
- Girls' experiences of physical violence in heterosexual relationships

3.4. Sexual Harassment: mis-identified, mis-labeled, minimised or ignored by school personnel

Gruber and Finneran (2008) challenged the misnomer "bullying" that is often used to explain sexual harassment in schools arguing instead that girls' experiences of sexual violence are shaped by gender power inequalities that cost them dearly—to the extent that their greater growth is stunted. They also assert that sexual harassment is a manifestation of gender power inequalities that are underpinned by deep sociocultural beliefs around gender, race, class and sexuality. Their argument resonates with those of Hlavaka (2014) who show how the notion of sexually harassing behaviours as developmental has in fact worked to normalise sexual harassment in schools. They found that the developmental perspective attributed to sexual harassment misses how gender inequalities are invoked and sustained. Hlavaka argues for shifting the lens towards understanding how and why these acts are produced and maintained in schools. Her views are based on the American Association of University Women (AAUW, 2011) study which revealed that out of 1965 students, nearly half of them reported

experiences of sexual harassment and only 9% reported their experiences to institutional heads. Hlavaka also noted that more girls than boys accounted for experiences of sexual harassment which included sexualised verbal abuse and being coerced into heterosexual relationships.

Other scholars (Conroy, 2013; Espelage, Hong, Rinehart & Doshi, 2016; Haavind, Thorne, Holloway & Magnusson, 2014; Summit, Kalmus, De Atley & Levack, 2016) found that sexual harassment and sexual violence in primary schools operates in the shadows and that individuals and institutions thus fail to spot it. According to these scholars, sexual harassment and sexual violence is not just between boys and girls, rather there is consensus that societal and cultural norms attached to gender interact with other structures such as sexuality, race and class that must be seen as enablers that facilitate gender power inequalities.

Miller et al. (2013) also link heterosexual violence to aggression and bullying. However, they clarify that whilst bullying emerges from childhood, sexual harassment is borne out of pubescent changes that bring an increased awareness of the sexual self and are accompanied by boys' and girls' desires to attain self-efficacy and autonomy. However, these authors maintain that sexual harassment, aggression and bullying co-exist and therefore should not be viewed in isolation. They conducted their study with Grade 7 and 8 learners in North Carolina, America. Gruber and Finneran (2008), on the other hand, are clear that these behaviours should not confused because sexual harassment is especially driven by male sexual entitlement and is also intended to shame girls (and women) especially, as well as others who transgress gender norms. This resonates with Duncan (2004), who found that the perception and construction of sexual harassment as bullying points to a failure to recognise the gendered behaviour of children. He asserts that failure to identify sexual harassment highlights the neglect or absence of an understanding of how gender and gender power, aided by sociocultural norms, impact on school girls (and boys). He believes that failure to recognise sexual harassment leads to incorrect interventions within the range of the school and an inability to address unequal gender norms in society more generally. By applying a developmental perspective to sexual harassment, sexual violence becomes normalised as a feature of hot-blooded masculinity that fails to account for how young girls themselves view and respond to gender and sexual violence.

3.5. Girls' experiences of sexualised verbal violence perpetrated by boys

Renold's book *Presumed Innocent* (2005) examined boys' and girls' experiences of sexual harassment in two primary schools in London and makes a fine contribution to filling the gaps around young children, gender, sexuality and violence. Her yearlong ethnographic study revealed that transgressions against heterosexuality was shored up in misogyny. By ousting the non-confirmative behaviours of peers, children created "policies" and "markers" about what it meant to be a girl or a boy, which created hierarchies among themselves. Girls who exhibited nonconforming femininities were punished by boys through adverse, aggressive and vulgar labelings such as "bitch", "slag", "tart", and "slut" (p. 129) so that they could insert themselves within heterosexuality to gain masculine capital.

Other scholars (including Eliasson, Isaksson & LaFlamme, 2007; Espelage, Hong, Rinehart & Doshi, 2016; Shute, Owens & Slee, 2008) concur that boys' misogynistic behaviour is indeed embedded to heterosexuality which is key to the display of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2000). Renold (2005) also recognised that swearing and sexual harassment was situated within a heterosexual discourse since boys who were unable to secure heterosexual relationships, resorted to misogyny which provided alternate pathways for boys to display masculinity and attain masculine status. She found that girls who terminated relationships with boyfriends were also labelled "bitches" as this was seen as a transgression of and affront to masculine pride. She notes that sexualised verbal abuse was sometimes accompanied by boys' laughter which, she maintains, created confusion and subsequently blurred the lines between sexual harassment and joking. Sexual harassment centered on humiliating and ridiculing girls, and she stresses that it is important to recognise that the intention behind the sexualised verbal abuse remains that of punishment to girls for transgressing gender norms.

Shute, Owens and Slee's (2008) study, conducted in Sweden with 14–15-year-olds, found that sexualised verbal abuse was much more prevalent than "physical touching", had much more valence, and elicited greater emotionality, especially as words such as slut and whore was used to cast aspirations on and taint girls' sexuality. The study also showed that girls who did not fit into the idealised picture of a sexualised femininity, for example "blond, big breasts and long legs" (p. 482), endured derogatory comments that suggested that the girls were punished for failing boys' idealised requirements of a sexualised girl: Verbal harassment was used to beleaguer the girls in front of peers. Boys' engagement in sexually

harassing behavior, they concluded, was status-orientated in that it elevated boys' status in social groups and gave them an advantage in their quest for hegemonic masculinity. The study resonates with Renold's (2005) and Summit et al.'s (2016) in that girls downplayed the harassment, calling it joking and playful, but that girls' silence and verbal retaliations were agentic attempts to counter further harassment. Girls' retorts such as "pindick" or "needledick" (p. 485) cast aspirations on the perpetrator's sexuality and sexual prowess, ridiculed his maleness, diminished his heterosexual attraction and created opportunities for other boys to taunt him. However, the authors also noted that girls who were seen as crude and unladylike experienced further victimisation and marginalisation by boys. This finding resonates with Bhana (2008) who found that girls' aggression was not advantageous for their femininity. Girls downplayed their experiences of harassment in favour of securing boys' attention and being popular in school, as being liked and being constructed as desirable were key to forming friendships and relationships with boys.

Eliasson, Isaksson and LaFlamme's (2007) study conducted in Stockholm with 14 and 15 year old boys and girls examined how verbal abuse is implicated in the construction of masculinities and femininities. Their study showed that verbal abuse was a regular occurrence that formed a part of everyday schooling life for both boys and girls. According to Eliasson et al., verbal abuse also carried 'gendered meanings' hence it also worked to police gender and sexuality. For example, their study found that verbal abuse generated by popular boys was linked to "toughness" (p. 592) which is characteristic of a desired masculinity while labels such as "bitch" and "*fjortis*" (a derogatory word that is used to describe a girl who is considered stupid and one who dresses in skimpy clothing) (p. 600) reminded the girls that they had transgressed gender norms since short dresses and make up were considered brash and sexually provocative. According to Isaksson and Laflamme, such words carried much power because of societal beliefs and values accorded to femininity and masculinity. Equally so, if girls were deemed unattractive or labelled "car crushers" (if they were considered overweight) by boys (p. 596), this caused the girls immense emotional distress. Similar to the boys' use of verbal abuse on the girls, girls also engaged in sexualized verbal abuse to "other" girls. Eliasson et al explain that when girls ascribe a derogatory word to a girl, she does so to ascribe a different femininity to herself. Thus when a girl calls another a bitch or *fjorti,* she is in fact complicit with the gender inequality that seeks to punish girls for perceived transgressions. I discuss this next.

3.6. Girls as perpetrators of sexualised verbal violence

Whilst boys are overwhelming represented as sexual harassers in global literature, studies also posit that violence is ubiquitous by recognising that violence is also mobilised and perpetrated by girls (Gonnick, 2018; Summit, Kalmuss, De Atley & Levack, 2016), who challenge and transgress idealised feminine norms by participating in a culture of violence (Gonnick, 2018; Osler 2006).

The study by Summit et al. (2016) was conducted in Travis County, Texas, with 44 participants aged 14–16. They found that girls' engagement in heterosexual violence was displayed through derogatory sexualised verbal abuse and labelling of other girls. Girls who were perceived as transgressors of gender norms earned the label of "slut" or *"ho" (Slang word for whore).* According to Summit et al., girls were extremely critical and jealous of other girls who dressed in what was regarded as sexually provocative attire because boys were attracted to girls who exhibited sexual desirability. The slut label, as described by Summit et al., demonstrated how failure to abide with traditional constructions of femininity was both precarious and damaging. Girls who carried the slut label were seen as "easy" by boys who sought to sexually harass and/or violate such girls. Such labelling therefore reinforced a controlling and dominating masculinity, since girls who feared damage to their reputation were forced to subvert their sexuality and adopt traditional ways of being feminine which entailed sexual passivity, demureness, and innocence. Slut labelling thus worked to erode, regulate and capture girls' sexuality. The authors argued that as sexual reputations were important in order to secure meaningful relationships, girls had to thread a very thin line in negotiating their sexuality. This highlights the complexities that surround girls' sexuality and desires.

3.7. Girls' Experiences of Physical Sexualised Violence Perpetrated by Boys

Studies have shown that there is much confusion over sexualised touching (Cobbett & Warrington, 2013; Gadin, 2012; Renold, 2005; Shute, Owens & Slee, 2008). Cobbett and Warrington's (2013) study in public high schools in Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica, found that girls perceived boys sexually harassing behavior, such as touching them in sexual way, attempting to expose their bodies by disarranging their clothes, or feeling them up, to be a violation of their personal integrity. However, Cobbett and Warrington (2013) also found that

touching and hitting was seen as playful and linked to displays of heterosexual attraction and relationship initiation. They found that girls' ambivalent interpretations of the nature of the touching blurred the lines between consensual and non-consensual touching, and that their experiences of sexual harassment were thus complex and contradictory. Girls' construction of boys' behaviour as "no big deal" (Cobbett & Warrington, 2013, p.1031) normalised their experiences of sexual harassment because boys rejected accusations of their behaviour as being disrespectful.

There is agreement among studies that physical touching often resulted in confusion. Renold (2005) described how girls used gendered discourses that served to normalise their experiences as a form of harassment despite describing these incidents as unwelcome. She noted that none of the girls in her study reported these forms of harassment to the teachers at Lipton or Hirstwood. Shute et al. (2008) found that girls engaged in physical violence towards boys, and that while hitting may have been in retaliation to being teased, it may also have been flirtatious behaviour, and that the girls' accompanying laughter raised questions as to whether the verbal harassment was taken seriously by all the girls or only some girls. The laughter, they conclude, suggests that boys' behavior is not sexual harassment, even though it may involve touching girls' breasts or vaginas. They also found that girls touched boys as well, and that this was viewed as fun and flirtatious.

Gadin's (2012) study with a group of young girls from Grades 1–6 in Sweden sought to understand these girls' how girls gave meaning to their experiences of peer sexual harassment and how these meanings normalised their experiences. Through the use of focus group discussions and interviews, she found that although sexual harassment was prevalent within the schooling context, it was concealed because girls feared further harassment from their peers and/or that their parents/teachers would be shocked to learn that sexual harassment occurred at primary school level. Frequently, she found, the girls believed that the touching may have been accidental and therefore did not want to make a big thing out of it. They also believed that the boys would deny such occurrences, which added to their reticence about reporting them. Gadin also found that there were contradictions and complexities surrounding the girls' experiences of sexually harassing behavior, and this was especially so in heterosexual relationships. She relates boys' sexually harassing behaviour to an exercise of male power rather than purely an indication of heterosexual attraction, arguing that boys enjoyed the emotional upsets that the girls experienced.

3.8. Girls' experiences of sexual harassment and sexual violence by boys

Results from Parkes and Heslop's study conducted in Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique with girls aged 8–17 (aggregated into three groups: 8–10, 11–13 and 14–17) showed that school girls are constantly at risk of sexual harassment and sexual violence (Parkes & Heslop, 2013). Whilst their study included a wide range of participants that encompassed girls, boys, educational officials, teachers, parents and community members (2 757), I have drawn specifically on results that focused on the girls (300) and on sexual violence within the school setting. Violations such as peeping and sexualised touching of their intimate body parts was especially experienced within the age group 8 – 11 years whilst older girls reported experiences of sexual coercion and sometimes rape in all three research sites. Sexual harassment and sexual violence was experienced in the classrooms, in the school grounds during breaks, and on the journeys home. The report stated that Kenyan girls were less reticent regarding their experiences as compared to girls in Mozambique and Ghana, who unlike South African girls, rarely talked about sexual violence from boys. Parkes and Heslop also noted that whilst girls in all three sites spoke about teachers as perpetrators (3.1% for forced sex and 3.1% for transactional sex), they generally failed to recognize the violation, hence they suggest the data might underrepresent the actual disclosures. The authors suggest that it was quite possible that school girls in Ghana and Mozambique did not perceive sexual harassment by boys and as violations and therefore did not know how to name it, and that their silence regarding their experiences might have been due to fear as discussions on sex is generally a taboo subject in these countries.

Chikwiri and Lemmer's (2014) study, conducted with 20 girls aged 12–24, in Grades 7 to 12, focused on girls experiences of sexual violence in Zimbabwean schools. Drawing on qualitative research including focus group discussions, drawings and semi-structured interviews, they found that their respondents' experiences of sexual abuse included "indecent touching" and "groping" (p. 99), which resonates with other studies (Cobbett & Warrington, 2013; Gadin, 2012; Parkes & Heslop, 2011), as does the normalising of sexual harassment, evident from girls' silence. Chikwiri and Lemmer also found that whilst some instances of rape were recognised and reported as acts of sexual violence where official action was instigated, many instances of sexual violence were silenced due to social and cultural taboos that dominated beliefs around young girls' sexuality.

A study conducted in Zambia by Cornell University's Law School (2012) also reported that boys used physical force and threatened to rape girls as punishment for rejecting sexual overtures and for refusing requests for sexual intimacy. According to the study, the girls perceived such threats as very real since they knew of other girls who had been punished through rape and gang rape for rejecting boys' requests for sex. The study posited that this sexual violence emanated from boys' beliefs that girls had transgressed gender norms by rejecting requests for sexual intimacy and that they must therefore be punished through rape.

Le Mat's study in Merkato, a socioeconomically marginalised town in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, found that boys' views on sexual violence were influenced by messages they received from lessons in school (Le Mat, 2016). The study was conducted with 14 girls and 11boys aged 14–18 and examined how boys and girls defined, experienced, and interpreted sexual violence in school. She found that although boys recognised rape as an act of sexual violence, verbal insults and sexualised touching were seen as displays of heterosexual interest or a 'bad habit' or a 'misunderstanding' and were therefore not considered by them to be sexual harassment or sexual violence. As did Parkes and Heslop (2011) and Chikwiri and Lemmer (2014), Le Mat found that touching, sexualised comments, and sexual coercion were unwanted experiences that girls had to contend with that were underpinned by heightened forms of masculinity, such as ideologies regarding male sexual entitlement which enabled their behaviour to fall outside boys' definitions of sexual harassment. Le Mat reports that whilst girls resented the abuse, they tolerated their experiences because they were invested in completing their schooling, which they saw as a way out of their poverty-stricken circumstances. She concludes that power relations in the school were lopsided, favouring male teachers and boys, whilst reinforcing girls' subordinate status within the school and within society more generally.

Morojele's (2011) study focused on what it meant to be a girl in a rural school in Lesotho. The study, which was conducted in three primary schools with learners aged 11–15 richly illustrates the impact of sociocultural beliefs on girls' experiences of ,and vulnerability to, gender and sexual violence. He found that boys' harassment of girls was textured by sociocultural beliefs that worked to sustain gender norms and support the unequal gender power relations that permeated all aspects of girls' lives. Heterosexual attractiveness was key to femininity, and girls defined their femininity within this discourse. Their experiences of sexual harassment were based on these beliefs, and girls who were deemed sexually

unattractive were labelled in derogatory ways that threw their heterosexual appeal into question. Morojele illustrated this point by explaining that boys called girls "*mmofu"* (big breasted) and *"mampitla"* (fat one) to coerce them to behave in ways that benefitted the boys by enabling them to exercise control over girls. Boys also used physical force to rape girls to ensure their submission and to punish them for transgressing normative gender boundaries and the cultural beliefs accorded to masculinity and femininity. Even in cases of rape, Morojele found, punitive repercussions favour boys and masculinity.

3.9. Girls experiences of physical violence in heterosexual relationships

Results from a study by Lopez's (2015) with Mexican–American girls aged 14–18 showed that power in dating relationships was asymmetrical, with boys having more power than girls. Heterosexual experiences of violence was overwhelming embedded in male dominance and control and was perpetrated through various strategies aimed at boys controlling their girlfriends. This included the use of physical violence and intimidation to regulate their girlfriend's appearance, clothing, behaviour, relationships with others, and whether or not she cheated or threatened to cheat. According to the authors, this behaviour was underpinned by jealousy and possessiveness, which drew attention to the fragility in masculinity which requires constant performances of dominant masculinity in order to secure a place in the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990). The girls' disclosed that they allowed boyfriends leeway to control and dominate them, and this illustrated how girls scripted themselves into subordinate positions by accommodating male power and appropriating normative gender roles. Girls who complained or who tried to cheat were punished by their boyfriends. On the whole, girls constructed sexual relationships within a discourse of love and romance in contrast to their boyfriends whom they believed saw sex as a rite of passage. According to Lopez, these conflicting emotions drew girls back into unstable relationships and to cheating boyfriends—echoing Gevers et al. (2012), who also showed that most girls went back to cheating boyfriends because they were still emotionally attached to them.

In contrast, Simon et al. (2010), working with a large sample (5404) of Grade 6 learners, addressed gaps in understandings of dating violence among young adolescents by providing information on the prevalence of perceived norms of violence and victimization among youth who were considered to be "boyfriends" or "girlfriends". Their study, conducted in four states in America, revealed that whilst both boys and girls engaged in dating violence, the

intensity of the violence perpetrated differed greatly. They found that girls resorted to scratching and slapping whilst boys were more severe, punching and hitting with objects and thus putting girls at far greater risk of sustaining serious injury (p. 404). The study also aggregated violence according to race, noting that non-Hispanic white boys and girls experienced less dating violence compared to the rest of the study population who lived in communities racked by unemployment and violence. Gender analysis was confined to statistics rather than respondents' own thoughts and perceptions, and so Simon et al. did not delve into how race, poverty and sociocultural beliefs influenced and impacted on violence in dating relationships. They found that dating violence was largely accepted by both boys and girls. A more qualitative approach to the study could have generated a more nuanced understanding of relationships between violence and race, class and gender (Gonnick, 2018). The study's important contribution lies in showing that boys and girls in primary school are invested in dating relationships and that violence against partners begins early. This suggests that dating violence is normalised at a young age, as boys and girls begin the trajectory towards adulthood.

Young girls' sexual decisions are highly complex as they are often at risk of sexual coercion and rape. According to Moore et al. and supported by other studies, boys provide girls with gifts and money with the expectation of sex (Le Mat, 2016; Mojola, 2015; Muhanguzi, Bennet & Muhanguzi, 2011; Parkes and Heslop, 2011). In such a context, a girl's refusal to engage in sexual intimacy is met with hostility and even violence. Because of sexual scripting, some girls might accept that boys must have sex and therefore acquiesce

.

As do the non-African studies outlined in the previous section, literature from sub-Saharan Africa on sexual violence in schools shows that the construction of young girls as sexually passive contradicts the sexual messages that they receive (Dunne, Humphreys, Sebba, et al., 2007; Porter, 2015). For example, Le Mat (2016) highlighted male sexual entitlement by drawing attention to the prevalence of sexual coercion in Ethiopian schools—both from boys and teachers, the latter often in exchange for academic favours, material goods and cash.

Another consistent feature in the literature highlights girls' vulnerability and experiences of misogyny, sexual harassment and sexual violence with regards to sanitation and menstruation (Jewitt & Ryley, 2014; Sommer, 2013).

3.10. Sexual harassment of pubescent and menstruating girls

Studies conducted in Tanzania (Sommer, 2013), Western Kenya (Mason, Nyothach & Alexander et al. (2013) and Uganda (Miiro et al., 2018) found that girls encountered harassment, humiliation and degradation during their menses. Sommer (2013) highlight how poor sanitation, lack of knowledge due to cultural taboos surrounding menstruation, and lack of access to proper sanitary wear to manage their periods, has contributed to girls' challenges in society. Girls' exposure to sexual violence increases as they grow older: pubescent girls are often eroticised and seen as ready for sexual activity (Jewitt & Ryley, 2014). Thus, teenage girls may receive messages from adults that their sexuality is both sought after and dangerous. Studies have also found that in some circumstances girls are susceptible to sexual coercion in order to access money to purchase items such as sanitary wear (Mason et al., 2013; Muhanguzi, Bennet & Muhanguzi, 2011).

Mason et al.'s (2013) study in Kenya with 120 girls aged 14 to 16 found that girls encountered hostility, ridicule and humiliation when they were menstruating. The ever-present threat of boys peeping or getting into girls' toilets made girls wary and scared. As a result, girls avoided menstrual hygiene at school during menstruation and were then humiliated by boys who declared them dirty, smelly and contaminated.

Other studies (Chikwiri &Lemmer, 2014; Sommer, 2013) found that poorly maintained toilets with broken doors and roofs increased girls' risk of sexual harassment and sexual violence, with the result that girls opted to use nearby bushes which further elevated their risk of harassment or even rape. Jewitt and Ryley (2014) study conducted in Kisumu, Kenya, with 53 participants from 9 schools found that girls largely absented themselves from school due to lack of access to sanitary material. The study found that poverty was largely responsible for poor school attendance since girls feared the makeshift sanitary, such as rags and leaves, leaked or would fall out. In addition, they feared being ridiculed by boys should their dresses became soiled. Girls also lacked guidance and knowledge on how to manage their menstruation hence they perceived menstruation as a taboo and therefore shameful. Thus the cultural perception and treatment of menstruation as dirty and shameful offered opportunities for gender inequalities to thrive.

3.11. Sexual coercion by teachers

Pattman and Chege's (2003) study conducted in Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Zambia with learners between the ages of 6–18 found that whilst teachers were the most common perpetrators of sexual violence on girls, they escaped with impunity because of social and cultural norms that privileged and endorsed masculine norms, their positions of authority, and their age, all of which worked to normalise male sexual entitlement. Sexually harassing acts teachers performed included touching and fondling girls in the presence of other boys—which also worked to legitimate boys' harassing behaviours towards girls. Girls often did not report the violations they experienced because of the school's indifference and apathy towards teachers' relationships with school girls. Instead, girls tried to avoid their teachers by shaming (shouting at) them, running away, and ensuring they were always in a group rather than alone. The overall message of the study was that girls were constantly challenged by asymmetrical gender power relations that grew worse with male age and authority.

A study by Cornell Law School (2012) found that teachers in Zambian schools took advantage of girls' poverty by attempting to have sex with them. Girls who rejected teachers' advances were punished in the presence of other learners, which increased girls' humiliation and embarrassment. Teachers might retard girls' academic progress by failing them, writing negative reports about them to their parents, or forcing them to do tasks such as cutting the grass in the school grounds.

Le Mat's (2016) study also found that girls were reluctant to report instances of violence perpetrated against them by either teachers or boyfriends because of the transactional nature of such relationships. Instead, girls were consumed by fear during lessons, to the extent that they avoided classes or dropped out of school. This suggests that they submitted to teachers sexual requests mostly out of fear, and highlights how age, power and authority contribute to violence against girls.

However, as I outlined earlier, a more recent body of scholarship has started to focus on how girls contest sociocultural beliefs and values with regards to their gender and sexuality. This shift in focus sheds lights on girls' volition to contest and challenge their victim status, while still recognising that gender violence is a large part of a girl's experience. This can be seen most clearly in the transgression of normative gender roles, for example in girls' engagement

in sexually coercive acts or in transactional sex. The latter was a focus of Parkes and Heslop's (2011) study, which found that girls entered into relationships for material goods and cash to buy items that they saw as necessary such as sanitary wear but also for accessing luxury items such as perfume, soaps and body oils. Involvement in transactional sex suggests that girls are shrewd negotiators of relationships and use sex as a resource in poverty driven circumstances. However, Parkes and Heslop (2011) caution against romanticising girls' agency, especially in the context of poverty, and point out that although some girls entered into transactional relationships because they afforded them money and material items that may otherwise have been out of their reach it, transactional relationships also placed girls at a disadvantage, particularly when it came to decision-making in sexual encounters, their ability to negotiate safe sex, and their vulnerability to intimate partner violence.

3.12. Conclusion

There is consensus in the literature that girls' experiences of sexual harassment is situated within a heterosexual discourse and that the ways girls respond to and navigate the terrain of sexual harassment is significantly influenced by the socially constructed notions of masculinity and femininity. South African girls' experiences of sexual violence resonate with girls' experiences around the world. Researchers such as Bhana (2012) Cobbett and Warrington (2013) and Gevers et al. (2012) have focused on gender to examine how the destructive power emerging out of unequal gender power relations shapes girls' experiences of sexual violence. Social acceptance of gender inequality underpins these patterns of power—patterns that are also fluid, as these studies show, and therefore contestable. This recognition of fluidity is important when analysing sexual harassment and sexual violence because it blurs the one dimensional view of girls as victims only and sheds light on how much of the violence that girls experience is a result of transgressions against normative gendered behaviour (see Lopez, 2015; Renold, 2005; Summit et al., 2013). Bhana (2018) asks that these transgressions be viewed as girls' agency in order to disrupt discourses of gender norms and male sexual entitlement.

Much of the literature concludes that school girls' experiences of gender violence, sexual harassment and sexual violence are underpinned by the broader gendered dynamics of violence whereby boys (and men) are perpetrators of violence against girls (and women). However, much of the literature locates girls' experiences within the victim–perpetrator

binary. While the evidence is that girls' experiences of sexual harassment and violence is overwhelming at the hands of boys, there is also evidence that girls, too, are perpetrators of sexually harassing behaviour. Girls' sexuality is key to their experiences of sexual violence and, by recognising girls' sexuality, it becomes necessary to see girls as both agents and victims. This, in turn, brings to the fore the multifaceted complexities of girls' lived experiences and the sociocultural influences that shape their identities and guide their actions. It is from this standpoint that I begin my study.

Chapter 4

Conducting research with young girls: The research process and methods

4.1. Introduction

Research with children is considered sensitive and when the topic under investigation includes words such as sexuality, sexual violence and sexual harassment, there is often panic that such research will traumatise children (Burman, Batchelor & Brown, 2017). Research with children on sexuality and sexual violence is thus often fraught with methodological challenges and ethical dilemmas (Lumby, Albury & McKee, 2018). This ethnographic study is no exception: It tells the story of 12 primary school girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence at Westhills Primary School.[5]

4.2. Ethnography: a qualitative research methodology

Groenewald (2004) explains that ethnography is a qualitative research method that has its roots in the discipline of anthropology, According to Creswell, anthropologist virtually immersed themselves into diffiferent communities in order to study their ways and beliefs of hence the concept of culture is of central importance. Groenewald explains that culture is a system of shared beliefs, values, practices, language, norms, rituals, and material things that group members use to understand their world. Creswell (2006) adds that besides examining shared patterns of behaviour, an ethnographer also explores issues such as power, resistance and dominance, hence data collection in an ethnographic study is extensive, involving prolonged time in the field in order to be able to render a thick description.

Ethnographies cannot be completed in brief enquiries: an ethnographer needs to spend long periods of everyday time in the field in order to understand the research focus and produce the type of 'thick description' so central to ethnographies. In order to capture a way of life it is necessary, as Henning et al (2004) and Mason (2017) suggest, to get to know the 'people and their practices as these occur as everyday actions', then recreate for the reader the shared beliefs, practices, behaviours of a group of people (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993) which in this study is a group of primary school girls aged 12-14 years. Being an educator in the research

[5] The girls in this study were 12-14 years old.

site has afforded me the privilege of engaging in what Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) call 'naturalistic observations' of my respondents as they went about their daily lives in Westhills Primary School. I was an insider, and this allowed me privileges such as being able to sit in the staffroom and observe teachers complaining about learners, and my presence did not bother them. I also sat in at management meetings and therefore had a good knowledge of how the school functioned and if there were any problems or major concerns. I was also privy to how the school handled some problems and challenging situations. I do, however, recognise that the concept of insider and outsider is subjective. I was an insider because of my location within the school and because I live in Reservoir Hills, but I was nevertheless still an outsider to my respondents' lived experiences of gender and sexual violence.

Prior to proceeding with the study, I conducted a literature review of other ethnographic studies that engaged in same or similar methods to my study (Hamilton, 2014; Hunter, 2005; Mayeza, 2015; Morojele, 2009; Renold, 2005). The literature was consistent in that a multi-modal approach is optimum for engaging children in research on sensitive issues.

In reading on ethnography, I was drawn to South African born anthropologist Monica Wilson's groundbreaking research conducted in the Eastern Cape (1931-1933) among Mpondo people [a South African ethnic group] that elicited great respect among academic communities, notably of which was the admiration and praise for her immersion and her careful and sensitive analysis of the culture that she sought to study. Her ethnography in Tanzania, was similarly praised for her attention to detail in her fieldwork that presented a deep and rich insight on the status of Nyakyusa [an African ethnic group] women in Tanzania (1935-1938). Through her studies, she was able to dispel many myths surrounding African society that emerged from historical anthropology writings about colonial rule and apartheid.

More recently, Mark Hunter's ethnography 'Love in the time of AIDS' (2005) conducted in Mandeni, a growing industrial town in South Africa, provides a powerful and moving analysis of how the forces of apartheid, social and cultural norms around gender, sexual intimacy and love drive this pandemic. His insider status (he lived in Isithebe, a shack in an informal settlement amongst the people) and his ethnographic lens captures the life, the Lettie and the sorrow, the trials and the tribulations of the people, and in fact, the very essence of life in Mandeni. Field notes give a graphic and beautifully rendered description, account and analysis of his observations, and interactions with the people in Mandeni. Hunter is however,

cognizant of the power that an ethnographer possesses by virtue of being ‘different’. He notes this when he is asked to transport a sick girl to the hospital: the mother reasons that they won’t be turned from this particular hospital because he is ‘white’ is a stark reminder of our powerful status as researchers. Hunter’s study elevates our simplistic understanding of transactional sex as just an exchange for money or materiality and the root cause of HIV and AIDS. Both Wilson and Hunter’s studies have its roots in cultural anthropology, and through the documentation of observations, people’s views, thoughts and opinions, actions and through looking and hearing the natural (people in their daily lives), both Wilson and Hunter have written beautiful and profound ethnographies.

In this study, I have cited and drawn on educational ethnographic studies conducted by Renold (2005), Morojele (2009) and Mayeza (2015). All of these studies have particular relevance for my study since they were all conducted in primary schools and the researchers’ interests corroborated with my own interest in studying gender, sexuality and primary school children. Emma Renold’s book ‘Girls, boys and junior sexualities (2005) was a constant companion throughout my studies. The book, based on her PhD study, explores young children’s cultural worlds in two schools in England. Her rich and textured descriptions and analysis of the school culture, the school context and the children’s cultural world draws us into the schools and the personal and cultural domains of the children. Data, collected mainly through participant observation and interviews is extensive and analysed so deeply, that one images oneself to be actually observing and interviewing the children. Renold’s study has shaped my thinking about young children’s sexuality in a deep and philosophical way. As I explained earlier in Chapter 2, I found theory confounding and struggled to make the connection with Butler’s theory on gender performativity, sexuality and young children. Renold, however, in the most simplistic yet powerful way helped me understand how masculinities and femininities are reinforced, contested, demystified and even detoppled as children negotiate and claim their gender and sexual identities. Renold dispels many myths about young children’s sexuality, showing that children themselves are active constructers of knowledge, recognising that children are powerful beings and their knowledge is shaped by their very own beliefs of what it means to be a boy or a girl.

Emmanuel Mayeza’s school ethnography conducted in a Township primary school near central Durban, South Africa provides a detailed appraisal of his ethnography (Mayeza, 2015). Mayeza, in seeking to explore how young children (6-10 years old) understandings of

gender shaped peer relationship and play during break time adopted a child-centred approach to his study, fusing traditional ethnographic methods such as observer, participant, talking and interacting with the children, drawings and telling stories. He draws on a series of interesting examples to demonstrate how he was both included and excluded by the children he sought to observe. For instance, he explains that the title of 'coach' that the children conferred on him both included and simultaneously excluded him from the game, illustrating the power differentials that comes to the fore in qualitative research and especially in research with children. According to Mayeza, the title of coach privileged a hegemonic masculinity since the boys identified him as a strong male, 'knowledgeable and an authority in soccer' (Mayeza, 2018: 131) and therefore, as one of them. However, he notes that the title of coach also worked to reinforce the power and authority of adults over children hence he positioned himself as if he was not so knowledgeable about soccer and shifted authority to them. I think that this was very clever of Mayeza, as it allowed the children to regain power and even to elevate themselves both in the eyes of Mayeza and their peers (boys and girls]. Mayeza also informs us that he avoided being called 'Sir' or 'Mr Mayeza' by asking that the children call him 'Emmanuel'. An interesting point that Mayeza makes relates to the difficulty that presented in observing and talking to children. He explains that children are often on the move, hence he had to also be constantly on the move, grasping and taking advantage of the opportunities to engage in informal conversations with the children. In August 2016, Mayeza presented a paper from his PhD study at the 1st South African National Conference on Violence in Johannesburg [Gauteng]. I attended his session. His presentation was received with much interest and generated a long discussion [approx. 35 mins]. Key to this discussion was his critical analysis of how power is woven into children's construction of gender. In my ethnography, my respondents often called me 'mam', which I tried to discourage, but they often forgot. I think that because I was in the school for such a long time, and because I had also taught many of them in the FP, habits were hard to break. In one instance, a respondent referred to me by my name 'Patsy'. I think she found this easy to do because at this particular interview the girls were talking about their teachers and about being accused of consuming Hunters [an alcoholic drink] and about being deliberately inattentive in class, so maybe calling me 'Patsy' at this particular group discussion was part of her defiance at what she may have perceived to be an unjust accusation by her teachers.

Pholoho Morojele's rich ethnographic study conducted with grade seven learners (11-15 years old) in primary schools in Lesotho drew on his life experiences as a person who grew

up in Lesotho (Morojele, 2009). Rich descriptions of the Basotho culture and traditions reflect how deep seated beliefs on culture and gender manifest in the subordination of girls [and women] and the marginalization of girls [and boys] who transgress gender norms. His study highlights biological essentialism and the socialization process as key to maintaining cultural constructs of gender and age. His study also demonstrates the malleability of patriarchy, explaining that girls are able to contest unequal gender norms in nuanced ways without disrupting the Basotho culture. Morojele positions himself as a 'hybrid' (p. 100), explaining that he is both an insider and an outsider to the research process. He compares his outsider position 'to those of colonist researchers in the early 1900's who sought to explore distant and exotic cultures whilst recognizing his position as an insider [a Basotho].

Creswell (2006) maintains that data collection in an ethnographic study is extensive, involving prolonged time in the field and Henning (2004) supports that ethnographies cannot be completed in brief enquiries, instead an ethnographer needed to spend sufficient 'everyday' time in the setting in order to be able to render a thick description. In the next section I talk about how the methods I choose for my study aligns with ethnography and qualitative research methods.

4.3. Engaging in qualitative research methods

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) explain that ethnography is actually a social research method that draws on many sources of data collection hence researchers may engage in a wide range of methods to understand the phenomenon under study. Henning et al. (2004) maintains that any method that yields information on the way may be used. In this study, I engaged in and relied on a variety of data collection techniques, namely, school documents (learner profile) and school records, observation, focus group discussions and semi-structured individual interviews to generate data for this study. I discuss the fit of these methods in my study below.

4.3.1. The learner profile

The learner profile is an important official document which is kept by every educator and has a record of the learners' behaviour, misdemeanors, parent visits and other matters related to the learner. The learner profile is kept solely for this purpose and provides evidence when

parents are asked to come to school to address their children's discipline problems. However, the discipline records were very limited in that whilst the misdemeanour was recorded, there was no record of any intervention/s. Furthermore, educators did not record the misdemeanour in detail, for example, the educator would record 'not interested' but failed to record what constituted 'not interested'. Thus the only purpose of this record was to show that a participant was frequently in 'trouble'. The learner profile also provides evidence as to why a learner was not considered as a recipient for the Good Fellowship Award at the end of the year. Surprisingly so, learner achievements are not recorded in the learner profile. I used this record to triangulate with the field notes and the data generated during the interviews and also to obtain a sense of the girls in and out of the classroom. I also asked the Principal for permission to access the Institutional Support File when respondent disclosed her experiences of domestic and later sexual violence. This was necessary because of the mandatory reporting of violence, including sexual violence. (See Chapter 7).

4.3.2. Observation

Hammersley and Atkinson also explain that observation or participant observation which the researcher undertakes covertly or overtly, and asking questions is key to ethnography. An ethnographer therefore needs to spend long periods of everyday time in the field in order to understand the research focus and produce the type of 'thick description' so central to ethnographies. Henning (2004) also maintains that in order to capture a way of life, it is important to get to know the "people and their practices as these occur as everyday actions" (p. 42). Observation notes were gathered during observation of the learners and girls' in the mornings and lunch breaks, in the class room, when I was called on to do relief teaching in any one of the grade seven classes and during fund raising activities such as Civvies Day [a quick fundraiser when learners were charged R5 ($US. 33) to wear 'colour clothes', Market Day and Pool Fun Day. It was during this time that I made notes pertaining to the girls' behavior, their talk, their social groups and their body language. I found this method of data collection to be most useful during focus group discussions as I was able to refer to certain incidents which I had observed.

Vaus (2001, p. 211) explains and I agree that the benefits of combining focus group discussions and individual interviews are abundant. I used both methods because the research question required both breadth and depth (Morgan, 1996, p. 134). Focus group

discussions was an ideal choice because it created an atmosphere which fostered talk, debate and argument. It provided the most suitable tool for me to provide a setting that would be conducive to foster interaction and engagement and which as I had hoped, generated rich, thick data. I used individual interviews as a follow up to focus group discussions (Vaus, 2001, p.211). The individual interviews provided a different experience for me and the individual girls. I had to engage in active talk, I had to probe and I had to listen without being judgmental. There were occasions when my maternal instinct came to the fore and I had to caution myself not to be judgmental. Whilst the groups allowed for a greater range of responses in a shorter period of time, I found that the in-depth individual interviews provided greater depth and afforded some of the individual girls' the privacy they had requested. I had no specific interview guide for the individual interviews. I also wanted to engage the girls in drawings where I wanted to the girls to illustrate their understandings of gender and sexual harassment. Many of the drawings were stereotypical, depicting girls engaging in transactional sex, falling pregnant and their views on boyfriends, HIV and AIDS. I searched the drawings for clues/relevance to the research questions, eventually I choose to include one drawing only (Chapter 6) of one respondents experiences as evidence to support the data. I agree with Anning and Ring (2004) in that the great challenge of qualitative research is to find ways of analyzing the evidence collected and then to be able to manage the evidence collected. They are both right in that qualitative researchers collect far too much of data without any thought through how to make sense of it.

Vaus (2001: 212) argues that research participant samples should comprise people who can best shed light on the topic through their personal thoughts and life experiences. Morgan (2002: 149) and Seidman (2013) advise that is vital to recruit people who are deeply interested in the subject matter and who are personally invested in the topic under study. Patton, too, is a proponent of purposeful sampling: "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information rich cases for study… from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research" (1990:169).

Following these examples, I initially used purposeful sampling techniques in order to find respondents who could provide the richest and most detailed data to help address my research questions. Thus I began my observation of the girls.

4.4. Observing the girls

Whilst I was located in the school for the past 10 years, my contact with the older learners was sporadic since I am located in the FP. However, I was familiar with some of the learners who started school in grade R and in grade 1 [FP]. In the initial stages of my study, I spent a lot of time walking around the school, observing the learners (especially the grade seven learners) and visiting their classes. Being an educator in the research site afforded me the privilege of engaging in what Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) call 'naturalistic observations' of the learners as they went about their daily lives. I was an insider, and this allowed me privileges such as being able to sit in the staffroom and observe teachers too. I was especially drawn to the grade seven A class as I listen to some teachers complain about the learners and especially the girls. Words such as 'too fast', 'fighting' and 'boyfriends' drew my attention. I also sat in at management meetings and therefore had a good knowledge of how the school functioned and if there were any problems or major concerns. I was also privy to how the school handled problems and challenging situations. I do, however, recognise that the concept of insider and outsider is subjective. I was an insider because of my location within the school and because I lived in Westhills, but I was nevertheless still an outsider to my respondents' lived experiences of gender and sexual violence.

I elected to spend everyday time during the breaks in areas where the girls carried out their daily tasks, routines, and conservations, in order to observe and generate what ethnographers call a 'thick description' of my observations (Geertz, 1973). Since the learners were familiar with my presence (all educators are tasked with ground duty), I was able to walk around the school during the breaks and observe without being obtrusive. I was a familiar sight. During this time, I observed the girls, noting details such as clothing, expressive movements, facial expressions, eye movements, body movements. I carefully noted their preferred physical spaces and, when possible, their language and behaviour. Sometimes I discreetly noted their conversations, too, but I was wary that the girls might behave differently if they became aware that I was observing them and making notes. I was hardly ever able to hear what the girls were saying as they would wander away, seeking their privacy, and also because they mostly spoke in isiZulu which was their home language.

In order to get a richer and fuller understanding of the girls' interactions with their peers – both boys and girls – it was necessary to observe these interactions, particularly because their

behaviour was influenced by the boys. Hence I would often walk to the tuck-shop area where they met. However, observations during break times did not yield the kind of data I was hoping to find. I observed a lot of teasing, but I noticed that the girls did not seem to mind because they laughed and responded in heightened voices. Sometimes, the boys would chase them, and then they would stop running and continue talking to each other. There were times when I asked the girls what was happening and they would respond laughingly: “nothing, Mam” and sometimes the boys would respond “Ow, Mam, nothing, we are just playing”. I note one such incident during my observation below:

> A grade five learner came to me and told me mam, there’s a boy that was busy with Akhona’s uniform, pulling it up, trying to see what’s underneath the uniform’. I walked to where Akhona was and asked her what had happened. She laughingly replied ‘no mam they didn’t really pull it up, they tried to pull it up, but nothing happened’.
> [Field notes: Date: 16 October 2012 Time: 11h10 Place: Near the school hall]

Frequently I would find the older girls in the FP area. I was later informed that this was a strategy that afforded the girls to see the educators on duty. Boys and girls would meet during the breaks whilst their friends acted as look outs for them. However, some of the girls told me that they preferred these spaces because they felt safe, able to roam freely without the fear of being accosted by boys.

Time was one of the greatest challenges in conducting these sorts of observations as the duration of breaks was only 30 minutes. During this time, I often had to attend to management issues or to matters relating to the FP, and my observation time was thus curtailed.

One thing I was able to observe was that some of the older girls did not eat lunch. Upon chatting with them, they said that they were too ‘shy’ to bring lunch to school. However, I later discovered that there was often no bread at home for lunch and the girls were ‘shy’ to place their names on the ‘indigent list’ in order to receive sponsored lunches. I decided then that I would bring some of the sponsored sandwiched to my classroom and offer them to the girls there. I did this in an effort to dispel some of the awkwardness of eating and I was glad when some of the girls accepted the sponsored sandwiches.

I decided that I would focus on girls only. I wanted respondents who would feel comfortable and not shy or scared to participate, and who would be likely to trust me and willing to engage with each other and share their experiences. Following Vaus (2001), I also decided that a small homogenous group would be best as the group dynamic is integral to the development of the narrative and homogeneity has significant advantages (see Morgan, 1995 in Vaus, 2001:212). I decided then that I would focus on one grade seven (7A) class that had 17 girls.

I continued my observation after I had chosen my sample. This time however, I paid more attention to the girls that I had chosen to participate in the study. I found that my observations were particularly useful during focus group discussions as I was able to refer to certain incidents which I had seen. This was generally met with surprise and laughter as the girls were unaware that I had noticed certain things. For example, for our term end fundraiser, *The Beach Walk,* all the learners were asked to come to school in shorts, t-shirts and sandals. However, one of my respondents, Kuhle, chose to wear a body hugging dress, long boots, big hoop earrings, and had her hair all brushed out. I observed her walking to the tuck-shop many times and noticed that there were three boys from grade seven following her about. I observed her suggestive walk, the swaying of her hips, and the sexual aura and confidence that she emanated. During one of our interviews, I asked her about this incident and she replied: *"when you see the boys, something happens ... you go like this [she demonstrates a very suggestive walk and actions] ... show your booty".*

Another afternoon I heard a noise coming from the grade seven A classroom as I walked past. I walked back and peered into the room. The teacher was seated at his table and he was asking the learners to settle down. Some of the girls had their heads down and appeared to be sleeping. I noticed that one of my respondents, Thiele, had a shawl wrapped around her head like a turban. She also had a small blanket wrapped around her waist. Seeing me, the teacher got up from his chair and came to the door. I asked him what was going on. He said that he had asked the girls to remove their blankets but they had refused, saying that they were feeling cold. Clearly, there was a power issue at play.

Another time I found Thiele crying. When I asked her what was wrong, she told me that she had got into trouble because she was involved in a fight. I discovered that Thiele had slapped

a boy because he had grabbed her breast. Thiele did not divulge this information on the day of the incident because she was too upset. My field notes thus provided me with important information that drew attention to sexual violence and sexual harassment within the school. It provided me with data which might not have been forthcoming in the interviews.

Sometimes, some girls approached me during the breaks to talk to me about a younger sibling or to ask if they could help me in class. I believe they felt that I was an ally, in the sense that I was interested in them and they were free to talk to me. This resonates with Pattman's experience where his respondents positioned him as a fellow male, an ally to whom they could express grievances about girls (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2001). However, I could never be the girls' friend in the school setting, and I also agree with Campbell et al. (2010), who argue that friendship is essentially a relationship between equals, and the structure of qualitative research generally militates against equality. There are certain invisible boundaries that cannot be transgressed. Nonetheless, by engaging in observation, I felt a deep sense of familiarity with the girls.

I first met with the girls from the grade 7A class, explained the study and requested their participation in the study. Nine indicated their willing participation. At more or less the same time, there was an uproar at the school which changed my sampling strategy: The grade seven educators discovered that some of the grade seven learners were involved in heterosexual relationships at school and were engaging in 'sexualised behaviour', especially during breaks. Five of the girls were from the grade seven A class. I then decided to ask the other girls in other grade seven class if they would be interested in participating in the study. Six girls accepted. My last respondent, Azande, was referred to me by her teacher, who was aware that she had a boyfriend and thought that she might be both interested and a suitable participant in the study. I now had 16 respondents. However, 4 girls later declined to participate in the study. Thus, by observing the girls and listening to the teachers talk about the girls, and through purposeful and opportunistic sampling methods I found 12 respondents aged 12-14 years old. Having finalised my sample, I embarked on a most important phase in the study: ensuring that ethical considerations were in place.

Table 1: Respondents' Background Information.

No	Name	Age	Had/have a boyfriend	Residence	Mode of travel to school/home	Lives with
1	Azande	13	Yes	Informal Settlement	On foot	Mother/ Grandmother
2	Lettie	13	Yes	Clermont	Public transport (bus)	Mother and aunt
3	Mandisa	13	Yes	Informal settlement	Public transport (bus)	Mother
4	Thiele	13	Yes	Clermont	School taxi	Grand Mother
5	Buhle	13	Yes	Clermont	School taxi	Mother and grandmother
6	JJ	12	Yes	Clermont	School taxi	Mother
7	Sne	12	Yes	Informal Settlement	On foot	Mother
8	Paleesa	13	No	Clermont	Public transport (bus)	Mother and grandmother
9	Mbali	14	Yes	Clermont	School taxi	Mother
10	Kuhle	14	Yes	Clermont	School taxi	Mother
11	Loanda	12	No	Clermont	Public transport (bus)	Mother
12	Mpho	12	Yes	Informal Settlement	Taxi	Mother

4.5. Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance to conduct my study was granted by the University of KwaZulu Natal (See Appendices1 and 2). The first Ethical Clearance Certificate was for a study with learners, 7-12 years old. However, certain 'happenings' in the school changed my focus and I subsequently amended my Ethical Clearance. (See Appendix 2). I also changed the title of my study (See Appendix 3). I then obtained permission from the Provincial Department of Education (DOE), KwaZulu Natal to conduct the study in the school. Thereafter, I requested a meeting with the Principal. I explained the focus, purpose and methods of my intended study and submitted letters which explained my study in detail (See Appendix 4). I also explained that pseudonyms will be used to maintain confidentiality of the school and the respondents. I also requested permission to use the learner discipline profiles and other documents that might have relevance for the study. Further to this, I explained the limits to confidentiality, informing the Principal that if, during the focus group discussions and interviews, there were any disclosures of abuse, violence or any matters that compromised the girls safety, I would have to report it to the relevant authorities, including the police and the School and Special Needs and Educational Services (SNES) section of the Department of Education. The Principal gave me permission. I was excited and nervous but also naïve. I had not anticipated the magnitude of this study and the ethical dilemmas that would follow (see chapter 7, p.167).

I then met with the grade seven educators, outlined my study to them (just like I had done with the Principal). We set a day (Thursdays) and time (1pm) for interviews. This arrangement was however, fraught with challenges. Sometimes, management meetings would be called up and plan would be disrupted. There were also times when teachers would not send the girls because they had not handed in projects or had incomplete work. Thus I often felt that the teachers perceived that participation in the study was a privilege, and I critically noted that in exercising their authority, they exerted their power over me as a researcher. I did become disappointed and sometimes even upset, but I also was mindful of my position as a management member and I did not want to use or confuse that authority with that of my position as a researcher which was albeit, one that was temporary. I then proceeded to obtain consent from respondents' parents or guardians. I drew up an informed consent agreement that was accompanied with a detailed outline of the study (See Appendix no. 5). Parents were

informed about the steps taken to ensure confidentiality, and as I had done with the principal, they were also informed that if, during the group discussions and/or interviews, there were any disclosures of abuse, violence or any matters that compromised their daughter's safety, I would have to report it to the relevant authorities, including the police and the School and Special Needs and Educational Services (SNES) section of the Department of Education. The letter also stated limits to confidentiality. I then proceeded to obtain written consent from the girls. Just as I had done with the parents, I explained the study to them and requested their consent to record all focus group discussions and interviews. I made it clear to them that there was no obligation to participate in the study and that they could withdraw at any time without fear of reprisals. I also explained the limits to confidentiality to the girls, and that if during the focus group discussions and interviews there were any disclosures of abuse, violence or any matters that compromised their safety that I would have to report it to the Principal, their parents, the police and SNES. I issued a form that required biographical details such as name, age and grade and I also asked that they sign their forms and return to me the following day (See Appendices 6 & 7). The informed consent agreement was also reiterated to girls at the beginning of each interview in order to verify their continued willingness to participate. The respondents were informed that the data would be stored safely as stipulated by the conditions laid down by the Ethical Clearance Committee (UKZN). All the respondents confirmed that they understood the requirements for participation in the study and consented to participate.

4.6. Confidentiality and anonymity in ethnography

Confidentiality and anonymity in qualitative research is important, more so when as I have mentioned earlier (p. 80), the respondents are children and the research topic is considered sensitive. In the following discussion, I explain my endeavours and the steps I took to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of the study. However, it would be fair to say that I realise that confidentiality and anonymity is debatable in ethnography. Ethnographic research hinges on rich, descriptive details that usually includes a historical background of the context, the respondents, observations and other minute details that distinguishes ethnographic research from other qualitative research. More importantly, observations become memos and field notes that inform ethnographies. Removing thick descriptions will undoubtedly count for less. Thus whilst I adhered to ethics according to research protocol, I have followed the belief that ethics in ethnographic research is a unfolding process, and one that the researcher and the

respondents will have to address as the data collection proceeds (Van den Hoonaard 2003). I also agree with Aldridge (2015) that marginalized respondents are strengthened and empowered when their voices are privileged in research.

There are four primary schools and six informal settlements in Reservoir Hills. I used pseudonyms for all the respondents, the teachers, the school and the informal settlements. In this study, the school is named Westhills Primary School. Confidentiality and anonymity was further ensured in the presentation of the data. However, whilst this formality is in keeping with formal ethics in research, and necessary to build and instill trust between the researcher and the respondents, there is still concern that as researchers, we don't know what the respondents will disclose during discussions. This tension surfaced and resurfaced in my study. Being a teacher in the school meant that I had to constantly negotiate my position between teacher and researcher, more especially when my respondents disclosed very sensitive data. I had to speak to the Principal and the Heads of Departments concerning the girls' disclosures of instances of sexual harassment however, I had to be conceal the identity of my respondents. When one of the respondents disclosed her experience of sexual violence, it created further ethical dilemmas which I discuss in detail in Chapter 7 (p. 167).

4.7. Recording the interviews

At our first meeting I explained my reasons for using a voice recorder. The girls were very excited to know that they were being recorded, especially since their voices would be anonymous. Initially, I found that encouraging the girls hold the voice recorder and speak into it made them shy. However, when I played the interviews back to let them hear their responses, and also to verify their responses, they were excited and many laughed as they listened. In the ensuing focus group discussions the girls reached out for the recorder themselves and urged their friends to speak louder so the recorder would not miss their voices. The recorder also meant I was free to engage with the girls and pay keen attention to other aspects of the focus group discussions and interviews which could not be captured by the recorder, such as the nuances of the girls' body language, and how they made eye contact with other girls. I made quick notes of these as the focus group discussions and interviews progressed. There were, however, times when I made no notes at all because I became so captivated by the girls' discussions.

The voice recorder was an excellent tool. Whenever I read the transcripts and if I wanted to get a sense of the mood or the intensity of emotions during the group discusssions and interviews, I was easily able to access the recorded interviews. I transcribed key words, phrases and statements in order to allow the girls' voices to speak. I knew that equipment failure and environmental conditions would threaten the data collection process and so I did my best to ensure the recorder functioned well, that there was enough memory space, and that I always had spare batteries. I also had my cell phone as my backup. At my research site it was always a challenge to ensure that the interview setting was as far as possible from background noise and interruptions: quite a few of my recordings are punctuated with knocks on doors, learners shouting, and announcements over the PA system.

Because my data was voice recorded, it was imperative that I developed a system to organise and manage the data. The recorder provided a file number and the length of each interview, so I merely recorded who had attended, the duration and the date, before I began transcribing the data. Since I was working with only two groups, it was not difficult to keep track of the girls in the different focus group discussions. As I listened, I could visualise the participant talking and see the girls' emotions and body language. I also listened to the recordings before writing my field notes in the evening, which helped jog my memory. I ensured that all transcripts were backed up, and also printed off hardcopies.

4.8. Focus group discussions and individual interviews

There is a large body of literature advising on how to establish trust and rapport with research respondents (see for example Bhana, 2005; Creswell, 2006; Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006; New South Wales (NSW) Commission for Learners and Young People, 2005; MacNaughton 2000; 2004), including spending time with them, doing things they would like to do, making the purpose of the research clear to them and taking a sincere and an interested attitude to what they say and do. This I did with my 12 respondents.

The first time I met with the girls, I asked them to seat themselves casually on the carpet. At this point I noticed that within the larger group there was an affinity to form groups within the group. I let this be. This proved to be a wise move as I discovered that the girls had their cliques. I found that in letting them chose their own groups, I was afforded insider knowledge as the focus group discussions progressed. However, I also observed that the respondents

from the townships formed their own group, and the respondents who lived in the *imijondolos* formed theirs. My first thought was that even in poverty there are levels of class: the respondents from the townships were advantaged; they had stronger homes, travelled in taxis to school, socialised with peers after school, and so forth, unlike the respondents who lived in the *imijondolos* who had no electricity, no running water inside their homes, shared communal toilets, and lived in fragile homes. However, I eventually formed two focus groups, as it allowed me to more time to explore their experiences.

The focus group discussion was also an ideal choice because it created an atmosphere which fostered talk, debate and argument amongst the girls. I engaged in an open-ended design which allowed the girls more freedom to speak of their own experiences and use their own language in ways that were meaningful to them. In this way, the group narratives and conversations moved in new and exciting directions, something which I had not anticipated. When this happens, as Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2014) point out, the resulting data is directly grounded in the girls' experiences as they perceive them. Lederman (1990) also found that groups give rise to rich conversations and are dynamic and unpredictable. In my study the group dynamic started to create a story of the girls' constructions of their gendered and sexual identities, and their experiences of sexual violence and sexual harassment, which was underscored by their investment in heterosexuality within their school.

I conducted the focus group discussions in a variety of settings. Sometimes we used the school hall, which worked very well as we had our privacy and were not disturbed by the heavy traffic from the main road. There were times when the girls elected to engage in their sessions on the school playground. This choice of venue also worked well as the girls were at ease, happy and friendly as we engaged in our discussions. At other times we had to use a classroom, and this did not work as well as we were constantly disturbed by traffic, announcements over the PA system, and people knocking on the door–interruptions which did nothing to facilitate discussion. I believe these sessions were also unsuccessful because the classroom is a formal setting, with learners' tables and chairs, the teacher's table, learning charts on the walls, the chalkboard, books and behaviour rules stuck on the walls.

The open format we adopted in the focus group discussions allowed me to gage what the group placed most importance and emphasis on. I also found that by interfering as little as possible, the girls shaped the categories and concepts they used to understand their

experiences themselves. The group discussions were challenging and always interesting. The girls were vocal, exuberant and argumentative, and healthy, robust conversations prevailed. Rather than creating a more structured conversation in which all the girls had equal speaking time, I allowed the group dynamics to lead the conversations. Inevitably some girls dominated the conversation whilst the others spoke less freely. Usually I allowed the conversation to flow, but sometimes I intervened to ensure the conversation stayed on track. There were occasions when tensions within the group were palpable: I could hear the girls' sniggers and the tone of their responses when they did not approve of or disagreed with what was being said. There were also times when rivalry between the girls erupted into confrontations. This came to the fore when Thiele disclosed that Mandisa's boyfriend had said that he loved her. It was an uncomfortable moment for all of us.

Some of girls considered themselves to be more 'with it', meaning that they were more popular with the boys. In instances like these, I had to control the flow of the conversation and redirect the questioning to the other girls. The girls responded to each other in these group settings, contesting and agreeing, producing dynamic interactions. By giving them the space to express themselves, the girls ran with the conversation and provided rich, thick descriptions and explanations of their social life, and of their experiences of sexual violence and sexual harassment. The group discussions were a profound experience for the girls and for me. They gave the girls a voice, and they allowed me into their social world, forcing me to acknowledge both their agency and the unjust realities that they face in school. In doing so, I found myself reflecting on my schooling experiences (see Preface, p. x).

The focus group discussions also proved useful for identifying the language, definitions and concepts that the girls found meaningful as they navigated through their daily life experiences (Krueger, 1994). Sometimes, the girls spoke in isiZulu and I could not understand. Then they would provide a richly detailed explanation of the term that had been used and its significance. For example, in one session Mpho (a participant) said *"Lento emnyama engathi yinyama eshile, asigcwali ngawe!"* and the girls explained: "It means you are black meat – like burnt meat – you are ugly, we don't love you." The implication was that girls with darker skin were not as attractive.

In our final focus group discussions interviews, I focused the discussion on the girls' teachers, and they spoke of their experiences in the classroom, about feeling embarrassed,

insulted and about their experiences of verbal abuse from their teachers. We spoke about some of the incidents and we shared laughter after their indignation had passed. This was a positive experience for me as an educator as, while I could not divulge the conversation to other educators without comprising the girls, I knew that I could address the verbal and emotional abuse of learners at a professional development workshop with the collective staff.

By engaging in focus group discussions, I developed a closeness with the girls that allowed me to gain a deep sense of their sadness when they spoke. Campbell et al (2010) describes this emotional bonding as emanating when the researcher forges a closeness and responds to the respondents as disclosures of experiences emerge. Lofland (1990) suggests that this is done "not by just listening to what they talk about but to pick up on their minor grunts and groans as they respond to the situation" (Lofland 1995:45). Lederman (1995) states that focus group discussions are dynamic and unpredictable and eventually tell a story. I experienced this unpredictability and I could see a story emerging as the girls voiced their experiences. Through their narratives, I sensed their vulnerabilities, yet I also sensed their resistance to being cast as victims. I continually reflected on my relationship with the girls and how we had managed to overcome, to some degree, the teacher-learner relationship because here they were, talking to me about my colleagues without being scared. I thought that this was wonderful and reflected the trust that has been established–both the trust between peers, and the trust between me and the girls.

I agree with Vaus (2001:211) that the benefits of combining focus group discussions and individual interviews are abundant. I used both methods because the research question required both breadth and depth. However, while the focus group discussions generated a greater range of responses in a shorter period of time, I found that the in-depth, individual interviews provided greater depth and afforded the respondents greater privacy. I had no specific agenda for the individual interviews and used them more as a follow up to the focus group discussions. In the individual interviews, I noticed that the girls were quieter and more serious. I found that these interviews yielded data that were intimately shaped by the data gathered during the group discussions, and that the two methods interacted and complimented each other, producing richer data. To begin as interview I would either pick up on particular marker I had noted during the group discussions, or I would ask the participant to tell me a bit more about herself, or about her boyfriend. I looked for patterns that emerged as the girls talked of their experiences of sexual harassment, in order to verify responses from the group

discussions and to identify specific parts of a narrative to explore. One of the greatest challenge for me was when Azande told me during an individual interview that she had had sexual relations with an older male who was 'twenty something'. This again raised the ethical dilemmas that were never far from my study. In Chapter 7, I explain in detail the ethical issues that surfaced and my response.

4.9. Validity trustworthiness, rigour and reliability

By engaging the respondents in focus group discussions, individual interviews, document analysis (learner profile) and participant observation, I have strived to achieve validity, trustworthiness, reliability and triangulation in the collection of the data sets. Since I was the primary data collector, I have ensured that there is no misrepresentation of data. In many instances, the previous interview served as an opening for a new interview. This was necessary since I was solely responsible for the collection and the transcription of the data sets, I had to ensure that data was not 'lost' or 'added'. I paid close attention to the methodological criteria that ought to be followed during the process of data collection. Creswell (2006) states that these include the deferral of personal prejudices and biases, an organized and true recording of the observations, creating and maintaining trust and rapport within the interview and creating the most conducive conditions in terms of location or setting for the collection of the data. Furthermore, I often shared my thoughts about the data with the Senior Primary HOD, who had her Honours degree in Gender studies. She sometimes pointed out certain biasness that she believed might have influenced my analysis of certain observations, and also shared information on the girls that I might have not known, for example, on how the office attended to the case of corporal punishment where a certain female teacher was implicated. I also elected to consult with Mandisa after I had completed my transcripts. For example, if I was unsure about something that was said during the group discussions, I would ask her to confirm if understanding and interpretation of the discussion or what was said by a respondent 'acceptable' or 'correct'. Mandisa was astute and critical. She was also the Head prefect. Validity and trustworthiness is also achieved by presenting the respondents experiences in their own voices which is key to feminist research.

4.10. Writing up my field notes

The descriptions of my observations were usually written hastily and messily. However, in writing up my observations, I tried to provide accounts of the girls, scenes I had witnessed, and sometimes even the conversations that I happened to overhear or was invited into. I wanted to enable a reader of my notes to be able to immerse themselves in the schooling context and into the girls' social worlds. Whilst my field notes were hastily written, they mirror the reality of what I saw. Thus, I was able to capture my observations and retain them even though they were scribbled, but they were crucial to retain that data gathered. As with many ethnographers, Lofland and Lofland emphasise that field notes "should be written no later than the morning after" (1999:5). I opted to write my field notes on the same day, before going to bed. During this quiet time, I would refer to my 'scribblings' and then write up my notes as comprehensively and descriptively as possible and I always tried not to be judgmental. I would also note what happened during the focus group discussions and interviews. I noted who was involved in any incident that occurred, where and when it took place, how or why it occurred, and what or who had provoked the situation.

In recording my field notes, I followed a method advocated by Groenewald (2004). This involved making observational notes, what happened notes and theoretical notes from which I sought to draw meaning. I often reflected on my experiences and observations and I added notes which included reminders, instructions or critique about my observations. Throughout the process I constantly questioned my notes to see if what I was writing was relevant, if I was observing and recording details which would eventually help inform the study. These were some of the issues I considered as I completed my progress review and my summary at the end of each day.

4.11. Reflecting on the study

The study inadvertently exacerbated the inequalities between myself and my research respondents. Methodologies intended to achieve greater collaboration, greater interaction and more open communication with research respondents ironically introduced some of the ethical dilemmas feminist researchers hope to eliminate – specifically respondents' sense of betrayal at having confidential information disclosed. Stacy perfectly sums up how I felt:

“The greater the intimacy—the greater the apparent mutuality of the researcher/researched relationship—the greater is the danger” (Stacy, 1991:114).

Throughout the data collection process I was acutely aware of the power differences that existed between me and the girls. I often reflected on this disparity and wondered how it could be overcome, or at least lessened. When discussing delicate and sensitive issues such as gender, sexuality and sexual violence, power imbalances are not reduced; they are heightened. In a sense the girls were much more powerful than I: they decided what they would reveal, which questions they would answered, and whether or not they would choose to be silent. Feminist sociologists emphasise how researchers and respondents have, as Cotterill puts it, a “different and unequal relation to knowledge and that within most research projects, the final shift of power between the researcher and the respondent is balanced in favour of the researcher, for eventually it is she who walks away” (1992:604). This was certainly my experience.

While feminist researchers argue that power differentials in research could be minimised by developing non-hierarchical and friendly relationships with respondents (Campbell et al., 2010; Kirsh, 1999), I believe that power imbalances in ethnographic research are inevitable. Power is omnipresent, even in our attempts to come to know and represent the intimate details of people who live in close proximity to us. Even if researchers and respondents are demographically similar with regards to gender, ethnicity, class and age, for example, this does not assure any equality of power, and being an insider is not a guaranteed route to knowing.

Feminists have emphasised and reflected, as I reflect now, on the tensions and dilemmas that surface in the ways respondents’ voices are heard, with what authority, and in what form (see, for example, Ribbens & Edwards, 1998; Wolf, 1996). They have asked how – or even whether – the voice and experiences of others can be accessed (Scott 1992; 1994). They have noted the dangers of presuming to know, speak for, or advocate for others (Beiser 1993, Charmaz 1993, Wilkinson 1994). I am acutely aware that my work can and will be read in unpredictable ways. I feel keenly that a review of a research plan, particularly regarding ethical considerations, may generate input from other researchers on obviously problematic issues, but it does not guarantee that there will not be other, unforeseen ethical challenges.

Ethics are, at best, frameworks that guide decision making: they are not rules, regulations or laws.

According to Gilligan (1982) women's most sophisticated moral decision-making is based on the value for relationship, not the value for principle. Since my study is ethnographic, I found that my decision tended to lean towards the value for relationship. However, my moral compass regarding my ethics and duty of care for a minor propelled me to report Azande's relationship. A sense of responsibility and integrity influenced my choice. It has made me come to realise the undeniable: the inequities between researchers and those that they study make a certain level of exploitation unavoidable. Preissle (2006) counsels humility in our claims to benefit others, and courage to continue research that is ethical enough without being ethically perfect. I cannot be an offstage author who writes up tidy images of characters (research respondents). My respondents' lives are not tidy. Throughout this writing process I have been acutely aware of this, and of how the power imbalance has soared to my side as I select from the rich data my respondents gave me.

Following my interviews with the girls, I gave them a list of telephone numbers through which they could access help and advice regarding any incidents of sexual violence or harassment.[6] I explained that these services also provided help should they experience domestic violence or abuse at home or at school. I made it clear that the girls could come to me if they were scared to talk to their teachers or to the principal and I would investigate the matter and do my utmost to protect them.

4.12. Ontological framework and data analysis

This section is devoted to describing the ontological framework I used and detailing the qualitative methods of data analysis and interpretation. As I have said I approached this study from a poststructuralist, feminist perspective, and this gave me a powerful framework with which to analyses the data. I constantly sought to understand how power was situated in reward, how power was used to coerce certain behaviours, and how power legitimated acts of violence. I scanned the data for implicit meanings of power, and how it might be hidden, for example in the ways that teachers interacted with the girls and responded to their complaints

[6] The phone numbers were sourced from the resource Directory for Pinetown Stakeholders Forum

of being harassed by boys. I looked closely at the girls' reactions and responses as they or their peers spoke of sexual harassment, and this allowed me to see that they were not merely victims of gender violence.

My methods of analysis and approach to the data sets were influenced by a thorough perusal of gender, sexuality and gender violence studies.[7] It was very important to me that I did not impose my own presumptions on the data analysis process. I initially attempted to analyse the data on the computer but soon found that hardcopies of the transcripts were much more effective for being able to identify themes. I carried these transcripts with me everywhere and read them again and again until I reached a stage when I could close my eyes and visualise the group discussions and the individual interviews. I used my participant observation field notes constantly, too. By using all my sources of data I found that I was able to arrive at a better understanding of the learners' perceptions, methods of negotiation, and the nuances of language they engaged in during the interviews.

Analysing the focus group discussions, I paid careful attention to the dynamics in the group as these steered and influenced the conversations. During the fieldwork I had no preconceived themes. However, during the data analysis stage, I looked for how power manifested in the data sets. This tightened my focus I read through the transcripts and I sought to make the connection between the different data collection methods and to capture something important (Braun and Clark, 2006) that was said or even what might not have been said and why. I was able to critically examine and analyse what was said in the focus group discussion and individual interviews and tie my findings with my observation notes. A pattern began to emerge and these patterns became themes and sub-themes. This flexibility proved advantagous as I was able to link what the girls said and experienced with my observations. My theoretical lens also helped me to stay on a path, thus rather than deriving many or multiple themes, I found that few themes advantaged the analysis and the presentation of the data sets in a coherent and meaning way. I found that by tightening my focus and keeping my key research questions in mind, I was able to make the connection which included observing the respondents during the focus group discussions and individual

[7] For example, Haavind, Magnusson and Hollway, 2014; Maxwell and Aggleton, 2010; Osler et al., 2006; Renold, 2005; Sanhueza and Lessard, Sommer, 2013; Wamoyi, Wight and Plummer, 2010, and in sub-Saharan Africa, Dahn, 2008; Mojola, 2015; Muhanguzi, 2011; Parkes, 2015; Altinyenlken and Le Mat, 2018, as well as South African literature, including Bhana, 2012; 2016; 2018; Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Ranganathan et al., 2016; Gevers et al., 2013; and Prinsloo, 2006.

interviews, I was very mindful of the theoretical positioning I had chosen to engage in, meaning, that I was watching and listening but I was keenly attuned to how gender, sexuality and power infused their experiences within the school. When I came to analyse the data, clear themes emerged, and at this point I went back to the computer and proceeded to organise my data into working sets. My intent was to establish common themes, patterns, terms, and ideas, and use these to work toward a deeper understanding of the girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence in Westhills primary. This was a long process and I often sought out the girls to ask them to explain or verify something, or to get a clearer understanding of the isiZulu words and phrases they might have used.

One of the most fascinating focuses for me was interpreting the meanings the girls gave to the construction of gender, sexuality and sexual violence. I listened to the girls' recorded voices and read the transcripts so often that I felt I had developed a holistic sense of the girls: their beliefs, thoughts, values, experiences, and could envisage them in the context of the experiences that they described to me. I could 'see' and 'hear' their anger when they spoke about fights other girls, boys and boyfriends also picture their discomfort in the classroom when the boys picked on them. I proceeded to engaged in a discourse analysis. I looked for the type of language used and the nature of other data, such as the symbolic meaning in the drawings and the use of imagery, especially metaphors in language. When analysing the data transcripts I searched for signs of language that reflected the girls' ways of making meaning within the discourse. I highlighted and clustered the discourse markers which involved the specific instances of the use of words or phrases that exemplified the discourse and the accompanying metaphors (Henning, 2004). I also sought out contradictions and ambiguities in the girls' dialogue during the interviews. I then proceeded to identify discursive units of meanings which I then labelled and organised into themes on which I based my argument. By engaging in discourse analysis, I was able to uncover social layers of meanings and multiple realities of the girls', all of which was connected to their social location and their social context (Vaus, 2001; Groenewald, 2004; Creswell, 2006; Cohen and Manion, 2010) In order to engage the reader in the girls' experiences represented in the dialogue, I have written the girls' responses in the vernacular and natural language of the participant as Creswell (2006) maintains that ethnographers should. This ensured that the dialogue becomes especially vivid, to the both the reader and myself. I have also incorporated the girls' use of metaphors as these provided strong visual and spatial image of them and further accentuated their agency,

Having identified the themes that were dominant in the data, my next step was to engage in discourse analysis. I looked for the type of language the girls had used, searching for signs of language that reflected the girls' ways of making meaning. I highlighted the use of words or phrases that pointed to or alluded to gender and sexual violence. I also looked for emotions, such as laughter, anger and evasiveness (which I had picked up from the voice notes and recorded next to the data) and the accompanying metaphors that was expressed in isiZulu. I also sought out contradictions and ambiguities in the girls' dialogue. Drawing on other studies (for example, Vaus, 2001; Groenewald, 2004; Creswell, 2006; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2010) I then proceeded to identify discursive units of meaning which I organised into themes. In this way, discourse analysis enabled me to uncover layers of meaning, all of which were interconnected to the girls' social locations and social contexts.

Although I have tidied up excerpts from interviews, as far as possible I have written the girls' responses in the language that they used in order to help ensure that the dialogue is as vivid as possible. Inevitably I have had to pick and choose the data I present in this thesis, but through the process of data selection I sharpened my focus, I sorted out my data, I discarded repetitive and unwanted data and I organised the data into a meaningful pattern that enabled me to draw verifiable conclusions. Three core themes emerged: 1) sexual violence and sexual harassment; 2) desire, violence and power in young girls' heterosexual relationship, and 3) that sexual harassment is prevalent at Westhills Primary School.

4.13. Researcher reflexivity

The tensions I have expressed in this chapter are underscored by my relationship to the respondents. I realise that in representing the girls I am also representing myself and facets of my life which I share with the girls. Similarities and differences merge and the ethics of research become ethics of everyday life. I know that these girls have sexual desires, and my knowledge is based not on scientific research but on their disclosures to me, and on my own experiences of when I was a 13 year old girl.

Listening to the girls talk about the teasing and harassment they suffered at the hands of their peers often unsettled me during the data collection process and I found myself engaging in

the emotionality of their lives by saying things like ‘I remember something like that happening to me too when I was in school’ and ‘I know…’ .

I was thus able to empathise with the girls regarding the slurs and violence that they were subjected to. They reciprocated this ethic of care–I could see it in their facial expressions and in their offerings of many ‘sorry’s when I spoke. I also knew that girls knew that they could approach me regarding concerns and if they needed help. Sometimes, they would come to me to ask for soap to wash their dress if it became soiled during their menstruation, sometimes they would ask for sanitary pads or toilet paper. I found that this ‘comfort’ that they shared with me was recognized by some of their peers as they too would seek sanitary pads.
The girls were very supportive and respectful of each other’s emotions when disclosures of sexual harassment and sexual violence emerged during the interviews. The empathy that surfaced between us ultimately led to a reduction the hierarchical relationship that normally prevailed within the school. Every now and then I was not a teacher but just someone who was interested in their lives and who understood their experiences.

Chapter 5

The School Context

5.1. Introduction

Westhills Primary School is one of five schools in Reservoir Hills. The learner population at Westhills however, is not reflective of the demographics of the suburb. Whilst the population is largely middleclass and working class Indian, the learners that attend Westhills are largely Black working class. The school has a staff of 25. The teaching compliment comprises 21 teachers [19 female teachers (including the Principal) and two male teachers]. There is also a female librarian cum relief teacher, a female clerk and two cleaning staff (male and female). There are approximately 570 learners enrolled in the school, most of whom live Clermont and KwaDabeka, the townships neighbouring Reservoir Hills. A small number of learners live within Reservoir Hills and quite a few also live in the nearby informal settlements. Many of the learners migrated with their parents from the Eastern Cape. Some learners are also immigrants, mainly from Mozambique, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Malawi. Westhills Primary is easily accessed by taxi, bus and on foot, and has school fees of just R800 (approximately US$56) per year although these are mostly unpaid. It has the reputation of being a good school, and for these reasons attracts large numbers of learners. The learners' school life centres on the school day. On Fridays, learners are engaged in extracurricular activities such as netball, volleyball and soccer. Inter-house and interclass matches arranged by the coordinators are usually held on this day. The school has a school governing body (SGB) which is tasked with raising funds for the school, overseeing the appointment of teachers and presiding at learner disciplinary hearings.

The school is situated near a major bus and taxi route which transports some learners to Clermont and KwaDabeka. Most learners travel to school via school taxis.

5.2. Taxis, *Malumes'* [uncles], *uaunti* [aunties] and the 'KK' bus

When asked how they got to school, learners would often answer 'ischoolbus' (pronounced e-schoolbus). Some said 'Quantum' or 'Siyanda', referring to the newer, bigger taxis, and some said *'uMalume'* or *'uAuntie'* which means uncle or auntie, their way of denoting the drivers of

the taxis that transport them to and from school. *uMalume* and *uAuntie* is a common way of referring to elders and is regarded as a term of respect. *uMalumes* and *uAunties* begin transporting learners from as early as 6am to ensure they all reach school by 7.30am. Most go back to the townships and return at 2pm. However, some *umalumes* park their taxis at the park or outside the school. The school is dependent on learners from Clermont and KwaDabeka to buoy admission numbers: A decrease in enrolment would pose a threat to teachers' jobs. The *uMalumes* and *uAunties* are dependent on income from the learners, who pay R250 a month (US$15.50) for transport fees to and from school, and will not bring a learner to school if the taxi fee has not been paid upfront.

Some learners also commute via municipal buses, referred to as 'KK'. They are readily recognisable, white with a wide green and brown stripe. The KKs transport children in the morning and again in the afternoon from 3:30pm onwards. They do not operate in the area outside these times. If learners miss the 2:30pm bus they must wait for the 3:30pm one, which may arrive as late as 4pm. In these instances, learners are without supervision for two to three hours, as the Foundation Phase class finishes at 1pm.

The learners who live in Reservoir Hills most often walk to and from school. Some in the Foundation Phase, however, wait for their parents to walk them home, and others wait for their transport at 2pm outside the school gates. Some play a game called chicken while they wait, standing in the road in the face of oncoming traffic and running off just before the car reaches them. It is just as dangerous as it sounds. The learners waiting for their transport are also a problem for the many residents who live in the vicinity of the school, and the school receives numerous complaints on a regular basis regarding unruly learners. Some learners harass the residents, tease their dogs, throw stones at their dogs and at their homes, and remove mail from their postboxes, throwing it onto the road. As Diwali, a Hindu festival approaches, a new kind of danger comes into play in the form of fireworks. Many learners buy and burst fireworks on the road and in the nearby park. Every year, the school deals with learners who are injured as a result of fireworks being thrown at them or because they fall as they run frantically to escape exploding fireworks. Despite appeals to learners to refrain from purchasing fireworks and to shopkeepers and vendors to refrain from selling fireworks to the learners, the problem persists. Fireworks are also thrown into postboxes despite the danger it presents and much to the anger of the residents. There are also incidents of learners engaging in shoplifting in the nearby shops such as the BP Garage Quick Shop. Garage staff now

monitor the learners who come into the shop.

The school has taken measures to combat some of these problems. These include sending letters to parents regarding the delayed transportation of their children, negotiating with the municipality to allow learners to wait in the nearby park until pick up time, and asking the taxi drivers to wait at the park with the learners. However, issues of safety also arise at the park, where learners are vulnerable because the park is some distance from the school. Furthermore, when the learners do go to the park, they interfere with the homes situated alongside the park. Many fights take place during this time, especially with the older learners, often sparked by jealousy between boys and girls who have boyfriends or girlfriends in neighbouring schools.

5.3. Westhills Primary School

The school is fully fenced with concrete precast fencing. In some places, concrete slats have fallen and the gaps have been closed with wire fencing. There are three gates, the large automated metal gates at the entrance allows teachers and visitors to enter and exit the school. The gate is however operated manually [the automation often malfunctions], with the cleaner opening the gate at 7am and closing it at 8am. The second large gate is used by visitors on special occasions [mostly weekends] and on days when the school hall is booked out for public functions. The third is a pedestrian gate that allows learners to enter and exit the school. At the end of the school day, the learners are led to the pedestrian gate and dismissed. Since there are different dismissal times for Foundation Phase and Senior Phase, the routine works well. Learners who attempt to enter through the main gate are scolded by the cleaner and even some teachers who warn them about the dangers of being knocked by cars.

The school comprises four long, barrack style buildings. Block A houses the administrative facilities, including the staffroom, the teachers’ toilets, the textbook stockroom, the computer room, the library and a sick bay. Block B is for grade R (Pre-school classes) and the grade one classes, and Block C is for the grades two and three. In Block B and C, the toilets are situated between the classrooms. The Buildings are decorated with brightly painted murals, sponsored by a community incentive. Building B is festooned with Disney characters from children’s classics such as *Snow White and the seven Dwarfs*, *the Jungle Book*, *Lion King* and *Aladdin*. Block C is decorated with thematic images such as forms of transport, sea creatures

and wild animals. Saplings have been planted in the yard. Block D is double storied: the Intermediate Phase (IP), grades four and five are downstairs and grade six and the Senior Phase (SP) are upstairs. Many classrooms here have missing window panes. The chart display boards inside the classroom are broken, and there are few charts on the walls. Desks are combined and arranged in rows of two and three. The teacher's table is at the front right hand corner. This seating arrangement prevails in all classes except for the grade R (Pre-school) classes where plastic tables are arranged in social groups. There are no toilets in Building D – the nearest ones are close to the tuck shop (approximately 2 minutes away). Building D is the noisiest. Love messages such as *Kwanda Ka Angel 4 life (Kwanda and Angel for life)* and *I love SBu* are written on the walls.

Figure 11: Block D: The Intermediate (IP) and Senior Primary (SP) Phase

Figures 12 and 13: Declarations of love on the walls outside the grade seven classes

Figure 14: Inside the grade seven class

5.4. The School Toilets

There are 8 toilets in the FP Blocks [4 for boys and 4 for girls]. However, 3 toilets are broken. The toilets for the older learners are situated on the side of the senior primary building. Sometimes the toilets do not flush, and a sickly stench permeates the air. Some of the older girls go into the FP to use the toilets there. The inside of the toilet walls are dirty in both phases (FP and SP). Learners have written their names and messages are scribbled on the walls in the SP girls toilets. Insults are also written on the walls.

Figure 15: The Senior Primary Girls' and Boys' Toilets

Figure 16: Behind the SP Toilets

I recall my field notes on the day I visited the toilets there:

> I have decided to take a walk with the girls. I wanted to go with them into the toilets. They said to me that this is where they wrote messages to other girls and declared their boyfriends. I walk around the toilets, I feel uncomfortable and I put a tissue to my nose. I see Sipho, the cleaner. He looks at me very suspiciously. I explain that I am doing a study and that I wanted photos of the school and toilets. He seems confused. I tell him that I want to go into the girls toilets. The girls laugh at me. I wrinkle my nose. The girls wrinkle their noses too and make funny sounds. Some laugh. I tell Sandile again why I am taking photos. I go into the toilets. I see the writings on the walls. Some of the girls show me their messages. I click, click, and click, taking photos. I read as I click. I recognize some of the girls' names. There are messages. The walls are filthy. Messages have been written, rubbed, scratched and sometimes written as a response to a message. For example, one message read 'Banele Owami Ningamthathi (translated it meant that Banele (boy) has taken Owam (Owami). From O-Queen Juqah'. Someone else has written 'fuck Banele' inside this message. There is one that says 'Beauty queens, Trap Queens, Beaty (Beauty) fam' and lists the names of girls some of whom belong to this group. There's another one in which a girl dispenses with her ex-boyfriend and declares her love for her new boyfriend. I don't want to take my time here. The stench is overpowering. I want to vomit. I avoid the one that

smells the most. When I come out, Sipho is still there. He looks at me weirdly. [Field notes, Date: 04/09/2012 Time: 13h30 Place: Senior Primary Girls Toilet].

Figure17: Writings on the toilet walls

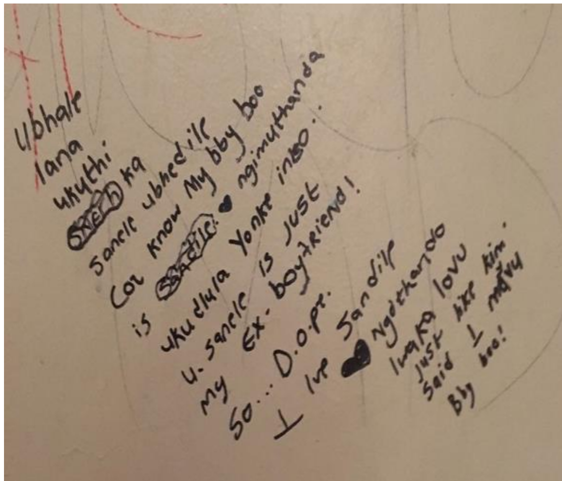
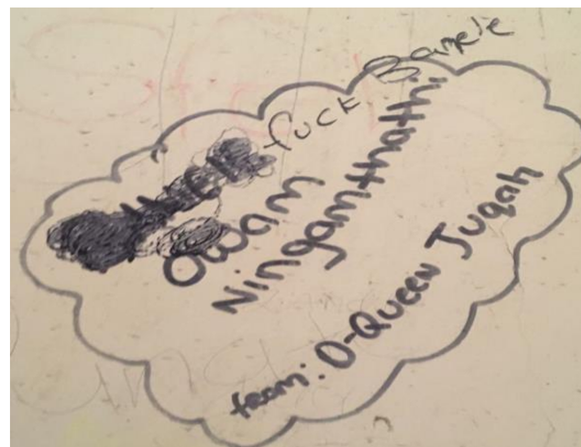


Figure 18: Declaring a group

Figure 19: Someone writes ‘Fuck Banele’ after seeing that he has a girlfriend



5.5. The School Tuck Shop

There is a tuck shop that is run by the school, opposite the toilets. It is an untidy area, shaded with overgrown bush. It also serves as a social space for older boys and girls, as the younger learners usually purchase their items and go elsewhere to eat and play. It is also a place for altercations and secret rendezvous for older learners. An early entry in my journal revealed one of the key analytical developments from which research questions around girls' resistance to harassment and violence emerged:

> There is a fight by the tuck-shop. I see Paleesa standing there against the wall, looking very angry. There are loud voices and laughing. I enquire about what is happening and I am told that Paleesa hit a boy from grade seven. I notice the boy amongst a group of other boys. He is also visibly upset. I am told that the boy swore at Paleesa and her mother. Paleesa got very angry and she hit the boy. [Field notes, Date: 18/05/2012 Time: 10H55 Place: Tuckshop].

Paleesa's resistance to the boy's effort to wield power over her resulted in the altercation above. Her confrontation show how male power is defied and prevailing constructions of both masculinity and femininity is subverted. Physical violence by girls is not an unknown phenomenon. Studies (Bhana, 2008; Morojele, 2011) show that girls mutate dominate forms of gender construction by challenging and resisting violence. However, whilst her victory over him was ridiculed by the boys for being beaten and celebrated by the girls, it is important to note that he was a slightly built boy, and it is doubtful that Paleesa would have reacted in that way had he been bigger and stronger. Morojele (2011) explains such victories are significantly linked to girls' perceptions of their abilities to win.

Figure 20: The tuck shop area where the older learners congregate

5.6. Ground Duty and Duty points

There are three duty points in the school. During break times three teachers are on duty for fifteen minutes each in each phase [6 teachers per week are on duty]. Duty points are behind

the SP Block, the FP assembly and play area and in-between the FP Buildings and the admin Block. Ground duty is rotated after the third week. Prefects are allocated duty spots and assist with the monitoring of the learners. Accidents are recorded by the teacher on duty in the 'accident' book. Minor accidents are attended to by the secretary or the class teacher. Serious injuries are reported to the parents and with their permission, the learner is taken to the nearby doctor who provides a free medical service. However, in the case of very serious injuries, the parent is informed and the ambulance is called. Teachers do not go on ground duty or gate duty in the mornings and after dismissal.

The school has very few facilities. There is a computer room, a library and a school hall. There is no sports field. Netball and volley ball matches and soccer is played in the FP assembly area, behind the hall and behind the SP building. The Principal, the Deputy Principal's and the Head of Departments offices are situated inside the admin Building that has no views of any part of the school. The secretary's office is in front of the entrance to these offices. Overall, the school resembles one of the many government schools in South Africa: Insufficient funding from the Department of Education, nonpayment of school fees, and unsuccessful fundraising drives have impacted on the overall maintenance and lack of resources in the school.

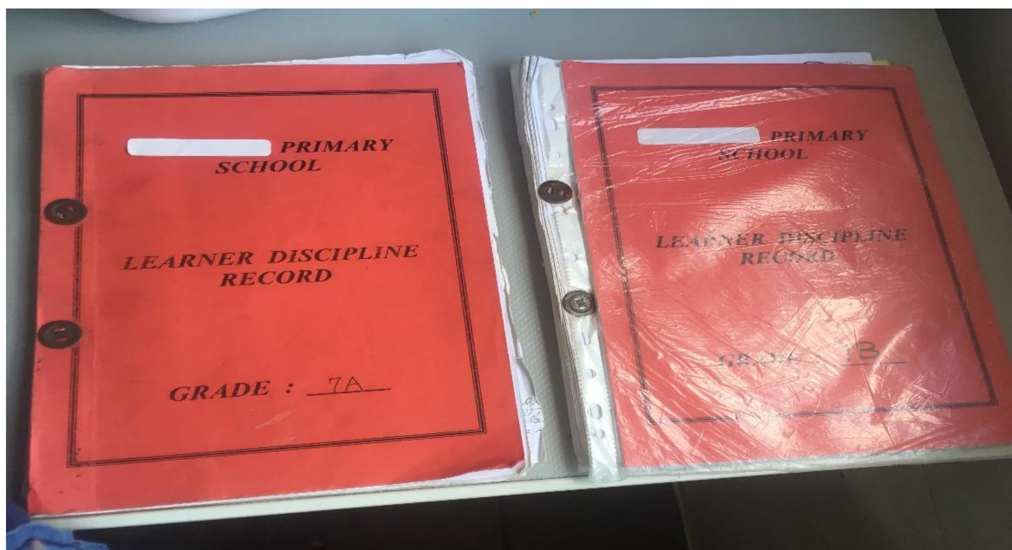
5.7. The Quintile Ranking of Westhills Primary School

The quintile ranking determines the fund allocation to the school from the department of education. Westhills Primary is ranked as a quintile 5 school because it is situated in an affluent area hence it is classified as a fee-paying school and receives less funding. This is despite the fact that most of the learners emerge from deprived socio-economic contexts. The Principal has engaged and continues to engage with the Department of Education regarding the status of our learners, however, their argument remains: if the parents can afford to pay the taxi fare then they can afford to pay the school fees. However, most parents pay the taxi fare but not the school fees. As a result, the school experiences many financial constraints such as unpaid water and electricity bills that run into hundreds of thousands of rands.

5.8. Discipline and Punishment

Learners are required to follow the rules and regulations as set in the school code of conduct which aligns with The South African Schools Act. At the beginning of the year, all learners are given a copy of the school code of conduct for their parents to sign. Learners in from grade 4 to 7 are also required to sign the school code of conduct which is then collected and filed by the teacher. Strict rules for uniform is stipulated herein. Girls are required to have their dresses at knee length, hair must be cut short or braided. Weaves are banned. Make-up, fancy jewelry, fancy jackets, non-regulation school shoes (including takkies), hats, nail polish and cellphones are banned. Dangerous instruments are also banned. There is also a section on sexual harassment that stipulates a disciplinary hearing, suspension and even exclusion of perpetrators. A learner profile is kept by every teacher and teachers are required to record misdemeanors and actions taken against a defaulting learner. The school works on a merit and demerit system. Three misdemeanors results in detention whilst achievements, including good behaviour is rewarded with a praise badge. However, I only came across entries relating to misdemeanours.

Figure 21: The Learner Profile



5.9. A Typical Day in Westhills Primary School

In this section, I have drawn from my observations to provide a description of a typical day at school. I talk about reporting for teachers' duty, learners arriving at school and other things

that might be considered mundane, nothing special. However, these descriptions provide insight into the context where the phenomenon is being studied.

5.9.1. Reporting for Duty

> I am caught in the traffic congestion just a few metres from the entrance to school. Motorists (residents) exiting the busy road are delayed by the 'Quantums' and Siyandas' dropping off leaners on the pavements alongside the school. Tempers flare as irritated motorists shout and hoot at the uMalumes and uAunties. Teachers are less vocal but also blare their car hooters at the taxi drivers and the learners who delay their entrance. Once inside the car park, I park at my usual spot and then make my way to the staffroom to sign the attendance register. Staff has to report for duty by 7:30am. I sign in, greet teachers, and then make my to the Administration offices to meet with the Principal to become informed about specifics that concern the school day and then walk around the school building. Teachers sign in and then proceed to their 'social groups' where they meet, greet and chat with their colleagues. The siren sounds at 7:30am after which the teachers slowly make their way to their respective classrooms. The school day has started.
> (Field Notes: Tuesday, 19 February, 2013, Time: 07:20am)

5.9.2. Arrival of the Learners

The learners arrive in taxis, cars, public transport (KK buses) and some on foot. The girls [and some boys] across the grades linger around the street vendors that sell sweets, chips, popcorn, ice lollies and lollipops. The older boys go to the shop across the school and play games like hand soccer and pinball. Some of the boys and girls also socialize on the pavements. The learners mostly enter the school in groups. Heavy school bags are hoisted onto both shoulders which leave their hands free to eat, hold, and hug each other as they walk and talk. Some stop at the toilets, some head towards the tuck shop that also opens in the morning. Others linger in groups behind the senior primary Building or in the Foundation Phase area. Boys also congregate in social groups near the tuck shop, the toilets or behind the senior primary Building. The Foundation Phase area is very noisy. Learners leave their bags

along the corridor and run off to play with their friends. Girls often engage in skipping games, with ropes made from twisting plastic bags and knotting them to form ropes. Clapping games are also common. The boys generally play chasing games and some improvise empty plastic bottles for balls that they kick around. These games are rough and sometimes learners are injured when the boys run into them or when the plastic bottles make body contact.

I am drawn to the rhythmic sounds of voices and clapping. I approach a group of girls and observe their game. They look at me, laugh and continue to sing and play the game. I join their ring, much to their amusement and Lettie. I cannot dance like them, their young bodies are so agile, and I just clap instead. They are happy to have me in their game. The other learners watch, excited that I have joined in and suddenly we have attracted a crowd. And more players! The buzzer goes and I ask them to make their way to their classrooms. I also promise to play with them again. I linger on the ground and observe the older learners make their way to their classrooms. They seem to be in no hurry. They chit chat along the way, some arguing with prefects that deny them access to the taps, the ones that take the longest are those that linger around the tuck shop. Some even decide to purchase items after the siren has been sounded. Those that report late to class may have an entry in the discipline record file. Learners who persist in reporting late to class are also sent to the office [Principal].

5.9.3. The School Assembly

On Mondays, all learners line up outside their classrooms and wait for their teachers to lead them into the hall for assembly. Once inside, boys and girls stand in separate lines. Teachers stand either at the front or back of their class lines. A Christian ethos prevails, but only during the assembly. The Lord's Prayer, 'Father we thank thee' is said in English. Teachers conduct the assembly on a rotation basis, making announcements that might include special events or functions and often talks on discipline. Sometimes, learners are called up to the stage to recognize their special achievements such as sporting success and winning competitions. The assembly concludes with the National Anthem 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika' translated 'God Bless Africa'. Learners have to adopt the correct posture and action during the singing of the anthem: the right hand must be placed on the heart. The anthem is sung beautifully but the learners do get confused and sing softly during the Afrikaans verse. The Afrikaans language is not taught at the school. Sometimes, spot checks on uniform [including hair] is also conducted.

5.9.4. The School Curriculum

The home language in Westhills is English and the first additional language is isiZulu. This means that learners receive their education through the medium of the English language. IsiZulu is taught as a 'second' language during the isiZulu period.

5.9.5. Break [lunch] Time and Friendship Bonds

The break or lunch time [11am–11:30am] is eagerly waited for by both teachers and learners. It's a time for socializing and sharing food, stories, and play. The learners in the Foundation Phase are sent to the tuck shop 5 minutes before the buzzer sounds so that they can make their purchases easily and without the risk of having their money stolen or lost. Learners sit in groups on the floor, spread out their lunches and eat. Those learners that bring elaborate lunches comprising of fruit, yogurt, juice and snacks are often the envy of learners who have simple lunches. Sometimes, older learners [boys and girls] often approach the younger ones for food. In some instances, they are bullied for food. However, this tactic is executed very subtly, hence if the learner does not report the bullying, it goes unnoticed by the teacher on duty. Play resumes when learners have finished eating.

Girls and boys in the SP and the IP also engage in games. Soccer is a common game and is usually played on the small ground alongside the hall. Older girls sometimes stand under a large tree near the hall, chit chatting or watching the game. Others [boys and girls] also occupy the area behind the senior primary classroom. Thus during break, most spaces in the school are noisy and active. No learner is supposed to remain in class.

Prefects also go on duty to their designated spots. They have a small note book in which misdemeanors are recorded and given to the prefect mistress. The head boy, head girl and their deputies are tasked to oversee the prefects performing their duties. Whilst these exalted positions give these prefects power, it is also a position that hinders their socializing. As is often the case, prefects too get into trouble for not being at their duty points. Two buzzers sound towards the end of the break. The first sounds at 11:10am to alert learners [and teachers] to pack up their lunch boxes, wash and go to the toilet. When the second buzzer sounds, learners and teachers should be making their way to their classes. However, this is not always so. Even after the second buzzer has sounded, learners' continue to play, visit the

tuck shop, go to the toilet or linger near the stairs and walls. Girls and boys in the senior primary show no haste in reporting to their classrooms. Some teachers also delay.

5.9.6. Dismissal Time (1h45pm)

The buzzer sounds and there is *noise!* Some learners rush out of their classrooms, pushing and shoving other learners, some running as if to escape the school. Some classes do lead out quietly, but soon join in the excitement of 'home time'. Sometimes a teacher's voice can be heard reprimanding the learners. They rush off through the gates and a huge crowd forms outside the gates as they wait to board their taxis. Some remain to visit the library to borrow books, photocopy notes, or retrieve information on projects. Many learners will only be picked up at between 2pm and 3pm. Teachers generally gather their things and go to the staffroom. It is also their time to meet with colleagues, attend to marking and preparation for the following day, and reflect on the school day. Teachers leave school at 2:30pm.

5.10. Conclusion

This chapter is largely descriptive since the purpose was to offer the reader some background to context in which my respondents are located. I have drawn attention to the rigid ways in which the school *expects* to function. However, in detailing aspects of the school functioning, gaps emerge. Two of my most striking observations recorded ties to the lack of teacher presence at the school gates in the mornings and afternoons, and delayed reporting to classes. I have highlighted the authoritarian structure of the school where one sees the hierarchal functioning of power. The power rests with the principal and cascades to the deputy principal, the heads of departments, the teachers and then the prefects. However, my observations showed that despite the prestige and power associated with being a prefect, many girl prefects found that duty impinged on their freedom to socialize with their peers. I also found that many girls [some are participants in this study] resisted the constraints within the school. For example, I noted that they selected spots during the breaks that would allow them the freedom and the privacy from teachers. Sometimes, they would gather in groups and colour their lips with berry flavoured sugar powder sold at the tuck shop [learners were supposed to empty the contents into a bottle of water to mix a flavoured drink]. This plummy colour highlighted their lips! Sometimes they would spend time grooming each other's hair, braiding the hair in pretty patterns. Thus with the coloured lips and the pretty hairstyles, they contested

the primary school girl as ordinary and lacking in 'style' and sexually passive. Rather, their efforts is a sign of their desire to be recognized as sexual beings, it is a sign of intimacy and friendship and it is a sign of 'approaching womanhood' (hooks, 1996, p. 92). Thus they became agentic, subtly resisting the constraints of schooling and its efforts to separate them from the boys and to deny them their femininity.

Chapter 6

Gender and sexual violence: A concealed phenomenon within a heterosexual discourse

Lettie: 'He told me that I am touching you.'
Buhle: 'They look at the private parts because that is what they want.'
(Focus group discussion, 14 August 2012)

6.1. Introduction

Primary schools are not safe places. According to a report from the Human Science Research Council (HSRC: 07 August 2018) a large number of learners aged 10-14 experience sexual violence at school.[8] The report states: "Violence occurred mostly in the classrooms, on sports fields or in bathrooms with signs of hair pulling, kicking, verbal threats and inappropriate touching and even rape". The report also states that these findings resonate with a Human Rights Watch (2001) report titled 'Scared at School', that came out almost two decades ago. It highlighted sexual violence against girls as an insidious problem in South African schools. Various other studies conducted globally (Pinhero, 2006; UNESCO, 2016), in sub-Saharan Africa (Parkes & Heslop, 2011; Muhanguzi, 2011) and in South Africa (Bhana, 2016; 2018; Burton & Leoschut, 2013; Mabetha & De Wet, 2018; Mncube & Harber, 2013) also pinpoint the school as a fertile breeding ground for potentially damaging gendered practices. The introductory excerpt locates sexual violence and sexual harassment within a compulsive heterosexual culture that prevails at Westhills Primary School. It is within this context that I investigated 12 girls', aged 12-14, experiences of gender and sexual violence.

This is the first of three chapters in which I present and discuss the results of my investigation. First, I focus on the girls' experiences of intense sexualised verbal harassment from boys, and show how such harassment is used to emphasise the gendered positioning of the girls within a socio-cultural context. It reinforces gender inequalities and gender stereotypes in which the girls are constructed as inferior and as sexual objects. I then move on to girls' experiences of sexualised touching by boys in different locations within the school. I

[8] The HSRC report was based on the findings of a 2015 study conducted by Cape Soul City Institute and Grassroots Soccer.

show how ridicule and humiliation is embedded within their experiences of sexualised verbal abuse and unwanted touching. Significant here is evidence that primary school boys have already accrued the cultural status accorded to males and masculinity. Their perpetration of sexually violent behaviours is a marker of their masculinity, in which heterosexual prowess is understood to be all powerful. Then I conclude the chapter by showing how the girls rationalise their silence about the violence they have experienced.

Focussing on what these 12 girls said, how they said what they said, the nature of the violence they experienced, witnessed, perpetrated and tolerated, I argue that the school is an active site for the production of violent gender relations where girls are not just victims but are also agents of violence. However, while recognising that girls are active agents, in that they are able to make decisions that appear to be self-affirming, I am also cautious about romanticising girls' agency (Bhana, 2018; Renold & Ringrose, 2009). While the notion that young girls are active agents with the capacity to make informed choices and decisions is an important one, I show that their agency is in fact restricted by gender and socio-cultural norms that are established very early on in children's lives. Their agency is constrained by the context in which it is exercised (Ninsiima, Leye & Michielsen et al., 2018). In other words, while the girls experience gender and sexual violence within the school, their experiences are situated within a broader socio-cultural context that extends well beyond the school.

In chapter 4 I discussed the focus group discussions we held, and their efficacy in generating data. In talking about their experiences together, the girls realised that they had all undergone some form of violence, and so the group discussions generated a sense of solidarity. This was important as it provided opportunities for the girls to dislocate themselves from the victim discourse and opened up opportunities for resistance. There was a common thread in which the girls' voices emerged as one: they were part of a resonant partnership where they could speak out and hear their own voices clearly. The discussions thus provided a venue for them to cement bonds. Through listening to their experiences and noting the textures of their voices as they spoke, I have been able, in my analysis of the data, to move beyond notions of innocence and show how the girls resisted patriarchal notions of power and reworked gender inequalities to affirm their sexualities.

Many studies argue that violence against girls is a manifestation of social constructions of masculinity and femininity, which combine with gender inequality to privilege male power –

not least because boys have learnt that heterosexual prowess and masculinity are deeply connected to the validation of male privilege (Bhana, 2016; 2018; Paechter, 2012; Renold, 2005). Drawing on these studies I examine, in the rest of the chapter, the data my first research questions generated: What is the nature of sexual harassment in Westhills Primary School? How is sexual harassment routinised at the school? How do girls negotiate and contest sexual harassment within the broader social, material and cultural context of the school?

My discussion is divided into 7 main themes: Sexual harassment in the classroom; Harassment and ridicule in the toilets; Periods, ridicule and sexual humiliation, Sexual Taunts: ‘bodies that don’t fit in;’ Touching, fondling and groping; Sexualised verbal abuse is about sex; Blurring the lines between sexual harassment, sexuality and desire and Fear of re-victimisation.

6.2. Sexualised verbal abuse is about sex

Research in South Africa has found that when the classroom becomes a space that is claimed and dominated by boys, it also becomes a space that allows for the construction of unequal gender power relations that privilege male domination (see, for example, Bhana, 2013; Burton & Leoschut, 2013; Du Plessis & Smit, 2011; Mncube & Harber, 2012; Ngqela & Lewis, 2012; Renold, 2005). The classroom has also been identified as an ideal space for the display of the nexus between masculinity and power (Connell, 1995). Connell (2005) further explains that demonstrations of aggression amongst boys created and maintained perceptions of powerful masculinities. This was evident in my study, too, as this section illustrates. During one focus group discussion (12 September 2012), the girls discussed an event that had occurred in the classroom, where a boy took a girl’s head and placed it on his private parts in front of the class. Fundamental to this kind of mimicking of oral sex is the operation of power and the public display of hypersexual masculinity before other boys and girls. According to Kuhle, Azande and Loanda, three girls who are in the same class, the perpetrator, a boy whom they described as a strong (fit) boy, was a self-confessed bully, who was feared by all his classmates except one friend who was able to convince him to stop the harassment. The incident upset the girls immensely:

Kuhle : There is one girl who is the quietest in the class [The girls nod their heads]. And there was a boy in class, a fit boy, he is still in our class. He took the girl's head, he saw the girl was sitting down. He took the girl's head and placed it on his private part in front of the class. The girl couldn't say nothing. I was looking and he told the boys that he is being a bully because you know the girl is quiet. He started talking and talking. Only his friend could convince him. That is, one friend of his that's not scared of him.

P.J.: This happened in the classroom?

Loanda and Kuhle: Yes.

P.J.: Did the girl do anything about it? Did she just keep quiet?

Azande: She couldn't do anything because she was scared of that boy.

P.J.: What did you all do?

Loanda: Nothing. Because we are also scared of that boy. There was only one boy that said stop it.

P.J.: What did the rest of them do?

Kuhle: Laughed. Laughing and enjoying.

Azande: How…look at that girl!

P.J.: Did you also laugh?

All: No, No, No!

Kuhle: We went and just kept our girl quiet because we wanted to. She was crying.

The girls' description of the incident and their subsequent responses makes it clear that they felt there was a risk in any direct confrontation with the perpetrator as this could have resulted in an angry reaction, physical harm or social retribution. While not all boys perform masculinity in such a violent way, they all derive benefits from certain kinds of misogynistic behaviour since such violence and harassment is legitimised by their laughter and enjoyment. As other scholars have shown, sexuality and humour are mobilised in the interests of consolidating heterosexual masculinities and securing status amongst boys and girls (Allen, 2014). The humour serves to make the sexual misconduct a frivolous and laughing matter while maintaining hierarchical gender and sexual relations of power. Thus, while not all the boys were responsible for harassing the girl, they all benefitted from this display of hegemonic masculinity. As Connell (1995) said, gender is a concept of power. An incident such as this illustrates how merely being male can confer power. The girls' silence also

reinforces their oppression, as can also be seen in that their efforts to comfort the girl occurred only *after* the perpetrator had been subdued and the danger had passed. The incident is echoed in other studies that have identified the classroom as a dangerous space controlled by boys, where girls are reduced to victims (Renold, 2005). Renold's study conducted in with 12 -13 year old girls in two schools in England also found that the classroom is a space in which boys contest for the apex position in the classroom and within hegemonic masculinity more generally by demanding a recognition of their male supremacy from peers – both boys and girls.

Similarly, JJ and Buhle learnt that submission is a necessary tool to mitigate such threats. They described how in some instances some boys demanded money in exchange for freedom from touching. Refusal to hand over money exacerbated the touching, which was not restricted to their hips, bums and breasts, but also extended to their vaginas:

> JJ: Sometimes they say maybe… like… give me about R5 [$US .33] and if you don't give them [R5] then you are not walking away. They put their hand, their hand, mam, [she stresses this] in your private part [she indicates her vagina].
> Buhle: They push you into the corner and they say just kiss me, just kiss me and all of that stuff.
> JJ: They touch your private parts, your vagina!
> Buhle: Sometimes it's like can you give me R2 [$US .13] and the first time you give him and ask him what are you going to do with the R2 and its like I want to buy airtime and the second time it continues and if you don't have the money and then he will start to be like abusive and stuff. Ja. [Boys] Treat us like an ATM (automatic teller machine).

While such invasions of their bodies unsettled the girls greatly, their silence gave the boys the opportunity to both coerce money and to sexually harass them. Given that these girls came from poor socio-economic backgrounds and might not have had money on a daily basis to protect them, the threat and likelihood of being touched and/or violated was ever-present. In South Africa, the study by Bhana (2005) with black primary school learners aged from 7-10 years old concluded that boys were able to coerce girls into handing over resources that they coveted through a display of what she calls 'warrior masculinity', where the boys' success is grounded in threats of sexual violence. This finding resonated in my study too. It showed

how boys in the context of poverty, drew on a fearless masculinity and a fearful femininity to coerce money from the girls. Their ability to coerce money from the girls is based on their physical strength that invokes fear in the girls. The girls also spoke of how boys harassed them outside the classroom:

> Lettie: Most of the boys in class in grade seven hold your bum and squeeze it.
>
> Loanda: When you thought he is your friend, loving, caring, he will squeeze your bum and I feel cheap!
>
> Lettie: They walk like this and then they come behind you and hold you like this and kiss your neck and then they kiss you here and then their private parts stick to your bum and then you are like 'Get off, you!'
>
> P.J.: Do they pull you to them?
>
> All: Yes! [The girls clapped their hands and I sensed their outrage. I, too, am shocked and upset].
>
> P.J.: Where does all of this happen?
>
> All: At Break. In class, after school, in the morning, everywhere, mam.
>
> Paleesa: Everyday, mam.
>
> Lettie: In the class it is worse.
>
> Thiele: Even if they like they can kiss even your neck and give you a love bite.

Evident here is that the girls are fully aware of the boys' sexual desire for them. The girls' testimonies show that the boys have already acquired a distorted understanding of heterosexuality, evidenced in the touching, groping and fondling that requires no conversation with the girls, and no attempt to gain their consent. Boys' ability to mobilise masculinity with impunity draws from their restricted understanding of what it means to be male. The girls' resistance to fondling, touching, squeezing and groping took the form of "get off, you!", and had little impact. They found these close encounters and the pressing of male bodies against them both demeaning and humiliating; their anger was palpable in the angry clapping of their hands as they reiterated their experiences. According to them, such incidents were regular occurrences, and could happen anywhere in the school, even after school. Emerging from social environments where sexual coercion and rape against women and girls is normative, the girls' experiences show how their bodies are a battleground in which gender and sexual harassment and sexual violence is used as a tool to dominate. Boys operate an active male sexuality, and girls are coerced into being unwilling recipients of male sexual action.

This invasion of their bodies caused the girls much embarrassment. Even though they expressed anger towards the boys, their feelings of powerlessness were tangible. Lettie's and Thiele's description of the manner in which the boys surprised them by approaching and grabbing them from behind also suggests that they were being stalked in school. These stealth tactics suggest, too, that the boys were quick to act when opportunities to harass the girls presented themselves, for example, the lack of teacher's presence either within the classroom or on the grounds. The threat of love bites also shows how boys derive power by attempting to mark the girls. Such marking on the girls, however, would put them at risk of being sexual labelled, as peers and teachers would associate the love bites with boyfriends. It would also put them at risk of violence if their boyfriends thought that they were double dating. Their abhorrence of the boys' attempts to establish bodily contact reinforces the tension between boys' and girls' sexuality; virility versus passivity. However, their resistance is situated in their sexual agency, which debunks the myth of young girls as asexual beings and sexually unknowing. The girls contest prevailing norms by rejecting the boys' gestures, and in doing so, they begin to rework gender power asymmetries.

In the following section I discuss how boys also generate gender power inequalities by defying and transgressing the gendered boundaries of toilet spaces and violating girls' privacy and dignity.

6.3. Harassment and ridicule in the toilets

In chapter 5, I described the toilets, and the unkemptness of the area around them (pp x-x). In this section I show how their location and structure, and the bushes around the vicinity, predisposed the girls to harassment.

The harassment of girls in toilet spaces is not uncommon in sub-Saharan Africa. Sommer et al. (2016), Chikwiri and Lemmer (2014), Jackson (2018), Jewitt and Ryley (2014), and Parkes and Heslop (2011) have all written about girls' vulnerability to violence while accessing sanitation, and how they are often silenced because of the sense of shame involved. Other studies in South Africa (Burton & Leoschut, 2013; Haffejee, 2006; HRW, 2005) have identified school toilets as the most common area where learners feel afraid and where girls experience sexual violence and harassment. The young-person centred methodological approach I used in my fieldwork meant that, despite the embarrassment they felt, the girls

were able to raise the matter of their vulnerability in the school toilets and the invasion of their privacy. Because they knew I valued what the girls themselves raised as important, they were able to describe to me the problematic performance of heterosexual masculinity and their reduced agency.

The girls recounted incidents inside the toilets where they often fell prey to forms of sexual victimisation perpetrated by boys who either acted alone or in groups. Paleesa and Loanda described how sometimes boys climbed onto the walls or up pipes and peeped in through the toilet windows and sometimes saw them and other girls in their most vulnerable and private moments. It did not end there, however. Further embarrassment and shame followed them when they returned to the classroom, as the offending boys would announce to the other learners their success in seeing these girls relieve themselves in the toilet. Loanda and Paleesa were overwhelmed by feelings of anger and shame as they spoke:

> Paleesa: Sometimes they follow you to the toilet.
> Loanda: Yes they follow.
> Several voices: Some get in.
> Loanda: Some get in, they take bets. They get in and look at it [girls' private parts] and some run off and say to their friends 'yeah! I got in. I got in the girls' toilet!'
> P.J.: What do they want in the toilet?
> Loanda: They want to see what we are doing in the toilet.
> Paleesa: When we come out we see them screaming "Yeah! We got in! We got in! We got in!" And sometimes they will lie and say they saw you doing something in the toilet.
> P.J.: That so rude. Have you spoken/complained to the teacher?
> Several voices: Yes.
> Loanda: Sometimes we do not say to the teacher because we are scared of the boys because after school they will hit you.

This violation of the girls' privacy shows how the boys conspire to oppress the girls even further. "We got in! We got in!" is a proclamation of a boastful, heterosexual bravado. It also demonstrates how boys need constantly to jockey for power and prove themselves within peer groups (Keddie (2003) also noted this). It shows how the boys' excitement at being able

to transgress gendered spaces positioned them as risk takers. While not all boys went into the girls' toilets, those that did shared their success when they returned to class with the other boys who also benefitted from the misogyny and degradation of the girls. The toilet space thus became a gendered space where the girls were subordinated and made to feel inferior.

> Field notes: Date: 30 July 2012 Time: 1h30 Place: Grade seven classroom
>
> I could hear the Principal's angry voice coming closer and the words 'Don't tell me lies. You went there to smoke!' She knocked at the door and walked into the classroom, with the two trailing behind her. Some learners started to giggle but soon quieted when the Principal demanded to know what the problem was. She proceeded to reprimand the teacher for sending two boys out of the classroom at once, insisting that the boys were 'ducking' lessons and were up to 'no good' because she had found them behind the toilets. She assumed that they had gone there to smoke cigarettes. Both boys however, clarified that they were searching for their money that they had lost during the break. The teacher apologized and then clarified that the boys had not returned to class after the break [the buzzer sounds at 11h15 to signal the end of the break]. The boys received more scolding from both the teacher and the Principal. I listened as the teacher complained that the two boys were very troublesome in the class as well. More scolding from the Principal! I sat there quietly, feeling very embarrassed that the teacher had been shouted at in my presence. I watched the boys as they returned to their places. I saw one of the boys giving the boy behind him a 'thumbs up' sign which was followed with loud laughter from some boys. The teacher stopped the lesson and enquired what the problem was. The boys replied 'Nothing'. I noted some girls [and boys] were writing whilst a few [girls] were just looking at the other girls. Loanda and Paleesa who were in this class, also looked at me. I knew that they were redirecting me to the discussion where they disclosed that boys peeked at them when they were in the toilets.

The girls' disclosures made evident their embarrassment and despair at being peeked at when they visited the toilets. Once again they voice their fear of the potential risks that can arise from their complaints to their teachers. Thus at times they silenced their shame and fear. Paradoxically, however, as I described in Chapter 5 (p.112), the toilet wall was also a place

that held the girls' secrets: it was a place where they declared their attraction and love for boys, their jealousy and hatred of rivals and where they declared their boyfriends off-limits to other girls. The toilets were thus also a dynamic space for the contestation of heterosexuality. This may also have been a reason for some girls' reluctance to divulge to their teachers the harassment they endured–despite the great humiliation they suffered when the boys transgressed these gendered spaces.

The girls' vulnerability and the emotional intensity they displayed recounting their experiences underscores how extremely damaging in nature these violations were. It illustrates how incredibly complex it is for the girls to navigate and negotiate their sexuality in the political sphere of patriarchy, where hegemonic traits such as daring, risk taking and misogyny, are all upheld as legitimate markers of hegemonic masculinity. It shows the robustness and resilience of patriarchy; girls may be agents, but their agency is "lite", as Bhana (2017) put it: thinned out, limited and without weight. Bhana argues that lite agency points to girls' restrictions, their inability to comprehensively act, choose and contest within a broader environment. It does not infer an absence of power or ability to act, merely a reduction of action (Bhana, 2017). Bhana's thoughts on agency resonate with my own work. I found that the girls' voices were stymied by their fear of further humiliation and violence.

In the next sections of this chapter, I turn the discussion to focus on menstrual narratives, and the confusion, distress and shame girls feel as they recount experiences in which the repudiation of the feminine was key to male functioning and power within a problematic heterosexual masculinity.

6.4. Periods, ridicule and sexual humiliation

With a few exceptions (Sommer & Sahin, 2013; Mason et al., 2013), the onset of menarche in the early years of adolescence has not yet received adequate attention in sub-Saharan Africa. As I show in the discussion below, the onset of menstruation and girls' experiences of these biological changes show that they have to manage and navigate their menstruation within turbulent gendered schooling conditions.

Menstruation is often located in the domain of privacy, secrecy and shame, in part due to cultural taboos around menstrual blood, and in part often because of adults' reluctance to

teach girls how to manage menstruation at home and at school (Sommer, 2009). In Tanzania, Sommer's (2009) study which explored girls experiences of menstruation found girls lacked knowledge relating to the development of their bodies, menstrual and sexual health especially in relation to HIV and AIDS. She concluded that interventions should focus on appropriate education that supported knowledge relating to bodily changes, menstruation and reproductive health, including HIV and AIDS. Mason et al.'s (2013) study conducted in Kenya with girls aged 14-16 years, found that girls were ashamed during menstruation and therefore sought to hide their bodies to such an extent that they do not go to school. According to Mason et al, the shame that girls experience is related to cultural taboos which influence a largely negative dominant discourse regarding menstruation. Jewitt and Ryley (2014), in their study in Kenya concluded that harassment was key to girls fear and shame during their menstruation. These authors posit that both fear and shame contributed to the gendered inequalities in that pollution beliefs assigned to menstruation are steeped in power and power relations in society. In my study I too found that the girls experienced marginalisation and discrimination at school through menstrual blood being treated as a pollutant.

> Kuhle: When you come in the morning, you will be confused, everyone will say "Hey you are on periods! You are on periods!" and then another one comes, "Hey you are on periods" and then another one and another one and then you get confused how did they all get to know that I am on periods or something?
> P.J.: So how do you think they all get to know?
> Mandisa: It's the boys, the boys, the ones that are in your class.
> JJ: Some when you are walking they just put their hands in your bag and then they come out with your private stuff like pads, towels and everything that you need.
> Lettie: They open your bags and take your pads.
> P.J.: Your pads?
> Lettie: Yes and stick it on the board and write your name on it. Maybe it's Amanda's and they will write "Amanda's pad!"
> Paleesa: In the morning, mam, in the morning they take the pad and stick it on the walls. Because the class is not opened, they stick it in the walls and they tear it off and they pass it to each other saying "it's this ones pad, it's this ones pad".
> P.J.: So when they stick the pad on the board, what does the rest of the class do?

> Kuhle: They start laughing at you.
> JJ: And if they see a pad in your bag then they are going to mock you for the whole week, that you got a pad, that you are in periods.
> Lettie: Even for a month that you got periods. In Zulu they call it umenza.
> Paleesa: They tell everyone. Even every day.

The girls' disclosures regarding the mocking they endured when they had their periods suggest that the boys use menses as another way of consolidating dominant modes of masculinity where femininity is slandered and mocked, consequently entrenching the divide between the genders. The girls spoke eloquently about how the boys took much pleasure in embarrassing them when they had their periods, enjoying humiliating them. Confusion, distress and shame emerged as they recounted their experiences, describing a problematic heterosexual masculinity where misogyny is key to male functioning and power.

Loanda spoke about how boys would take their sanitary pads and wrap them around their wrists as a bandage, or even write their names on the pads so as to reveal which girls are menstruating:

> "And some of them take it and put it over here [she indicates her wrist] and say 'It's a bandage, it's a bandage!

The girls described how boys would stain pads with tomato sauce to mimic a soiled pad and even soil their dresses with tomato sauce. With stained dresses, they faced public ridicule and humiliation as menstrual blood is used to construct as them as 'other' and 'polluted'. The girls' narratives were emotionally intense, making it painfully clear that they were mortified and felt violated. Their accounts also drew attention to how other boys and girls colluded in their harassment and victimisation by laughing at their embarrassment:

> Paleesa: They are laughing, even the girls themselves, mam [Paleesa sounds as if she cannot believe/understand other girls joining in the mockery].
> Loanda: And, mam, some girls get their periods, mam, and then the boys come and touch them.
> Lettie: And if one of them have tomato [tomato sauce] then they spread it on it and stick it on the board. If they have tomato [tomato sauce] they take the tomato

> and rub in on the pad and say that you are mensing and they say that it is better to be a boy than a girl and they will start telling everybody, everyone in class.
> Paleesa: And sometimes they take [potato] fries [sold at the school tuck shop]. If it's finished, and there's tomato left, they will open it and the maybe just rub it on you and they will stand there and start laughing and say "Ohhhhhh! She is on periods!" while they put tomato sauce on you and you cannot do nothing, you cannot just go and wash it.
> P.J.: Do they actually stick the pads on the board? [I am sure they can hear the disbelief and shock in my voice].
> All: Yes!
> Loanda: If the class is still locked, they put it in front of the door.
> JJ: For everyone to see [JJ speaks softly, her embarrassment evident].

The girls' disclosures provided a picture of how gender power inequalities manifested, as biological changes occurred, to reduce the girls' agency and force them to manage menstruation, and the shaming it involved, with little support from teachers, for whom conversations about menses are often culturally taboo and off limits. It is important to remember, too, that the children at Westhills Primary came from environments where their parents had limited schooling and where notions of *ukuhlonipha* prevented teacher-parent discussion about sexual and reproductive health.

Casting menstruation as feminine and contaminating permits the exercise of male power and is thus masculinity confirming. Indeed, such misogynistic discourses, through their mockery and humiliation of the girls, is key to maintaining a dominant masculinity and subordinate femininity. The enactment of masculinity based on the invasion of girls' privacy, the public announcements: "Hey, you on periods!"; "Amanda's pad!" stuck on the walls in and out of the classroom, has consequences as the girls are publicly shamed and humiliated while the boys' masculinity is simultaneously secured. Much of the research in sub-Saharan Africa points to structural, physical and financial constraints at the onset of menarche as girls lack access to water, soap, pads, sanitation and reproductive health information (Jewitt & Ryley, 2014; Sommer, 2009; Sommer & Sahin, 2013; Sommer, 2015). The experience of menstruation at school was uncomfortable also because the girls were anxious about menstrual odour. According to Lettie, when it was discovered that a girl was menstruating, the teasing worsened, and the girl would be told that she was smelling:

Lettie: And if something is smelling, they will blame the girls and say that you are smelling.

JJ: They say fish!

Loanda: They will say that your vagina smells!

Several girls: They call our private part fish!

Lettie: They call our vagina, fish!

Thiele: They say, "You are smelling of fish today!"

In as far as possible, the girls tried to hide their menses and visible evidence of menstruation such as their pads. This infringement on their sexuality oppressed them and silenced them, as their narratives show. Menstruation became a significant stress in their schooling and, echoing Nightingale's (2011: 153) finding, it became "important in the production of social inequalities". Such negativity towards their menstruation impacted on their assessment of themselves. Their most intimate and private moments were used to humiliate and belittle them. Indeed, Lettie, Loanda and JJ's'embarrassent was so great as they spoke of their experiences that the humiliation was instantiated and internalised by all the girls in the group. I also witnessed how the boys teased them on the day representatives from 'Always' [a sanitary pad manufacturing company] came to address the girls in the Intermediate and Senior Phase:

Field notes: Date: 23 May 2012 Time: 09h30 Place: Room 17 (Grade seven classroom)

I was serving relief in the grade sevens where only the boys were present. The girls were in the school hall, listening to a talk by two representatives from the Department of Health about menstruation management. The boys were curious and wanted to know what was happening in the hall and why they were left out. I explained that it was a talk for girls only and that soon they too will be attending a boy's only talk. Here I was referring to an initiative undertaken by the Department of Health, known as Medical Male Circumcision [MMC], which offered safe circumcision to the boys [with parental consent]. I proceeded to talk about healthy living, respect for one's body, manners, respect and behaviour with the boys. At around10h30, the girls returned to their classrooms. They entered the class noisily but when they saw me there, they quietened and proceeded to their places. The boys began to ask them questions about what happened in the hall. I

heard someone say ‘none of your business!’ A few more girls joined in, raising their voices, and I saw some of the boys laughing. The boys guessed that the talk was about ‘menstruation’ and I heard the word ‘periods’, accompanied by laughter, uttered more than once. It was almost break time [10h45]. I decided then that I would spend my break on the ground today. I wanted to observe this lot of boys and girls.

Field notes: Date: 23 May 2012 Time: 10h45 Place: The school ground
I observed the girls for a while, and I noticed that they had formed their groups and had wandered to the edge of the ground and buildings. I imagined that they were talking about the presentation. I approached one group [Mandisa, Thiele, Kuhle , Mpho and St’bile] and asked about the presentation. They were excited, saying that they were each given a small pack of Aways Ultra. Thiele showed me a pack that was in her pocket [I noticed then that all the girls in this group had the pads in their pockets]. The pads were their secret, just like the talk that they had attended. They did not dare leave it in their bags since, they explained, the boys will find it. I thought how secrets, silence and shame all intertwined.

Dunne (2007) found in their research with learners in grade 7-9 in Botswana and Ghana, that offensive personal comments and name-calling generated low self-esteem, and that the burden of responsibility was placed on girls to avoid being teased. The girls in my study were consumed by their physical appearance. They had boyfriends, they wanted to be seen as sexy and beautiful. However, they also had difficulty in asserting and maintaining their sexuality because their menstruation was seen as an imposition on their enjoyment of their sexuality. They refrained from telling their teachers about the harassment they endured in order to avoid further embarrassment, and instead tried to manage their menstruation with as much dignity as they could muster. But to be told that one is smelling creates huge anxiety. This highlights the complicated relationship between body image, self-objectification and shame that Theresa Jackson (2018) writes about in her study conducted in New England with girls, 11-17 years old.

In my study, the girls’ experiences connected to reinforce the prevalence of gender and sexual violence within the school. The fear of the boys is ever-present as the girls’ testimonies show that the possibility of being harassed is constant: in the corridors, in the

classroom, in the toilets and even outside the school. These findings resonate with HRW (2001) findings that documented and highlighted how the predatory behaviour of boys undermined girls' sense of safety, causing them to experience immense psychological stress within South African schools.

6.5. Sexual Taunts: 'bodies that don't fit in'

In the following discussion, I draw on material from Paleesa, an isiZulu participant and Mpho, a Nigerian participant whom I introduced earlier (p. ….), to illustrate how gender, race, misogyny and xenophobia combine as powerful forces to ostracise and marginalise them within the classroom.

> Mpho: I was taking my desk from Sifundo and Sifundo hit me and I said that Sifundo must give me my desk. Mrs R. Soni came and Sifundo gave me my desk and swore at me. And I swore at him, too, and he said that I am a Nigerian and said that I am black like a black plastic bin and swore me again. Sifundo called me the private of my mum, sausage and underwear for boys [Mpho started to cry as she spoke].

> Paleesa: The boys in our class swear at us and they say' msunu kayihlo' which means your fathers's private part and they say 'msunu kanyoko' which means your mother's private part and they say bad things to us. They swear at us, they fight with girls all the time. I wouldn't say their name, he hit me on my backside, they swore at me, mam.

The words directed at Mpho are emotionally charged yet are within the ambit of societal acceptance for girls' and women's subordination and marginalisation in society, and this enables Sifundo to use the profanities effortlessly. Paleesa and Mpho's highly emotional states suggests that they, too, are familiar with these words: they understand that the words are taboo and carry unpleasant inferences, which is why the girls both feel shame, and become very emotional and angry. Calling the girls their 'mother's private part' or 'underwear for boys' shows how an attack on their sexuality is central. The reference to Mpho as 'underwear for boys' also reinforces the construction of girls as passive objects: she is seen as just an item in the boys' sexual world. The swearing also shows how the girls'

sexuality is constructed as dirty. Sifundo's use of these words simultaneously highlights how verbal abuse works to capture girls' sexualities for hegemonic demonstrations of masculinity.

Mpho is further unsettled by the linking of sexualised insults with race. 'Black' (even though she is black African in South Africa), 'Nigerian' and the reference to vagina and penis (or as Mpho puts it, 'sausage') functions to sexually objectify her within a racialised and class context and also reinforces how xenophobia connects with biological differences to alienate her as a female and to reinforce social differences. Racial differences in skin colour for example, between black South Africans and foreign Africans, is used as a tool to 'other' and further entrench differences and distance (Vandeyar and Vandeyar, 2017). Dauda, Sakariyau and Ameen (2018) also assert that a parochial mentality amongst some South Africans has led to the belief that foreign nationals in South Africa, in this instance, Nigerians, have usurped job opportunities, are responsible to the high rates of crime and disease in South Africa. These perceptions resulted in violence, hatred and ostracisation of foreign nationals. It is in this context that Sifundo casts Mpho as dark skinned, black, Nigerian and thus foreign. This is a strategic way of marginalising Mpho through race, class, xenophobia, gender and sexuality while confirming his own masculine power. Mpho's desirability within the heterosexual compulsion is brought into question, as being 'black' and 'Nigerian' is seen as a move away from desirable femininity. However, Mpho resists being passive. Her fight is situated in her anger at being insulted, and her good standing in the school (Mpho is a prefect and an enthusiastic athlete who participates and enjoys success in athletics and netball) gives her the support of the teacher who assists in getting her desk back. While Mpho's dignity is somewhat restored, the insults about her sexuality remain since her skin colour and her immigrant status remain unaltered. It shows how being cast as the 'other' erodes her power and dignity.

Other studies, too, have found that a familiarity with taboo words give them greater emotional force (Garrido & Prada, 2018; Mncwango & Luvuno, 2015). These authors state state that vulgarity and swearing denigrates girls and women and works to reinforce gender inequalities and gender stereotypes. The perception and the construction of women (and girls) as inferior lends intensity and valence to sexualised verbal harassment. Furthermore, the potency of the meanings assigned to these words has cultural significance and power, and the words thus become powerful tools used to devalue girls and women. They belittle and

contaminate females' sexuality while simultaneously reinforcing gender inequalities and gender stereotypes.

In schools, language is thus a powerful medium through which boys exert their power over girls. Renold (2005) reports that verbal insults often take on a phallic form and that some pejoratives are directed at parents. Studies conducted in sub-Saharan Africa (Parkes & Heslop, 2011; Chikwiri & Lemmer, 2014) and in South Africa (Bhana, 2008), have found that the words directed at girls are highly sexualised, for example, bitch, pussy, father's dick, mother's puss (or *msunu ka nyoko* in isiZulu) and vagina (*ngquza*). Neupane and Chesney-Lind (2014) and Garrido and Prada (2018) also argue that swearing is related to social power. Thus, when the boys swear the girls, they carousel on patriarchal power that accords hegemonic masculinity both social and cultural power. Other studies (Bhana, 2013; Conroy, 2013; Summit et al., 2018) also emphasise the link between sexualised swearing and heterosexuality, arguing that it is a public performance through which boys establish either their heterosexuality or their misogyny, or both, to gain favour in the eyes of peers which, as Connell (2000) argued, works to create and maintain a dominant gender order. Given that the school is a place of authority and a place where boys and girls congregate, it thus provides a setting and a space for the contestation of power, where heterosexual scripts can be enacted and rewritten. It also creates platforms for hate speech. Furthermore, argue that when there is subjective familiarity with swearwords, when the words are understood as one of my respondents, Mpho, understands them, and when the words hold negative meanings, as illustrated in the excerpt below, they create instantaneous anxiety because of the emotional intensity they elicit.

Another participant, St'bile, whom I introduced earlier (p. 38) is also isiZulu living in Umgudulu Road Informal Settlement and Mpho talked about how their bodies were also ridiculed by boys in the school. In the excerpt below, St'bile explains that she was ridiculed for having 'three boobs' because of the protruding bump of her navel visible through her uniform. The protruding bump is caused by an umbilical hernia that occurs in both children and adults but is more common amongst girls.[9]

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[9] Uba, Igun, Kidmas and Chirdan (2004) note that umbilical hernias are less common among children that come from better off socio-economic backgrounds. Research on the stigma and discrimination associated with this disorder is virtually non-existent. In South Africa, that the majority of people are poor would suggest that a large number of children have this condition. Lopez (2013) cautions that the disorder should not be racialised and

Body image is extremely important to the participants as they, too, objectify their bodies, wanting to look beautiful and desirable. St'bile, however, is highly self-conscious of the 'bump' and her efforts to conceal her body shows how she, too, colludes with the objectification of her body, suggesting that she also believes that she lacks heterosexual attractiveness. She considers herself unattractive and therefore conceals her body to prevent ridicule and harassment:

> St'bile: The boys in class say that I have three boobs. My breasts and my… [She points to her protruding navel which causes a bump in her midriff. She is highly self-conscious and remains silent thereafter].
> Mpho: They [the boys] call me a man because I have big feet, because I play rugby. They also say that I have hair like for scraping pots [meaning steel wool].
> P.J.: What did you do when they told you these things?
> Mpho: Nothing. Nooooo! [She shakes her head]. Because they were going to hit me.
> P.J.: Have they ever done or said anything to you, Paleesa?
> Paleesa: I wouldn't say their name, he hit me on my backside, they swore at me, mam.
> P.J.: What did they say to you?
> Paleesa keeps quiet for a moment and laughs self-consciously: They say 'izinkomo ekhanda' – that means a "cow's head". [The other girls laugh but the laughter seems to be lighthearted].

This exchange indicates that when girls challenge territorial spaces, as Mpho did when she fought for her desk and, as has now been revealed, by playing rugby, traditionally a male sport, there are consequences. The boys' references to her big feet as manly once again reminds her that she has interrupted a socialised gender boundary by playing rugby. She is also instantaneously relegated to the kitchen, as noted in the reference to her hair as a cleaning item "for scraping pots". While Mpho's actions (fighting for her desk and playing rugby) interrupt dominant discourses surrounding masculinity and femininity, she is quickly reminded that resistance will result in oppression. Similarly, Morojele (2013:143) found that

stresses that environmental and social forces that underlie and impinge on poor people's access to health services must be considered.

in Basotho communities in Lesotho, *matlhare* (ugly) is particularly insulting because heterosexual attractiveness is upheld as paramount by girls and by their communities. The implication is that girls who are not considered beautiful or attractive to the male gaze are punished through name calling. There is consensus that such misogyny maintains and safeguards boys' positions within the patriarchal system (Dewaele, 2010; Garrido & Prada, 2018; Gruhn, 2016; Strauss & Allen, 2008).

Mpho's challenge to conventional gender roles draws attention to how resistance can be a vehicle for change. However, resistance is precarious and there is always a price to pay. In this instance, it culminates in boys' harassment that questions and taunts her femininity and her sexuality. The incident also underscores her vulnerability: while she is able to challenge a single perpetrator, she is overcome with fear when the boys collude in their harassment towards her. Hence her resistance becomes muted.

While St'bile, Mpho and Paleesa tolerated these harassing incidents and struggled with feelings of humiliation and anger during their disclosures, they found support from the other girls in the focus group who also began to share their experiences of being taunted, tainted and teased by the boys. For example, Paleesa's disclosure that the boys referred to her as a cow's head, generated laughter that worked to lighten the tone in the group discussion. In this way, the focus group worked to cement the bonds between the girls through their experiences at school. However, the emotional intensity of St'bile's, Mpho's and Paleesa's responses indicates that the abuse hits home. In the next section I show how the words that the boys use subordinate and demean the girls, and simultaneously elevate the boys' status.

6.6. Sexualised verbal abuse is about sex

> Lettie: Yesterday there's a boy in class that called – in front of the class, mam – he called us a big name, the 'b' name!
> Buhle: He called us pussy, your mother's pussy, your father's dick, fuck you!
> Lettie: Yes, mam.
> JJ: He sings songs and all those things.
> Lettie: And he does this thing with his tongue and tell us how sex is done.

> Buhle: He even asks us 'What this is?' about our private parts, our vagina [ingquza in isiZulu], mam, just imagine 'pussy' [ingquza in isizulu!] He says our ingquza!
>
> Buhle: He says he wants your ingquza!
>
> Loanda: Mam, yes, mam. We were all shocked, mam, because he is a lovely boy mam, he is funny, he smiles, he is loving, caring, smart, he smiles.

Buhle: Loanda, Lettie and J.J. appeared to have much in common, besides being in the same grade. They were all 13 years old, although Lettie was closer to 14 years. They were a close-knit group that hung out together during the breaks. They travelled via different taxis to school and back home. Whilst they were friends with the boy whom they spoke about, they also referred to him as 'yellow bones' because of his light skin. However, this friendship was compromised when the boy resorted to crudity and vulgarity in his interaction with them. They were upset to realise that 'nice' boys can also engage in sexual harassment, despite the kind facade they might sometimes present. They expressed disappointment with a boy whom they trusted to be their friend and whom they considered to be nice, but who turned out to be equally capable of sexual harassment. The girls were embarrassed and unsettled as they repeated the verbal insults in isiZulu during our focus group discussion. According to the girls, the word 'nquza' was used specifically to refer to their vagina. The insults violated cultural norms where even saying the word 'sex' can be seen as disrespectful and taboo (Bhana, 2008). Implicit in Zulu cultural norms based on respect or *ukuhlonipha* is that linking sex and childhood is taboo (Delius & Glaser, 2002). Even though *ukuhlonipha* is contested, as Lettie notes above, it reproduces and reinforces the association of sex and children as being culturally offensive, and this results in silences around sex and sexuality (Bhana, 2008).

Buhle's shock at the use of *ingquza* is located in *ukuhlonipha* and this intensifies her concerns as she sees it as violating cultural norms. The misogynistic epithets, and graphic and sexualised imagery, is intense in meaning and extremely damaging in nature. The girls' shock at the words, however, also stems from their construction of the boy as 'nice', implying that nice boys respect girls. Furthermore, the girls are affected because they realise that even nice boy's present danger. On page 141, I drew attention to how derogatory words are used to isolate and punish Mpho. In this instance, the misogynistic epithets are used to convey sexual lust. Similarly, the boy's conduct here is seen as referring to bodily postures and movements from sexual experiences that the girls assume that he (as a nice boy) should not have had.

By invoking a moral norm of caring amongst friends, Loanda constructs the boy's harassment as a violation of the conditions of friendship. His engagement in the sexually demeaning gestures towards them shows how power relations function to establish boundaries between boys and girls. Through their experience, they learn that even nice boys are not immune to perpetrating sexual harassment. The girls also spoke about the vulgarity of the same boy's actions towards them:

> Lettie: He does the nasty things with his pen, mam, and with his body. He says that he watches the movies.
> P.J.: What do you mean? What does he do with his pen?
> Azande: Everything and even with his desk, mam.
> Loanda imitates the boy thrusting himself against the desk, and the girls laugh.
> Azande: Like having sex. And he makes the noises like 'aahh ahaha aah'.
> Another girl asked the boy what is a hole and he does like this (points to her vagina) and he does this thing with his tongue and tell us how sex is done.

The girls were offended, but they felt powerless to address the boy's behaviour. While this excerpt lacks the serious tone and critique against male power that was evident in the previous discussions, it clearly signifies the male body's capacity for sexual power. It suggests that the girls' sexuality is both desirable and sought after, but that it is only valued for its role in the service of male sexuality. The girls demonstrated how the boy postured himself against the desk, simulating sex through pelvic thrusts of their bodies against the desk, and in this way they become witnesses confirming not only the boy's male status as heterosexually active, but also of how he sexually objectifies the girls as passive recipients of male sexuality. The boy's bodily postures and movements reflected sexual experiences that the girls most likely had assumed that he had not had, and this added to their sense of betrayal from the 'nice' boy turning on them.

As in the previous section, the girls had no misconceptions about what constituted sexual harassment and sexual violence. They regarded the boy's actions as invasive and unwanted. However, their laughter suggests that they are knowledgeable about sex, as does their actions replicating the boy's movements, and this disturbs the assumption that young girls are innocent and do not know about sexuality themselves. Laughter, as Allen (2013) points out, arises in a context where sexuality produces humour.

The girls' knowingness and awareness of the boy's sexual innuendos and the boy's awareness that the girls will understand the meanings behind his acts are also evident here. This reinforces the tension that exists between boys' and girls' sexuality, and in notions of femininity in which girls are supposedly sexually passive. The girls' humour is also situated in the boy's attempt to claim his sexuality. Nice boys are not supposed to be sexual, just as nice girls are not supposed to be sexually knowing. Furthermore, the boy's sexual knowledge is seen as deviant, something he learns from watching movies rather than an expression of sexual attraction or love for a girl. Thus the girls see his actions, movements and words as offensive. As I describe (p. 123), in another incident a boy pushed a girl's head onto his pants and was viewed by the girls as dangerous because he was displaying physical power. This is done in the presence of other boys who gained sexual currency by witnessing this debasing act. The boy above is seen as offensive rather than dangerous does this only in their presence, hence their further amusement. The boy's sexuality above is seen as weak and unnatural, and therefore he is not seen as powerful or as heterosexually attractive.

Beyond the laughter however, the boy's sexualised advances and pelvic sexualised bodily movements produce shame and humiliation. Fundamental to the verbal insults and suggestive bodily movements is a heterosexual hegemony operating in a complex network of power invoking gender, sexuality, class, culture and masculine norms that consolidate the boy's expression of power and the reproduction gender inequalities.

Since most of the girls experiences occurred out of sight of their teachers, they explained that their complaints regarding the lewd acts and harassment described above was received with disbelief, because he [the boy] was a strong academic achiever and not troublesome in the confines of the classroom:

> J.J.: They [the girls] told sir first. The boy was like no, no, no [denied the incident]. Sir did not do anything because Sir likes the boy because the boys is clever, he listens, so he won't do anything but if it was another troublesome boy he will quickly say 'Go to the office! Go to the office!'

According to Mandisa, Thiele and Buhle, boys' verbal overtures are laden with sexual innuendos that made them very conscious of themselves. Their explanations below suggest that besides making physical contact with the girls, the boys also situated their harassment in heterosexual narratives. Words such as 'I'm going to eat you up', 'check out the boobs,

check out the bums reinforce both the male sexual entitlement and the objectification of the girls. Declarations and utterances of boys sexual overtures described below suggested a knowledge that they are being constantly monitored and 'eyed' by the boys.

> Mandisa: They (boys) say "I'm going to eat you up…you understand what I am saying…I am going to eat you up! You are going to be my wife."
> Thiele: They come and compliment you, they say that you are beautiful. They tell you that they love you. They come to look at you. They want to kiss you.
> Buhle: They say that they want to play with you. They say that they want to amagondo you (have sex).
> Thiele: They say "oooooohhhhhhh…..its duered (closed). They say 'check out the boobs, check out the bums… mmmmmmm… mmmmmm! Check out the way you are standing. They say my Cherrie… intombiyana (my girl). They come for kissing and sex and things like that. As young as they are, they don't care'.

Their responses above suggested that boys were drawn to their physical attributes which symbolised femininity and desirability. However, they found the boys' comments lewd, insulting and embarrassing as it drew attention to their maturing sexuality. Thiele's response that 'they don't care' suggested that it was up to the girls to protect themselves from sexual harassment. This included being careful, watching how they walked and stood since boys scrutinised their movements. However, whilst they complained about the boys, they also are invested in their sexuality as the boys' flattery reinforces their sexual desirability. However, gender and cultural norms that position girls' sexuality as passive or lacking, restricts their public expressions of desire. To openly display or reciprocate the similar displays of sexuality publically is dangerous and can be detrimental to them since they will be judged and labelled 'bitch' and 'slut' by other boys, girls and teachers. Furthermore, it shows how girls contradict themselves, as they use age to position innocence since they too are invested in their sexuality. However, they project the 'right responses' by showing shock and feeling insulted. Yet secretly, they enjoyed the attention because it confirmed their sexuality and desirability within the school. Their response to the boys also demonstrates the sexual double standards that plague them within heteronormativity. They had to appear sexually innocent and demure whilst the boys were free to exercise and voice their sexualities towards the girls.

Contrary to studies that explain boys' engagement in sexually harassing behaviours might have been initial awkward attempts by heterosexual youth to establish sexual identity and express interest in the opposite sex (Miller, 2013), I show in the following discussion that the boys engagement in sexually harassing behaviours towards the girls is situated within a patriarchal system that validates male sexual entitlement, heterosexuality and privileges male power. I show how the social norms that dictates socially acceptable behaviour for girls conflict with their sexualities and become blurred when the girls struggle to both fight off the oppression and to establish their sexualities simultaneously. Their resistance, embedded in their accounts of sexual harassment, also debunks their sexual innocence because undeniably, they are able to read the messages in the boys' actions.

6.7. Blurring the lines between sexual harassment, sexuality and desire

Masculinity as evidenced in the girls' reports below is premised on male sexual prerogatives with little regard for consent. Besides swearing the girls and devaluing their bodies, such as those described above, some boys touched, fondled and groped the girls in sexual ways that showed the sexual entitlement. The girls reported that these incidents can occur anywhere in the school and even inside the classroom.

> Loanda: The boys touch our hips and tell us that they love us and then touch our bums and all of that stuff.
> P.J.: What do you do when they do that?
> Loanda: We say 'No! Get away, get away'. When you are standing they just come and put their hands on your boobs.
> P.J.: How do you feel when they do that?
> Loanda: Uncomfortable.
> Lettie: They touched me, another boy touched me, touched my boobs and then they pretend that it was a mistake. He said that he did it by mistake. They touch you on the bum when you are coming in and then they block the door and then you try to come in.
> Paleesa: They stand like this [she demonstrates, feet astride] and then they touch your bum. They are blocking the door and then you must pass and then they touch your bum.

However, the girls did not simply accept the harassment. Instead, they described how they shouted at the boys, and refuted the claims that their touches were by mistake. In calling the boys' actions deliberate, the girls revealed that they were aware of the boys' desire for closer intimacy with them through touching their bodies. However, while they say 'no' and 'get away, get away', they still squeezed past the boys, allowing the brushing of bodies to continue. Blurring the lines between wanted and unwanted bodily contact creates confusion and highlights the tension between sexual harassment and sexual invitation. The scenario also suggests that the girls must protest and show their indignation, as any indication that the touch is pleasurable might cast them as sexually wanton or immoral. This finding is supported by other scholars such as Bhana (2016), Paechter (2007) and Renold (2005) all of whom have found that, like boys, girls in primary schools are actively invested in sexuality.

> Lettie: If they don't touch you, you think that something is wrong with you. Because we are dating teenagers we have feelings. Beautiful boys in the class touch you in the class and you know you get angry but when you think about it, mmmm. You know it was a nice feeling of touching you.
> St'bile: Yes. And listen to girls every day when they ask 'Do you like it?' 'No!'
> Lettie: Some do like it but don't want to say they like it. It's the truth, mam.
> St'bile: They are scared.
> Lettie: They like it. It's the truth. Sometimes I just feel happy when they touch me but I don't want them to keep on doing it because that's being annoying and they will get used to it.

While their dilemma is clear, the girls' femininity and desirability are often directly connected to, albeit in contradictory ways, the male gaze, and the reproduction of male power. For example, when the boys block the doorway, the girls do not necessarily have to squeeze through the door to enter or exit the classroom. Their choice to do so points to their own desires and investments in the boys and the pleasure that they derive from close sexualised proximity with the boys. Their entering the class and thus touching the boys is therefore also a confirmation of the boys' desirability to them. Cobbett and Warrington (2013) found in their study in Antigua and Barbuda, in the Caribbean with 11-12 year old boys and girls concluded that reticence shown by girls reinforced the sexual double standards that plague girls and women. Girls are conditioned to withhold their sexuality and negate the positive and pleasurable emotions that accompany it, while boys' interest in girls is viewed as

'normal'. Therefore, boys are not castigated for showing interest in girls, but girls face the threat of earning derogatory labels and are thus forced to negotiate their sexuality in nuanced ways, which includes squeezing past the boys to enter or exit the classroom. However, obvious displays of enjoyment were taboo as any indication of acceptance or enjoyment could also lead to fights if the girls' boyfriends, or other girlfriends of the boys, found out what was going on. Lettie explained the situation succinctly: *"If you allow them to touch you, you could be labelled a slut!"*

While negotiating the virgin/slut dichotomy proved challenging for most of the girls in this study, Mbali was fearless in expressing her desires, her sexuality and her disdain for the other girls. Mbali presents as a confident and fearless 13 year old in the school. She was a strong academic achiever, a prefect, outspoken and described herself as a 'bitch.' She went on to explain:

> Do you know what that [bitch] stands for mam? Beautiful, intelligent, talented, charming and hot.' It means you are a bitch. (She explained that these words formed an acronym 'BITCH').

In the following section, I show that despite wanting to be seen as sexy, there is a dissonance between Mbali desiring boys and her ability to instill desire in the boys. While she embraced her sexuality daringly, there were consequences.

6.7.1. Heterosexual bodies: a conflicting site for desire and sexual violence

> Mbali: I was putting on lipstick, mam. I was sitting with my friend, mam, so I put the lipstick on. I was sitting next to two of my friends. You know what the other boy told to the other one? "She looks so sexy in that", and the other boy said "I could get in those lips any time" and I was like 'uuuuuuhhhhhh…WHAT GUYS? How can you say that?'

Mbali's response: "What guys? How you can say that?" suggests a reprimand, but her reference to the boys as 'guys' lessens the reprimand. It demonstrates that while she is rebuking the boys, their sexualised and flirtatious comments reinforce her desirability, and

she is aware of the powerful position that she commands both among the boys and the girls in the group:

> Just look at me. I know that I am beautiful, but I don't have even one boyfriend…I have many friends…but that is where it ends. There is one friend of mine who has a crush on me and I am like 'I know you do have that, but can you put it away, or this friendship is over', because I don't know what they think in their heads. I always get the jits to say 'no'. Some of the girls hate me. They know that I am still that innocent angel that people look up to and we are still closed. Other girls 'woooooahwo!' they don't want us even near their boyfriends. We don't know why (coyly).

Mbali tended to dominate the conversation, often taking on a moralistic stance with regards to her sexuality, boys and her virginity, wanting to distance herself from the other girls. She makes constant reference to her physical self when she talks: 'Look at me. I am beautiful. All the boys want me. I am still closed (virgin)'and I got the impression that the other girls did not really care about her and that they were also jealous of her.

> Field notes: Date: 29 August 2012 Time: 10h50 (Break) Place: Foundation Phase area
> During the break I observed Thiele, Paleesa and Mbali talking aggressively towards each other. I stood outside my classroom and pretended that I did not see them. However when the group broke up I called the Thiele and asked her what was happening. She replied 'nothing'. But I could see that she was upset. During our next individual interview I brought up the subject again. Thiele disclosed that an argument arose between the girls and her as the girls believed that she was taking their boyfriends away. Mbali spoke about feeling threatened by J.J. since her (J.J.'s) boyfriend fancied her.

This emerged later in the interview when J.J. discloses that her boyfriend left her for a 'certain girl'. Throughout this interview, I could sense an undercurrent but it was only when Mbali admitted that she was 'the other half' did it begin to make sense:

> There's a girl…I won't tell her name, but she is a pain in the neck. All her men want me and they just tell her it's over and come to me. And I tell her that I don't

> want him but she still hates me. She feels that I am a traitor but I don't want her to feel that way but she still hates me and every time she tries to get me down.

Conflictingly, though, she forces a recognition and acknowledgement of her investment in sexuality, pleasure, desire and subjectivity. Her reinforcement of her sexual desirability showed how she also negotiated her sexuality to occupy a powerful gendered position amongst the girls. Ironically, though, she conforms and performs her femininity in the service of the male gaze. Talking about why she felt boys find her attractive, she said:

> "It's my shape, mam, some people don't like it, but most of the boys like it"
> Sometimes you know mam, you like it when the boy like you…but you just don't want them to you know….but you like taking advantage of them…they like can I talk to you and you like uhuh (no)….I don't want to talk to you…but you make yourself beautiful so that they love you more…..mmmmm….mmmm
> (Focus group discussion, 4 September 2012).

However, Mbali's liberal thinking about her sexuality is still couched in a patriarchal discourse which views female sexuality as subordinate to male sexuality. Mbali's confidence did not protect her from being constructed as a sexual object: she is still subjected to sexualised harassment from the boys. The following entry from the learner discipline file read: "*X told Mbali that he wanted to f...k her private [vagina]" (06/2012).*

The association between male sexual entitlement, sex and the objectification of Mbali is clear. The construction of Mbali as a sex object showed how she [girls] is [are] challenged when they assume powerful positions which sit in conflict with the stereotypical constructions of female passivity and weakness. Sex, and/or the threat of sex, is thus used as an instrument to punish girls who challenge female passivity. Evident is a callous form of masculinity that violates girls' dignity, if not their bodies, through their experiences of gendered and sexual violence in school.

In contrast to dominant versions of sexual violence and harassment as the territory of male power, I show next that violence is not the means of power for boys alone but that girls can and do engage in acts of violence, challenging the gendered construction of femininity as

passive, subordinate and weak. I show next how Loanda, Lettie, Paleesa and Thiele challenged other girls who threatened them.

6.7.2. Sexual harassment and violence by girls

'If you are scared of her, you are not a virgin, if you fight and hit her, then you are a virgin'

'Inja (dog), foetsakkie (fuck you), isifebe/ifebe (bitch)'

Loanda and Lettie explained that besides being policed by the boys in school, other girls watched and noted their responses to boys' proposal, propositions and touching. Hence they were tasked with the responsibility to establish clear boundaries between them and the boys or suffer the consequences. Thus the manner in which they rebuffed would be suitors was also significant as any suggestion of insincerity was used by other girls [and boys] to vilify them. Loanda and Lettie explained this below.

> Loanda and Lettie: Some other girls when you don't say to the boys 'get away' they say you are a bitch, you are a slut
> Lettie: and that's how the fights start, because if you call me a bitch I get angry and you start fighting
> P.J.: So girls also come into this fight now
> Lettie: Yes because of what they saw. They saw you keeping quiet. They will tell everyone. They will call you a slut. They will say this one is a slut, this one is a slut, they will tell everyone and then they will come and ask me, and then you start fighting and then they take other words [swearing] and there is more fight

They explained their dilemma: if they kept quiet when the boys touched them, they were labelled 'bitch' by other girls as it was seen as if they enjoyed the touching. If they resisted, then they faced the boys' wrath.

Paleesa explained that they were provoked by other girls who used obscene language and swear words to insult them and to create hierarchies of power amongst them. According to Paleesa, the most common form of harassment entailed sexualised swearing. She described

the offending words as ‘strong’, meaning that they were obscene, intended to insult and belittle them:

> Thiele: There’s another girl called Thando… She has attitude, telling us that she is going to catch us after school, that she is not afraid of anyone…she forces us to fight.
> Paleesa: When we…girls get into a fight, it’s like ….inja (dog), foetsakkie, ifebe. They call you strong words, like you mother’s ass or your father’s ass. Hey! They come to hit you. They clap hands. They call you ‘Ukubatshwa’ – (The girls explain that this is a very strong word, a rude word which means that girls (women) can’t keep their legs closed because they cannot get sexual satisfaction with just one boy(man), therefore they are always ready to have sex with many boys(men).

The swearwords above are extremely vulgar, strongly sexualised, gendered and intended to provoke them. It showed that whilst they faced ridicule and harassment from boys based on their physical appearance and their refusal to become involved in relationships, the verbal abuse they encountered from other girls were more derogatory, linked to heterosexuality and emanated from jealousy over boys. Paleesa and Thiele’s responses also demonstrated how they too challenged and contest hierarchies of power through the use of swearwords and fights with other girls who were perceived to be threats. Thiele’s response suggested that to ignore such provocation would suggest that they indeed have ‘ukubatshwa’ (have insatiable sexual appetites), hence they retaliated to defend their honour, show fearlessness to obtain identity, power and admiration in the sense that they were fearless, beautiful and virgins.

> J.J.: Like in the bus, the boys say ‘Hey! Paleesa is beautiful, Mbali is beautiful, say mmmm….mmmm…mmmm, in Westhills there are hot chicks and the girls go (say) to that girl and say ‘I heard that you are beautiful. Show us that you are beautiful. You must fight with me…they say ‘Ashiphanub Ntombi’ (which they explained meant ‘Let us fight to prove who is the girl of the moment). You must show us who is virginal, more virginal.
> P.J.: Did you fight back?
> Thiele: Ow, mam, if you are scared of her, you are not a virgin, if you fight and hit her, then you are a virgin’

Clearly being constructed as virgins was important for the girls, however, it did not imply that they were immune from sexual desire as noted above. These girls also realised their sexual power over other girls, hence they fought back as they were not prepared give up the sexual power and satisfying status of ***'hot chicks'*** conferred upon them by boys. However, in claiming this title, they colluded with their sexual objectification and male sexual entitlement, a contradiction to their initial response which suggested that they took offence at their sexual objectification. It is important to note however, that their fights which centred on their heterosexuality reinforced the compulsory heterosexual domain of the school. They wanted to be considered beautiful, desirable and to be seen as virgins. Whilst these aspirations contradicted their earlier claims of being offended by the boys' flattery, it also pointed to the dilemmas created by their emerging sexualities. Whilst this created a dilemma for the girls, it also emphasised the double standards in heterosexual relationships meaning that whilst the boys were free to display openly their interest in and to approach participants, the participants were castigated for showing a similar interest in boys.

> Field notes: Date: 24 August 2012 Time: 13h15 Place: Outside the school gates
>
> Girl fight! Girls from Westhills and Mounthills Primary (The neighbouring school) were involved in a huge fight. The girls came from Mounthills and a big fight ensued outside the school. Boys were also in the crowd, including the boy over whom the fight was about. A mob [about 100 other learners from both schools] followed, screaming and urging the fight on. Teachers, (including myself) ran onto the road. We recognised some of the girls as our learners. Kuhle was amongst them. The learners [boys and girls] however, ignored us and ran to the nearby park whilst some girls from Mounthills were arrogant, argued with some teachers who sought to reprimand them. The teachers followed them to the park. The school taxi drivers had also made their way to the park. The police who were called, arrived quickly [they must have been in the vicinity]. Upon seeing the police, the learners dispersed, many made their way to their respective 'pick up' points [On Friday, all learners are dismissed at 13h00]. They stood with the teachers for a while, monitoring the situation and then one officer said "they are fighting for that small thing [meaning the boy's penis]. Educator and Principals from the two schools remained to identify the offending girls. Kuhle, St'bile and

> Lettie, Buhle, and J.J. were brought to the office. Their parents were contacted and asked to come to school the following Monday.
>
> Follow-up: The fight was over boyfriends. It emerged that Kuhle, St'bile, JJ and Lettie had learnt that the girls from Mounthills were interested in their boyfriends. After school, they went to Mounthills and confronted these girls and a fight had erupted. This fight was discussed in the school staffroom as well.

6.7.3. Blurring the lines between sexual harassment and boyfriends

In the next section I show how Lettie's acceptance of the sexualised touching by other boys draw attention to the complexity of young people's sexualities and their conflicting emotions as to what really constituted sexual harassment. Lettie reinforced the confusion over what sexual harassment constituted, since in this conversation, sexual harassment was accepted as desirable attention. Instead, in permitting the boys to touch her, kiss her and hug her, she harmonizes boys as sexual predators and girls as acquiescent. In a bid to get back at her cheating boyfriend Lettie explained her strategy to make her boyfriend jealous:

> Lettie: I broke up with another boy and wrote a message 'his name versus me' and I said yes, you took my friend, got in love with my friend, I allowed the boys to touch me.
> P.J.: Like how did they touch you?
> Lettie: Touch me anywhere, hugs, and kiss.

Thus one can interpret her actions as one that colludes with the unequal gender relationships that prevail within heterosexual relationships. Her silence adds to her complicity that boy (men) should not be refused sexual advances. Cobbett & Warrington (2013) explain that much of the silence around sexual harassment is linked to a confusion between understanding the differences between consensual and non-consensual sexual behaviour. Gadin (2012) and Miller, Cutbush, Gibbs et al (2013) also explain that the line between sexual harassment and normal relationships becomes blurred and complex as girls confuse sexual harassment and relationship initiation. As a result, sexual harassment becomes concealed in heterosexual narratives (Gadin, 2012). Similarly, Wood, Lambert, and Jewkes (2007), in their South

African study concluded that that girls' scripted refusal of boys' proposals also make the lines between coercion and consent difficult to distinguish.

Finally, in this chapter, I show how gender inequalities, heterosexualised violence and dating violence are obscured in school ground games.

6.7.4. Heterosexual violence in heterosexual games

The girls highlight the following two games: *Cross your fingers (K3T)* and *Spin the bottle (HBD)* that are played during the breaks and out of sight of the teachers on duty. The rules for (K3T) were simple. Girls have to keep any two fingers crossed throughout the school day. If other players in this game see that a player's fingers are uncrossed, then it is reported to the other players. The defaulter then has to face the consequence which demands that he or she kiss a boy/boyfriend or girl/girlfriend three times. The second game is 'Spin the bottle, also known as HBD. 'H' is for Hug (the first day), 'B' is for baby kiss (the second day) and 'D' is for deep kiss (the third day). The consequence for breaking the rule runs over three days. Refusal to engage in kissing results physical violence. Paleesa explains the game in more detail below:

> Paleesa: They play 'spin the bottle' it's when like there's a bottle and a group of people, boys and girls mixed, and then you spin the bottle, if it points to X and Y, they have to HBD (hug, kiss, deep kiss), if you don't want to do that, you get punished somehow.
> P.J.: What punishment do you get?
> Paleesa: Like they hit you…all of them, slap you, like if there are twenty over here (in the game), then all of them are going to slap you.
> P.J.: Twenty slaps?
> All: Yes.
> P.J.: Are they 'hard' slaps?
> All: Yes mam.
> Thiele: Sometimes it hard slaps, like Vukani…He has big hands (all the girls laugh at this, Vukani is a big built boy who is also much older than them).

Both these games provided opportunities for the girls to adopt positions which are either powerless (being hit) or powerful (joining forces with the boys to hit other girls) depending upon which discursive position they enter into as subject. Such games also serve as training ground for gender roles in heterosexual relationships as girls learn that the consequence of noncompliance will result in sexual violence (forced kisses) and violence (being punished physically). Whilst the girls explained that participation in the games carried the risk of being slapped or being forced to kiss, it was noted that they continued to engage in these games despite the one sided power that appear to favour the boys. Whilst their decision to play the game allude to their desire to challenge the boys, it also suggests that by playing these games, they are also able to kiss the boys without being constructed as morally irrepressible. Games such as those described above may also be seen as opportunities for sexual related activities such as kissing and deep kissing for those who do not have boyfriends. By engaging in these games, the girls also are able negotiate and exercise their sexuality: they could kiss as many boys as the game ruled without being considered loose, sluts or wanton.

Reporting was risky. In our focus group discussions, the girls repeatedly said that on the whole they did not report or divulge their experiences to their teachers or to their parents because they did not think that reporting would solve their problems. They explained that reporting carried the possibility of reprisals, ridicule, further victimisation and stigma. The girls spoke about how they feared reporting the abuse to the principal, their teachers or their parents as they believe that any intervention would only be temporary, but the possibility of further victimisation would intensify.

6.8. Fear of re-victimisation

According to the girls, the overwhelming fear of re-victimisation deterred them from reporting the harassment they suffered and continued to suffer. They believed that since the school offered little protection, and since the school was not able to extend any protection outside the school, especially when they were waiting for their transport home, it was safer to keep quiet. Their silence, however, helped to normalise the violence as a part of school life and gave the boys impunity to continue with the sexually harassing behaviour. Thiele and Lettie explained the situation as follows:

> Thiele: Maybe if we tell our parents and they come to school and ask which boy did that to you and then you like gonna point him out and then he will hit you or something.
> Lettie: If my parents like came and talked to Mrs Gobindlal and reported to her that the boys are touching us, what will Mrs Gobindlal do?
> Thiele: She will ask which boy touched you. She will keep saying she will suspend the boys.
> Lettie: even if they suspend the boys, it will be for two days. Then they will come back and keep doing the same thing. Some don't hit you but keep harassing you in front of other children.

Lettie's frustration with the manner in which complaints of sexual harassment were addressed within the school is evident. The simple punishment 'scolding' took away the seriousness of the perpetration of sexual harassment in the school. It also suggests that the school lacked proper channels for reporting instances of sexual harassment and gender violence. According to Thiele, boys who were suspended could still enter the school and hide in the toilets, lying in wait for them. She also spoke of how the boys carried dangerous weapons to school and might use these weapons on them. Indeed, Bhana's conceptualisation of girls' agency as 'lite' resonates well with my study particularly as the girls' testimonies suggest that acting against boys has the potential to stimulate further violence:

> Thiele: Maybe outside the gate they are saying "hey you! Come here, come here. Maybe let me talk to you. Call me this one and this one and that one and that one". Maybe there's a hole in the fence, they will get in because they know that the teachers there are just sitting in class and not doing anything, that they are just watching you and then maybe you go to the toilet and then they will be sitting there and playing with their phones in the toilet and then smoking.
> Azande: You can't go and tell the teacher that they are carrying knives.
> Paleesa: They can also use it [a knife] in school if they get angry with someone.
> Azande: If you tell the teacher, then they will find you and then there will be [she slams her fists into her palm to indicate hitting/fights].
> Lettie: They will hit you. What will you do?
> Thiele: Cause you are all alone!
> Azande: And then when they come back they do the same thing again.

The girls in my study linked their lack of reporting to fear of re-victimisation, but their silence was also situated in their agentic attempts to explore their sexuality without adult interference. Furthermore, they wanted to conceal their relationships (boyfriends) from their teachers, their parents, other boys and other girls, as they were scared of the repercussions such revelations would bring.

6.9. Conclusion

The data presented in this chapter suggest that gender and sexual violence is insidious within Westhills Primary School and that it is given impunity to thrive through oppression and silence. Sexual harassment is not an overnight manifestation. Other studies (HRW, 2001; Bhana, 2017; Jackson, 2018; Jewitt & Ryley, 2014; Parkes & Heslop; Sommer & Sahin, 2013; Summit et al., 2018; Russell, 2011) have shown how girls shape and are shaped by the gender power asymmetries that exist within the school and, more broadly, beyond the school. In the context of intense competition, where boys jockey for power, the display of heterosexual and hegemonic forms of masculinity monopolise the spaces in school to the extent that relations between boys and girls become extremely damaging. The boys' perpetration of sexual harassment behaviour points to a display of masculinity which is orchestrated to show machoism, dominance and sexual entitlement. The operation of young, heterosexual masculinity is shaped by broader structural, cultural and social processes in which girls are subordinated through rampant sexual harassment, abuse and violence. Boys erode the power and dignity of girls, and girls' experiences of persecution and oppression are located in socio-cultural factors that manifest in gender asymmetries that benefit the construct of hegemonic masculinities and subordinated femininities. The vulnerability of the young girls' sexualities is underscored and reinforced by the nature of the harassment that they experienced.

In this chapter I have shown that the degrading sexualised verbal insults that the girls experienced generated immense emotional intensity. The derogatory words insulted, belittled and marginalised them both in the school and beyond the school. However, embedded in the girls' experiences of persecution and oppression was their negotiation of their own gender and sexual identities which highlighted how they were active beings invested in their sexualities and in heterosexuality. To claim that the girls were passive victims nullifies their sexualities, just as to claim that boys performed sexually harassing behaviours towards girls

because of their age and stage of development is too simplistic: it nullifies the legitimacy of the girls' experiences of unwanted touching, fondling and groping.

While the school thus became a platform or training ground for boys to display culturally exalted forms of masculinity, such as boldness, sexual entitlement, heterosexuality and the privilege of male power, it was also a training ground for the girls. Coupled with the threat of sexual harassment was the girls' accountability of seeking to look desirable. Furthermore, girls' reactions and responses to the boys' harassing behaviour was of critical importance– not merely to manage the persecution, but also to avoid being labelled 'slut' and 'bitch' by both boys and other girls.

Results also indicate that sexual violence, sexual harassment and dating violence are inextricably linked. The tensions that they experience in their dating relations are accentuated by the social and cultural constructs of gender role beliefs which in turn sustains gender inequality. The tensions that surface in their relationships with their boyfriends and other girls however suggests their refusal to comply with gendered expectations in heterosexual relationships. Furthermore, their engagement in violent behaviours also works to shift, to defend and to regain power in their relationships and amongst other girls who threaten their sexual identity. The girls' increased sexual assertiveness in this study debunks the myth of the sexual innocence and sexual passivity in young school girls. Dardis (2014) explains that the increasing change in girls' attitudes and behaviours indicate a resistance to heterosexual relationships which demands a submissive femininity. This is seen in the girls' resistance, opposition and contestation of their boyfriends' perpetration of violence in their relationships.
I have drawn attention to the ways in which they challenge their sexuality as passive or absent and resist the construction of them as little people who have little or no agency.

The girls' resistance and challenge to the hierarchal positioning that the boys occupy constitutes a challenge to hegemonic displays of masculinity such as male supremacy and male domination. It also shows a fracture in the subordinate positioning within the gender hierarchy. Thus, the cultural capital accrued by the boys is challenged to the extent that dominant narratives become complicated, disturbed and even subverted. This is the girls' resistance, their agentic attempts to alter the discourse of passive femininities, innocence and asexual schoolgirls. They have a sophisticated sense of what constitutes sexual harassment

and violence. They have the ability to name and make visible their complex gendered and sexual entanglement with and among boys and girls underlined by the subordinate way in which femininity is constructed. Listening carefully to what girls themselves raised as problematic, unwanted and oppressive, has enabled me to illuminate the nuanced dimensions of sexual harassment and violence – physical, verbal and emotional assault – and its dynamic association with heterosexual masculinity and the broader social and cultural environment through which girls are subordinated.

Chapter 7

Sexual Coercion, Power Relations and Agency

7.1. Introduction.

Azande: He started telling me that he loves me ... He asked me to be his girlfriend. And he would give me money... (Excerpt from individual interview with Azande, aged 13)

The reasons that young people and adults engage in unequal sexual relationships are complicated and defy simple explanations. Whilst intimidation and transactional sex have been cited as reasons for older girls' involvement in unequal sexual relationships, Chadwick (2010) and Jewkes et al. (2005) postulate that predatory behaviour, male sexual entitlement, and a desire for "fresh bodies" also drive such relationships. However, to date, few studies have actually drawn on the voices and experiences of underage girls engaged in sexual activity, including coerced sex (Gevers et al., 2013). Gevers et al study conducted in a Cape Town school in South Africa with boys and girls (12-15 years of age) found girls (and boys) were engaging in a variety of sexual behaviours that was up until recently (2013), were seen as a violation of the SOA [10] and offenders were liable among other things, to a fine and/or imprisonment together with a criminal record. (Bhamjee, Essack & Strode, 2016).
Gevers et al noted that whilst money was one of the many motivations for engagement in sex, sex between dating partners was often non-consensual and unprotected. Their study has prioritised the need to engage with young people on sexual negotiation and sexual decision making from an early age. This chapter is guided by a belief that it is necessary to develop ways of understanding young girls' sexuality, from their own perspectives, as this is key to understanding how power relationships are produced. This is especially important for informing policy to effectively respond to social ills, such as the high prevalence of HIV

[10] The recent amendment in the SOA by Judge Rabie (2013) has since decreed consensual relationships between people under 16 legal, provided that there the age gap between consenting partners is no more than two years. Further to this forms of sexual expression and experimentation such as kissing, holding hands, touching genitals and breasts will no longer be a criminal offence, provided that both adolescents are between the ages of 12 and 15 years or one adolescent is aged between 12 and 15 and the other is 16 or 17, and there is not more than a 2-year age gap between them. This means that it is no longer a criminal offence for adolescents to engage in consensual sex with other adolescents aged 12 - 15 years. (Bhamjee, Essack & Strode, 2016).

infection in the 15–24 year age group (UNAIDS, 2015). This chapter thus addresses an important gap in research: Azande, cited in the excerpt with which this chapter begins, told me of her experiences of the harsh and complex realities of how sexuality, poverty, money, and sex combine to disadvantage young girls living in poverty.Through exploring Azande's experiences, a 13-year-old girl who was engaged in coerced sex, this chapter seeks to shed new light on the neglected issue of primary school girls' sexuality, sexual agency, and vulnerability to transactional sex, coerced sex, teenage pregnancy and HIV and AIDS. I argue that the ways in which young girls experience their sexuality and construct their sexual identities is mediated by the sociocultural context in which they live—as well as by their own agency. This allowed me to recognise the complexity of the relationship Azande was in: It was not purely transactional, although money was a motivating factor. Indeed, in all the interviews, she also alluded to 'love'. By focusing on Azande's sexual relationship with an older man (whom she identifies as '20 something'), I show how power is taken away from girls through inequalities such as discrepancies in age, and through poverty and sexual violence. The person is more than two years older than Azande, hence her relationship with the man is a violation of the SOA that defines this relationship as unlawful. Azande was drawn into the sexual relationship because of her poverty stricken status, and the lure of money led to detrimental outcomes. The aim of this chapter is to draw attention to the missing discourse surrounding young girls' sexual development, sexual agency and desire, including the decisions they make about sexual behaviour. The purpose of this ethnography is to further this body of research by enabling voices previously unheard to take centre stage.

The ethnography that follows draws on data from field notes, individual, open-ended interviews, and informal conversations with Azande and her mother, Miss Lithetha, a drawing produced by Azande[11] and entries in school records. The decision to include Miss Lithetha rested on the ethical issues that accompanied the sensitivity of Azande's disclosure.

7.2. Revisiting ethical concerns

Huge ethical dilemmas surfaced when Azande disclosed that she was in a relationship with a man believed to be 'twenty something'. Azande's engagement in sex, albeit consensual, is, under South African law, defined as statutory rape (Sections 15 and 16 of the Criminal Law

[11] In the study, participants were asked to draw a picture that related to themselves or their thoughts on heterosexual relationships, including their own.

Amendment Act no. 32 of 2007, Sexual Offences and Related Matters). I informed Azande that I was compelled to report her disclosure to the Principal (See Appendix 9), her mother, the Department of Education (SNES) and to the police. I requested a meeting with the Principal and explained the disclosure (See Appendix 8). I also informed both the Principal and Azande of my obligation to report it to the Police (See Appendix 8 & 9). Both consented verbally, with Azande explaining that her mother had also reported her relationship to the police. I contacted my supervisor and explained Azande's disclosure who confirmed the procedure to report the matter to the police. I also contacted the chairperson of the university's ethics committee at the time and revealed the disclosure. He explained the law and advised me to report the disclosure to the police, since the relationship constituted statutory rape (SOA).

In order to adhere to all protocols I sent out letters to the parent (See Appendices 10 & 11), outlining my request for a meeting. When I eventually did contact her, I informed her of my obligation to report a case of statutory rape. She informed that she had already done so but that she mislaid the case number. I subsequently went to the Sydenham Police Station on two occasions to report Azande's disclosure but I was told that the parent must report the matter, not me. However, I was not assigned a case number despite visiting the police station on three occasions, seeking advice and wanting to report the disclosures. I was advised that the parents must report the incidences and not me. However, in order to proceed with the study, I drew up an affidavit, explaining my study and the data captured (See Appendix 15). I also contacted the social worker from Child Welfare to provide counselling and support to Azande [Ref: RSM: 203:83] (See Appendix 16). I sent two letters via Azande requesting to meet with Miss Lithetha. I needed to inform her about Azande's disclosure and my obligation to report to the Department of Education and the Police (See Appendix 10 and 11). Her mother did not respond. I did however, succeed in obtaining a contact number and established contact. I explained Azande's disclosure and my obligation to report. Miss Lithetha consented to me reporting, adding that she had done so already. She also informed me that she had taken Azande to the hospital for tests. However, she informed me that she had mislaid the case number. She consented to my request to use the data and to be included in the study (See Appendices 12 & 13). I also asked Azande and was given permission by Azande to include the data in the study (See Appendix 13). I then requested Miss Lithetha's participation in the study. My decision to include her in the study rested on her beliefs about Azande and her relationship with the 'twenty something' person. I also explained the purpose

of the research, the procedures and the risks and benefits, and that participation was voluntary (See Appendix14) and that both Azande and or she could withdraw at any time. I also explained that names of the participants and places, including the school have been changed to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. I begin this chapter firstly by providing a biography of Azande.

7.3. Azande: A Biography

Azande was born in in 1999 in Valleyview, a town situated on a tributary of the mKhomazi River in the midlands of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. She was raised by her mother, Ms Lithetha, who was sixteen years old at the time of her birth. Her mother, who was in grade 11 at that time, left school when she discovered that she was pregnant. After Azande's birth, Ms Lithetha remained at home to raise her. Her biological father was uninvolved in her life. He was also a school going youth about the same age as her mother. His demise followed in 2006, seven years later. Miss Lithetha said that he was 'sick'. It was during this time that Ms Lithetha relocated with Azande to Mopane Informal Settlement. Azande lived with her mother, her mother's boyfriend, and her stepbrother. Her grandmother also lived in an *imijondolo* in the same informal settlement. When Azande was nine years old, her mother fell pregnant and gave birth to a son. Azande referred to her mother's boyfriend as her 'stepfather'. In 2012, after completing grade seven at Westhills Primary, Azande was sent to Valleyview to live with her maternal grandmother. She was to continue her schooling there whilst her mother remained in employment in Reservoir Hills. In February 2013, Azande's stepfather was found dead close to Banana City (a larger informal settlement near the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Westville Campus). Initially it was assumed that he had died as a result of accidental electrocution since his body was found near illegal power cables. However, Azande's mother disclosed that a post-mortem revealed that he had suffered injuries to his head therefore she suspected that he might have been murdered. In April 2013, Azande's mother was dismissed from domestic service. According to Ms Lithetha, her dismissal was the result of her asking for a wage increase. She was three months pregnant at the time. She returned to Valleyview and reunited with Azande and her family.

7.4. Azande's Achievements at School

Azande's strength lay in her sporting ability. She excelled in sport. She represented her athletic house on a yearly basis and won many medals each year for featuring among the top three fastest runners in her division. She also represented the school at Ward level in athletics

and netball. She enjoyed sport. She is tall and well built. However, whilst her physique bears testimony to her athletic prowess, her stature also belied her age. Academically, she underachieved. Her teacher noted that she was struggling academically at school. Teachers' notes in the learner profile indicated that Azande was displaying problematic behaviour in the classroom.

Figure 22: Documentation taken from the learner profile

LEARNER DISCIPLINE

rner :

INCIDENT / ACTION TAKEN

talking and not doing her work

talking in class

Misbehaving in class. Reprimanded by Mrs. .

does not have an English book. She writes on a page everyday. She says her English book is at home.

Stealing Sandile's things

dropped juice on her chair and on the floor to pretend that she urinated in her pants.

took a page confiscated by the teacher.

Spoke to Mbali and told her that [illegible] is not at school because she is sleeping with her father. Sent lette for mum to call at school.

Disrespectful to educator. Backchats educator. Disruptive behaviour.

Upon speaking to her, the teacher noted that domestic violence featured prominently in her life. The teacher subsequently completed Form 25[12] (14 September 2010) which is issued by the Department of Education (DoE) to report Azande's complaints of domestic violence and ill-treatment. Subsequent to Form 25, another form, LSEN 001 (no date) was also completed and submitted to the Psychological Guidance and Special Needs Services. Documentation from school records (Form 25 and LSEN REF 001) below provide evidence of the reported

FORM 25: [12] NOTIFICATION OF SUSPICIONS OF ILL-TREATMENT OF OR DELIBERATE INJURY TO CHILDREN: SECTION 42[1] CHILDCARE ACT NO. 74 OF 1883: REGULATION 39A

domestic violence which was subsequently reported to a social worker in the DoE in 2010. Azande was in grade five at that time.

FORM 25

NOTIFICATION OF SUSPICICIONS OF ILL-TREATMENT OF OR DELIBERATE INJURY TO CHILDREN: SECTION 42 (1) CHILD CARE ACT NO. 74 OF 1983: REGULATION 39A

2. Particulars of place, time and date of the alleged incident, including a children's home, place of care, place of safety, school of industries or shelter:

Informal settlement – according to Azande this has been an ongoing problem – perpetrator is her 'stepfather'.

4. Nature and extent of the ill-treatment of or deliberate injury inflicted on the child.

Being threatened with violence, locked out of the home, being instructed to buy beer or cigarettes from shebeens.

7. Circumstances giving rise to the suspicion that the child has been ill-treated or suffers from an injury, single or multiple, the cause of which probably might have been deliberate

Azande confided that she was unhappy at home and cited reasons – violence, locked out, told to go to granny (night), buying liquor

8. If the incident has been reported to the police, details of police station and references concerned:

Not reported – mother was called in and informed – told to stop ill-treatment – she has tried and is trying but perpetrator not willing to move/stop abuse

9. Other information or remarks

Child says that the level of violence against her mum has increased. Relative warned her that he will inform husband should she go to the police. Relative is a policeman.

LSEN REF 001

1. Reasons for referral

'Child (Azande) is struggling academically. Is becoming frustrated by circumstances at home iro of demands made by 'stepfather',

2. Relevant background information (obtained from parents/educators, etc.) Birth and developmental history.

Normal birth – no specific concerns/observations. Mother indicated that Azande is stubborn and is back chatting both herself and her stepfather.

Social background

Disadvantaged – informal settlement – mother is educated and has concrete plans for her future.

3. Emotional/Behavioural/social functioning

Becoming increasingly rebellious, stubborn, angry

4. Interests/strengths

Confident, shows leadership when working with groups.

6. Scholastic functioning at time of referral

Literacy, Reading, comprehension (grade 3 level), written work and spelling (Grade 2 level) [Azande was in grade 5 when the report was written].

7. Steps taken by the school/parents/educator to help the learner

Is in a remedial group

8. Other information

Mother had another child from the stepfather. Azande seems threatened by sibling's position in family'.

Azande's rebellion, anger, and poor academic performance might have been related to the circumstances at her home. Azande's low academic achievement is supported by research which endorse that children who are exposed to domestic violence may experience difficulty learning, have limited social skills, exhibit violent, risky or delinquent behaviour, suffer from depression or severe anxiety (Kiesel, Piescher & Edleson, 2016). Kiesel et al's study based on administrative data from the Minnesota Departments of Education and Human Services on a large sample (2 914) of children studied the link between children's experiences of domestic violence and their scholastic performance. Their study showed that children who were exposed to domestic violence underperformed academically and were characterised by poor attendance. Their findings resonates with Azande's scholastic profile. The above entries suggested that Azande was being ill-treated by her stepfather and that her mother was being intimidated by both him and family members hence she capitulated to his abusive ways. Azande's efforts to rebel resulted in threats, being 'locked out of home' and being sent to live with her granny, who also lived in Mopane Informal Settlement. Azande's resistance to mistreatment noted in her disclosure to her teacher must be seen as her resolve to expose her stepfather whom she believed had wronged her.

On the 17 of May 2012, learner attendance was poor due to a planned taxi strike. Learners that resided nearby and those that walked have however reported to school. Azande is one of

them. Since there were no formal lessons for the day, I thought to use some time to engage in an individual with Azande. Before we begin, I tell Azande that I had read about her complaints concerning her stepfather in the school documents. I then ask her if we can talk about how things are at home presently. Azande disclosed that her stepfather was abusive towards her mother, her grandmother and herself. She revealed that she was subjected to physical violence, verbal and emotional abuse at home. She spoke in clear, flat tones and in a matter of fact way about her stepfather.

> P.J.: Tell me about your stepfather.
> Azande: He is fine, but when he is drunk he is always doing that to me.
> P.J.: What does he do to you?
> Azande: Shouts at me. Hits me. Hits my mother. Swear me or my grandmother. When he comes back, he breaks the door. I go to my grandmother. When he is drunk he goes crazy.

The graphic and vivid details of the assault in her narratives suggests a familiarity with incidents of violence within her home. Whilst her subsequent perception of her stepfather as 'crazy' illustrates the association between alcohol, violence and an impaired mental capacity, Azande reasserts herself by drawing attention to the lack of control in her home and her decision to withdraw herself from the violence in her home. In doing so, she redefines and narrows the definition of victim, showing instead that she is both controlled and resilient whilst she casts her stepfather as 'crazy', as having lost his wits and therefore less powerful in her life. Poverty and gender violence are closely linked in South Africa (Meth, 2017; Statistics South Africa, 2016). According to Meth, South Africans experience a multitude of crime related behaviours. However, she notes that sexual violence against women and domestic violence are more common in informal settlements. She attributes these forms of violence to the lack of visible policing, lack of law and order, gangs and illegal activities. Statistics South Africa (2016) taken from the Demographic and Health Survey, reveals that one in five women older than eighteen years have experienced physical violence, the survey also shows that physical violence is most prevalent amongst women living poverty stricken households where one in three women reported physical violence. Jewkes et al (2014) and Jewkes and Morrell (2010) also support that people living in poverty stricken contexts experience oppression in a myriad forms which also increases their risk to violence. They link poverty to violence, which includes domestic and sexual violence, adding that social

norms that promote gender equalities further oppress girls and women, even in such poverty stricken contexts, men with their ability to provide (albeit meagre) still enjoy the privilege of control, domination and sexual entitlement delivered by a provider masculinity. Jewkes and Morrell (2010) identify structural inequalities such as patriarchy, gender and socio-economic conditions which they claim function as intermediaries to create and exacerbate vulnerabilities especially for girls and women that live in poverty stricken contexts. These assertions are visible in Azande's disclosures of her experiences of domestic violence and in the ensuing discussion that centres on her experiences of gender and sexual violence. The discussion centres on themes that emerged from the analysis of the data.

7.5. Azande experience of an attempted rape

Hampshire et al (2011) state that whilst children enjoy greater mobility as they grow older, this expanded freedom advantaged boys (and older males) rather than girls. Results from the study conducted with girls aged 9 – 17 years of age in parts of South Africa that included urban, peri-urban, rural and remote rural areas revealed that whilst sexual violence occurred in both impoverished and non-impoverished populations and contexts, poverty increased girls' risk to sexual violence. Both Hampshire and Meth (2017) explain that poverty shapes girls' movements, further elucidating that undertaking household tasks such as fetching water or firewood and walking through potentially dangerous places increases girls' vulnerability to sexual violence. According to the authors, this fear and danger limit girls' movements and consequently their social interactions with other people. Azande's account of an attempted rape below show that it is important to recognise that even this limited freedom is not without consequence. In Mopane Informal settlement there is no running water in the homes, hence there are no flushing toilets, no electricity and no roads. Such conditions increases girls' (and women's) mobility and create vulnerabilities for girls like Azande, who are at risk to sexual violence when they visit the toilets (day and night), when they go to the water pumps or to the river to collect water or to do their laundry at the nearby river and when they go to the shops since they have to traverse the pathways and make-shift roads in-between the shacks (See Chapter 1, p.5, Fig. 16).

> Azande: Someone where we are staying wanted to rape at me. He called me on my house and he locked the door and he told me that I must sleep on the bed and I must do like this. (Demonstrates: her arms held on both sides of her head and I

> must do that with my legs (spread her legs), and I said no. And I spoke lies and I said that my mother said that I must go to the shop. And then I was wanting to shout and then he do like this to me into my mouth (shows hand blocking her mouth) and then...and then there is this boy, umfana (isiZulu word for boy), that saw me and called my granny. She phoned the police. And that man did it to me (tried to rape her) and I didn't like that thing because I went to the counsellor [for counselling at the hospital]. It was last year and I went to the person who talks things and I told him. And that man (perpetrator) did not believe me and I told that there is a person who saw him and he said I must go and call him and I go and call Fanele (the umfana) and Fanele told that man and even now that man does not like me. Mam. It was Sunday mam and I told my mum and I told everyone that stays near me and I told my granny. It was Saturday and it was Sunday. And my granny and my mother said that they will put him in jail and that thing mam, they came, the police and we went to the police station and there was a person that said he will not put him in jail because he didn't do anything!

She explains that the perpetrator released her when the umfana saw her. Whilst her acceptance to go into his house hints that she knew him, it also suggests that the attempted rape was unanticipated, that she did not envisage this attack. Her quick thinking reflected in her ability to escape from the perpetrator, gave her a heightened sense of power which was noted during her disclosure. She spoke clearly and in a 'matter of fact' way.

Azande's vivid narration of the events whilst being intense and explicit, were also infused with an underlying thread of fear and relief which draws from her success in escaping the perpetrator. It also reinforces her agentic attempts and efforts to turn potential threats into victories. This is noted in her decision to tell everyone around her about her experience (at Mopane Informal Settlement as well as during the focus group interview). She explains that although the violation was reported by her grandmother and her mother, the perpetrator was not convicted because the Ward Councillor said that 'he did not do anything'. Crime in the informal settlements is often reported first to Ward Councillors[13] and then to the police.

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[13]Ward Councilors are expected to address issues of crime with the perpetrator without releasing the name of the complainant. Such silence is linked to fear of further violence, victimization, discrimination and stigma that the victim or the family may subsequently encounter at the hands of the perpetrator (Mswela, 2009).

Azande's experience of the attempted rape links with Bruce & Hallman (2008) in that sexual violence and rape is often at the hands of someone whom the victim is acquainted with and in a familiar setting. Since the alleged perpetrator continued to reside in the informal settlement, Azande still perceived him as a threat which meant she had to be on constant guard or risk being violated again. Azande was the only one in the interview that lived in Mopane Informal settlement. Her experience of the attempted rape highlights the social and cultural conditions particular to the everyday lives of black girls in townships and informal settlements. Azande's experience reinforced Meth's assertion that sexual violence is chronic, endemic and persistent in the informal settlement. Azande's experience of the near rape show that girls have to be on guard constantly, confirming that girls are indeed not free as is also noted in Bhana (2011).

Azande's refusal to become a victim underscores her vulnerability in the informal settlement. It also illustrates how girls who live in such deprived contexts have to be vigilant, careful and alert to coded messages within their environment. Azande's disclosure of an attempted sexual assault points to such vulnerabilities. WHO (2005), also supports that girls' vulnerability to violence in the community increases with age, maturity and increased contact with the wider community. However, whilst Hampshire et al (2011) agree that mobility increases girls' vulnerabilities to sexual violence, they also maintain that mobility also provides opportunities for heterosexual encounters and social interactions with the opposite sex. Such was Azande's case. It is through her interaction with the community that she meets a boy, and engages in a sexual relationship. The rest of this chapter focuses on this relationship.

7.6. Azande enters into a coerced sexual relationship

Field notes Date: 15 June 2012 Time: 13h00 Place: My Classroom

> I noticed during the focus group discussions that Azande did not speak about dating or boyfriends. The other girls did, speaking excitedly about dating, love, kissing, fights and presents. But I was told by a teacher that she had a boyfriend! I decided that I would ask bring up the topic around boys and boyfriends in an individual interview. The interview is held in my classroom which seems to be the most private space today. We seat ourselves across each other, she sits on my chair and I sit on a learner's desk. I have purchased two bottles of coke for

Azande and myself. I thought that sipping a coke whilst talking would create a more comfortable aura that would be more inviting to conversation. I ask her if she has a boyfriend. She responds that she had a boyfriend but 'not now'. I ask her to tell to about him.

Azande described the inception and foundation of her relationship as follows:

Azande: I was selling… my Mother was making vetkoek [deep fried buns]… she tell (told) me to go house to house… door to door and sell… He was my biggest customer… He started telling me that he love[d] me…He asked me to be his girlfriend. And he would give me money...

P.J.: How much?

Azande: About R20 or R15. [$US1—1.40]

P.J.: So you went to him because you wanted money as well?

Azande: Yes. Yes… because I did not have anything to get in school… he was going to give me money.

P.J.: How old was he?

Azande: About twenty something.

Azande did not see her relationship as exploitive, and did not recognize her vulnerability. The declaration of his love for her and his desire to have her as his girlfriend led her to believe that the relationship was romantic. However, whilst she accepts his proposal, her acceptance was underpinned by the awareness that the relationship would also bring her financial rewards. Her consent also suggested an active engagement with her sexuality and the knowledge that her body was desirous. She established her sexual power in the realisation that she could trade sex for money and use her body as a tool. However, whilst Azande subverted the power differentials in their relationship by deciding whether she would or would not engage in sex, depending on his ability to provide her with money. Her agency was eroded by her "boyfriend's" manipulation of her poverty stricken status *'he was my biggest customer'* and age. Monetary exchange was the foundation for the inception of the relationship, and this is what guided her behaviour within it. This is noted below:

P.J.: What if he did not have any money?

Azande: I wouldn't go to [have sex with] him!

Her acceptance of money, however, reinforces the discourse around the materiality of sex, masculinity, and male entitlement to sex—and to the female body as a commodity for their sexual pleasure. However, Azande's belief that her "boyfriend" loved her suggests that she also viewed the money as "gift giving," as a way of showing that he loved and cared for her. As established earlier, other studies have found that gift giving is not unexpected in sexual relationships, but Azande's age, and her complicity in the relationship, makes it evident that she coupled sex with money: She was clear that if he had no money, she would not "go to him"—and this also suggests that she was wily enough to have established his (albeit meagre) financial status prior to sleeping with him. She colluded in the unequal distribution of gender power, accepting money in return for sex, thereby reproducing a problematic sexual culture that helped sustain gender inequality in transactional sexual relationships. The gains from her relationship were minimal: R15–20 is barely enough money to buy simple items such as cool drink or a pie at school, yet she pursued this money. However, disadvantaged by her age and poverty, she was oblivious to the subtle coercion that played out in her relationship with her "boyfriend". This is noted in her meetings with him that took place under the cover of darkness. Clearly, Azande knew that her meetings must take place out of sight and going to her grandmother's house to watch television provided a perfect foil. While Azande's youth, age, gender and poverty provided the opportunity for sexual manipulation, it was also clear from the way she described their meetings that she knew her relationship was illicit. For example:

> P.J.: When did you meet with him?
> Azande: In the night, when I went to my grandmother's house… I used to watch Generations (a local television series) at my mother's house and when I was going, he is calling me… there was bush on this side and this side… So nobody could see.

She explained that she was thus able to meet him without her mother's knowledge, and that what initially began as a relationship based on sexual exchange for money began to evolve into a romantic relationship and became increasingly complex and complicated in terms of enjoyment, sexual pleasure, and the exchange of money. This is also evident in her drawing:

Figure 23: Azande's drawing her meeting her boyfriend amid the concealing trees

Azande depicts herself as a fearless, happy, and confident girl. Evident in the drawing is her lack of sexual innocence. The lack of fear and the happiness in her smile suggests that she is desirous of the rendezvous—whether because of the knowledge that she will be receiving money, or because she is looking forward to being with her boyfriend, is not clear. Her boyfriend's position near the trees could, however, be interpreted as predatory behaviour in that he is waiting for her when she leaves her granny's house in the night. Her depiction of her meeting is bright and colourful, even though she said that they met at night, suggests happiness rather than fear. Her portrayal of her boyfriend as an attractive person, dressed smartly also suggests her positive thoughts about her relationship. His brightly coloured clothing and the smile on both their faces also suggests feelings of happiness and possibly pleasure and anticipation of the expected encounter. The entire picture is bright, colourful and happy which further reinforces a romantic involvement. Her pursuit of her boyfriend also underscored her desire for the relationship, and suggests that she had become romantically attached to him. Azande disclosed that her boyfriend and her had not used protection during their sexual activity. I addressed the matter frankly:

> Azande: He tell me to sit down and… he would put his private part on my private part… and then I would get pain.
>
> P.J.: Did he use a condom?
>
> Azande: No… It was paining.
>
> P.J.: Were you taking any contraceptives?
>
> Azande: No.

Azande said she yielded to unprotected sex since condoms caused pain for her. This frank disclosure reflects her inability to perceive the consequences of underage, coerced, and unprotected sexual behaviour: She agreed to it despite the risk of injury to her reproductive organs, HIV infection and teenage pregnancy—especially given her age and sexual inexperience, the fact that her boyfriend was an adult, she could not disclose her relationship to anyone. That she took this risk repeatedly suggests that she lacked the knowledge and ability to assess the potential consequences of her behaviour. It also suggests that the monetary gains and pleasure derived from being with him outweighed these nebulous risks.

Azande revealed that her relationship ended when it was discovered by both by her boyfriend's concurrent partner (another girl) and by her mother. During the ensuing confrontation Azande learnt that her boyfriend had fathered a child with the other girl.

7.7. Azande's relationship is discovered

Azande revealed that her relationship ended when she was 'found out' both by her boyfriend's concurrent partner and by her mother. According to Azande, it was during this confrontation that she learnt that her boyfriend had fathered a child with the same girl. Her boyfriend's concurrent relationship and fathering a child with another girl, amplifies the risk Azande has exposed herself to. Such risk is further elucidated in Ranganathan et al (2016) who explain that multiple sexual partners elevates young girls risk to HIV infection and teenage pregnancy. Azande's description of the altercation between herself and the 'other girlfriend' noted below, draw attention to the intense competition for provider boyfriends in contexts of poverty (Hunter, 2010). It also became clear that Azande's silence around dating violence [the girls spoke about their boyfriends] during focus group discussions was embedded in her secret relationship. If she had disclosed her experiences of dating in the focus group discussions, she would have exposed herself and her relationship to the other

girls and me. However, Azande's experience and engagement in dating violence supports that primary school girls are in fact appropriating a different form of femininity, fearlessly and firmly to express themselves and their sexualities (Jewkes & Morrell, 2013). According to Sanhueza and Lessard (2018), this resistance and agentic practice draws into the changing discourse of passive femininities, innocence and asexual schoolgirls and challenges gender stereotypes. The altercation is noted below.

> Azande: His girlfriend heard about this… She asked me… and she told me that if I want her boyfriend, I must take his baby too… His girlfriend came to me and hit me, swore at me and did all that things to me… Then my grandmother said why she is going crazy. I told my mother… my mother asked me and I told her the truth.

Azande's discovery that she was not the only girlfriend and that he had had a child with another girls, did not daunt her. Nor did telling her mother about the relationship. Her only concern was the realisation that she, too, could fall pregnant:

> "I asked myself 'one day if I get pregnant, what will I tell my mother?'… So I left him".

Azande's discovery that she was not the only current sexual partner raises grave concern to the risk she has exposed herself to whilst her boyfriend's decision to engage with her in a sexual relationship suggest a coherence with the traditional tenants of masculinity, namely male entitlement to sexual freedom, risk-taking and a provider masculinity. Whilst Azande appears undaunted by both the girlfriend and revelation of the relationship to her mother, her greatest fear is linked to the realisation that she too can fall pregnant. Similar concerns were also noted in Ranganathan et al (2017) which found that whilst girls recognise the link between transactional sex and HIV and AIDS, they express more concern over becoming pregnant. I was concerned about the risks that she had taken with her health and I did advise her to go with her mother for a HIV test. She and her mother, however informed me that she had undergone tests when her relationship was discovered (p. 162).

Azande's decision to terminate the relationship showed how she instigates agentic practices to reclaim a sense of her power by relocating herself as being in charge of herself, both

through her speech and by taking ownership of her body. This is illustrated in her pronouncement that *'she left him'* as opposed to studies which show that boyfriends determine when relationships are 'over' (Wood & Jewkes, 2008). Azande reveals that her mother was extremely aggrieved about the relationship and that she was subsequently punished. Both she and Miss Lithetha described the ensuing punishment.

> Azande: My mother hit me...hit me, hit...and she told me if I do it again, I will be dead. My mother said that everyone makes mistakes but if I do that again she will hit me. She said not to have any more friends or she will send me to the farm.
> Miss Lithetha: I was so angry, 'cause I hit her. I hit her and then we go to hospital. They said I hit her so hard because she was not making the pee

That Ms Lithetha beat Azande so hard they had to go to the hospital also suggests Ms Lithetha's fear of the terrible risks that Azande had taken. It is this fear that underpinned her threats. Azande was punished physically, emotionally and psychologically, as is evident from the threats "if you do that again, you will be dead," and "not to have any more friends" or you will be relocated to the farm (meaning her maternal homestead in Valleyview) to severe any future contact that Azande might contemplate having with the boy and also to continue with her schooling, while her boyfriend was absolved of any blame and, consequently, any crime—even by Ms Lithetha, whose pronouncement was that the boyfriend was "a nice boy"—despite the fact that he had engaged in abuse of her daughter by clandestinely coercing sex from her:

> "That boy is a nice person, but I don't know what goes on with him… He is a nice person, I don't know what went on but Azande was going to seduce him." She recounted the conversation they had: "I was going to talk to him… and I asked him what is happening before they start sleeping and see each other? He say that everyday Azande was coming to his house… He thinks that Azande likes him, and then he told her to sleep with him…"

In her eyes, the blame rested with Azande, who was constructed as the "seducer". By casting Azande as a seductress, Miss Lithetha also colluded with discourses that position women as responsible for the sexual violence committed against them. If Azande was powerful, her

boyfriend was powerless, hence his pardon. According to Miss Lithetha, Azande's boyfriend's explanation that Azande sought him out underscores society's censure on girls who subvert socially sanctioned forms of femininity: Girls who break the gender mould by displaying other forms of femininities must be held accountable for acts of violence towards them.

It is clear from Miss Lithetha's position that the blame is Azande's: She is the perpetrator; the boyfriend is the victim. Yet, the construction of masculinity as dangerous and virile is still upheld: the suggestion is that girls should stay away from men or risk coercive sex or sexual violence. The boyfriend's reasoning created the impression that Azande was wanton and therefore to blame. His explanation that he roped her into sex because he thought that she liked him goes unchallenged by Ms Lithetha since she, too, accepted that Azande was to blame. Ms Lithetha's view that Azande provoked the relationship is, however, not only problematic for Azande and females in general, but also for the boys who, supposedly, cannot be held responsible for controlling their own sexual desires. By casting aspersions on Azande's character, Ms Lithetha accepts Azande was to blame. Ms Lithetha's response created concern since it vindicated Azande's boyfriend. This has implications for Azande's future relationships especially since she (Ms Lithetha) advocated for a subordinate femininity and for female sexual passivity. Ms Lithetha's construction of violence was complex, contradictory and subjective and there was a danger that the seeds for female passivity in heterosexual relationships was being be sown so early in Azande's life. By agreeing with the unequal structuring within heterosexual relationships, Ms Lithetha colluded with the unequal gender power, favouring patriarchy, hegemony, passivity and compliance. She believed and accepted that girls' failure to conform to a socially desired feminine behaviour will incur violence. This disquieting reasoning and acceptance underpins the South African social landscape in which patriarchy, male domination and male sexual entitlement combine, contribute to and support gender inequality and violence. Thus, it seems that the social construction of both masculinity and femininity that existed within Azande's context conspired to judge and shame her, while the true perpetrator escaped guilt free and unscathed. In this way, the violence against her was legitimised and her agency was undermined in favour of a passive, weak, and retreating femininity. Her position is premised on the desirability of female passivity in heterosexual relationships that reinforces cultural ideologies that support male dominance and decision making. Ms Lithetha She saw Azande's behaviour as nonconforming and punished her for challenging prevailing gender norms that

call for sexual passivity in girls and women. By punishing Azande, Ms Lithetha vindicated herself in the sense that she was adhering to, and supporting, these prevailing gender norms. Thus, prevailing discourses about dominant masculinity, the acceptability of uncontrollable male sexual desire, and male sexual entitlement emerged strong, unchallenged, powerful, and resilient.

7.8. Azande is sent away to Valleyview

Ms Lithetha explained that since Azande's boyfriend still lived in Mopane Informal Settlement, she feared the continuation of the relationship. Her fear arose from the boyfriend's attempts to re-establish contact with Azande. One morning whilst we were on our way to sports training (we walked with our learners to the nearby ground to train since we lacked a sports ground at the school), Azande joined me and struck up a conversation. She mentioned that 'boyfriend' had approached her. I recorded this conversation as an informal individual interview. I wrote in my field notes the following:

> Field notes: Date: 19 July 2012 Time: 10h00 Place: West Road
> Excited voices ring in the air, the sound of running feet competing with the war cries from children as they make their way down to the park for sports training. I try to maintain their pace but I can't. I drop back...better that I save my energy for the actual training I think. I am not alone for long though. Azande lingers towards the back of the crowd. She is in Emerald House or 'Green House' as the children refer to it. (Green is more tangible than Emerald). I am in 'Green House' too. She is our best athlete and our hope first or second place in our annual school sports. She knows it too. "Hello Azande, I say". She responds: "Hi mam". We walk together, chitchatting about nothing in particular. Then she says "you know that story I told you about the other day, I saw Him again, he was calling me…"
> P.J.: What did he say to you?
> Azande: He said that he wanted to talk to me.
> P.J.: Did you go?
> Azande: No. but when I asked 'why did you do this thing to me' he said that I asked for it'. I asked him why he was telling everyone that he sleep with me. He said I deserved it. He called me and said can we do something, and I said no …he

said 'please I'm begging you….I ran home and when I was at home and he went back. It was about 5 o'clock when I came back home.

P.J.: Did you see him again after that?

Azande: Ja. But I never went. He threw stones where we stayed.

Her refusal to engage with him however had repercussions as is noted in her disclosure that he began to harass her mother and her by throwing stones on their imijondolo. His decision to punish and intimidate them by stoning their imijondolo showed how violence is used as a tool to intimidate and harass girls and women. Azande was also angry that he revealed her relationship with him to other people and sought an explanation from him as to why he would did so. His response that she deserved it coincides with Ms Lithetha also allocating blame to Azande for transgressing social norms surrounding young girls' gender and sexuality. His presence in Mopane Informal Settlement also suggests that he was not convicted. Thus in order to avoid any possibility of Azande resuming the relationship and/or further harassment since he still lived in Mopane Informal settlement, Ms Lithetha subsequently decided to send Azande away to her maternal home to live with relatives and continue her schooling in Valleyview.

Field notes: Date: 15 April 2013 Time: 15h00 Place: Westhills Primary School

In 2013 I contacted Ms Lithetha to enquire about Azande and her schooling. It was during this time that she informed me that she too would be relocating to Valleyview since she was dismissed from work. She said that she was also pregnant and that she could not support herself since she had no income. According to Ms Lithetha, Azande would be returning to Durban for a brief period for a prayer. She informed me that Azande had 'stomach problems' and that a traditional prayer was going to be held for Azande. I was saddened by this information. I purchased toiletries and chocolates and asked Ms Lithetha to give these to her.

Field notes: Date: 24 April 2013 Time: 12h30 Place: Westhills Primary School

Azande has come to school! I see her outside the office. I'm so pleased to see her. The jacket and skirt that she has on, gives her a very formal and older appearance. I smile and say 'Hello Azande'. She responds 'Hello' and returns my smile. She informs me

that she has come for a copy of her birth certificate. We talk in general and I ask her about her new school and if she has settled in. she says that it is ‘okay’. She informs me about the prayer to be held for her. I wish her well and success at school. I’m curious to ask more questions but she tells me that she has to go. As she walks away I note that she had grown much, much taller.

7.9. Conclusion

Drawing on the notion of power inherent in gender relationships, this chapter explored a single case of coerced sex. Throughout, I have been concerned to give Azande’s narrative centre stage and, through it, to show how age, gender, sexuality, poverty, and culturally entrenched ideas regarding masculinity and femininity contributed to her engagement in coercive sex—as did love and desire. Azande’s narrative highlighted her active engagement with her sexuality—especially in that she conceded to sexual intercourse willingly. However, disadvantaged by her age and poverty, she was ignorant of the subtle coercion that played out in her relationship with her “boyfriend”. Indeed, her experiences highlighted the complexities and contradictions young girls experience in negotiating their sexuality. It was evident that she did not fully comprehend her decision to engage in unprotected sex and the risks she was taking in her clandestine relationship.

This chapter resonates with other studies which have found that sexual relations are based around power, and that underage sex (coerced sex) is perhaps the most damaging of all sexual relations. I have shown that Azande’s relationship reproduced relations of domination and subordination—not only between Azande and her boyfriend, but between Azande and her mother and, through her mother’s reaction to the relationship, between society and women more generally.

The construction of sexual power as exclusively the domain of men increased Azande’s vulnerability to sexual coercion and threatened her health, given the risk of HIV and AIDS. Indeed, her account of experiencing pain during sexual activity resonates with reports and studies which highlight the biological immaturity of young girls’ reproductive health and their increased vulnerability to HIV infection (see Dellar, Dlamini & Karrim, 2013; Jewkes et al., 2005; Muula, 2008; UNAIDS, 2015). Such sexual coercion has direct implications for

HIV transmission since it renders girls powerless in decision making regarding safe sex, and studies have shown that this powerlessness continues in later life.

Power, in Azande's relationship, operated not only to cast her as a victim, but also as an active agent because, even at age 13, she realised that she could employ hegemonic constructions of gender and sexuality to advance a coercive sexual relationship. She negotiated her sexuality under conditions of patriarchal inequality, but she was not simply passive. However, once she was drawn into the relationship, her power was undermined, and she became the traditional acquiescent female, accepting unprotected sex because condoms caused her pain, upholding domination and subordination. As Jewkes and Morrell (2010) argued, acquiescent femininity and hegemonic masculinity are both cultural ideals and are upheld by compliance. Kagesten et al (2016) explains that when girls are blamed for the violence against them as Miss Lithetha did to Azande, it upholds stereotypical norms that sustains gender inequality and reinforces the subordinate position accorded to women in society. Rahimi and Liston (2013) point out that such attitudes serve to remind girls of their gatekeeper role and highlights that there are consequences for being unsuccessful in navigating the boundaries of good girl/bad girl dichotomy.

Chapter 8

Challenging age, authority and power in the classroom

8.1. Introduction

In this final analysis chapter I explore how my respondents' teachers contributed to their experiences of gender and sexual violence in Westhills Primary School. My intention is not to create a deficit perspective of teachers however in illustrating how from the perspectives of young school girls, teachers own complicity in the reproduction of gender inequalities, my study points to important sites of interventions as I do in the conclusion of this thesis
In this chapter, first, I focus on the girls' experiences of being discriminated against by their teachers within the classroom, and how this related to the girls' heterosexual relationships and their sexuality.

Second, I describe the girls' experiences of hostility in the classroom, and how, for example, they were ignored or marginalised by their teachers. I show that an important underlying factor informing teachers' behaviour lay in traditional and stereotyped attitudes and values towards girls' sexuality, and that girls' efforts to challenge these were met with hostility and punishment. In chapter five I examined boys' derogatory name calling of girls and showed that such labelling invoked shame and isolation because of the cultural significance that the words carried (Garrido & Prada, 2018; Rahimi & Liston, 2011; Summit et al., 2016). Here I show that teachers also engaged in sexualised verbal abuse of girls, calling them "bitch" and "shit", for example, and how this resulted in even greater feelings of shame and isolation as it was perpetrated by custodians.

Finally, I focus on respondents' experiences of corporal punishment. The school is officially sanctioned to instill appropriate discipline norms, without compromising their or their learners' integrity. Corporal punishment was banned in South African schools under section 10(1) of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996. However, my fieldwork found that some teachers at Westhills Primary School were still resorting to physical forms of punishment as a means of discipline. Indeed, I was very concerned when Paleesa revealed that she was subjected to corporal punishment by a teacher. Paleesa said that their teachers do not like them, and this raised questions regarding teachers' subjectivity, as well as the punishments

they perceived to be appropriate for misconduct. The silence around corporal punishment is equally disturbing as it points to the fear that permeates within the school.
The purpose of this chapter is to address the key questions that emerged from my analysis of the focus group discussions: 1) Why do teachers trivialise girls' experiences of sexual violence? 2) How do gender power asymmetries contribute to girls' experiences of sexual harassment? 3) How do girls resist the victim discourse in their experiences of sexual harassment?

My aim is to illustrate how teachers' attitudes and actions regulated girls' sexuality as a means of controlling them. I also seek to address some gaps in research on gender violence in schools: As Bhana (2013) pointed out, many of the studies conducted in South African schools posit black girls' femininity as "pitiful", sexually lacking, and powerless against a violent, strong and virile masculinity. As a result, Bhana argues, there is little understanding of how school girls mediate, contest and reproduce sexual harassment and gender violence, or of how gender violence extends beyond the school and is orchestrated by sociocultural norms and socioeconomic factors, such as class and race, that create and uphold gender power asymmetries in institutions such as the school.

The discussion that follows is divided into four themes: 1) Silenced in the classroom; 2) Experiences of discrimination during teaching; 3) Being blamed for boys' sexually harassing behaviour; and 4) Experiences of corporal punishment. Embedded within these themes, is girls' resistance to oppression, discrimination and exclusionary practices by teachers.

8.2. Silenced in the classroom

The following section explores the relationship and conflict between two respondents: Thiele and Mandisa and a female teacher, Mrs Ngema. Dunne (2007) asserts that the age/authority relations between teacher and student are a fundamental structure of schooling that interacts with the gender regime. They claimed that they were targeted and harassed within the classroom. I could sense the mood of the interview change when I turned the focus of the discussion to their teachers. I observe Thiele and Mandisa looking at each other and then lapsing into isiZulu, as if deciding whether they should trust me with this information. I reaffirm my promise to uphold confidentiality and anonymity. It helps as they both begin to speak freely and frankly about their teachers, making regular eye contact with the rest of the

group and me. I find myself drawn to anger and hurt in their voices as they speak out against what they believed to be unfair and discriminatory practices by their teachers.
Consistent with prior research that showed how teachers used their authority to stymy girls' voices in the classroom (Murphy et al, 2013), Thiele and Mandisa explained that a teacher (Mrs Ngema) used her authority to suppress, oppress and humiliate them in the classroom. Murphy et al's study conducted in Southeast America with middle school girls reports that the girls perceived their teacher's use of authority to be unjustified which led to feelings of hostility, aggression and tension that impacted on the learning environment. This resonates with Thiele's and Mandisa's experiences of having their needs and opinions dismissed, and their relationships with their boyfriends scrutinised, in ways that seemed part of a system of subordination. Both girls revealed that when the news of their relationships became known, their teachers used this information to intimidate, harass and embarrass them in the presence of the other learners in the classroom. It also set in motion a series of experiences that underscored how the girls resisted and contested the power relations between them and their teachers, and raised questions about the teachers' accountability and responsibility towards the girls. Schooling contexts are necessarily based on authority and respect, but the exchanges that the girls described between them and their teacher, Mrs Ngema, suggest that boundaries had been overstepped. According to Mandisa, Mrs Ngema took every opportunity to taunt and mock them, and her belittling of them resulted in them feeling immense hostility towards her. Both girls were overcome with anger and frustration. Mandisa related the following:

> One day, I don't know what Siya [Mandisa's boyfriend] was doing outside, and I was in class, and then they were talking about being scared or something and Mrs Ngema said 'Aaaibo! Why is he scared of me? I am not his wife! There's his wife!' [Pointing to Mandisa] and I just look at mam and she say 'Don't look at me like that!' and I just looked down and played with my fingers and then she smiled.

The reference to Mandisa as "his wife" further demeaned her by overstating her relationship with Siya, her boyfriend, in a way that was at once patronising and suggestive that her relationship was also sexual. Mandisa also spoke about how, when her boyfriend was involved in misconduct, she was often held responsible: Instead of reprimanding the boy, Mrs Ngema would tell Mandisa to address his misdemeanours, consequently abdicating one of her

duties as an educator and placing Mandisa in an awkward position. Mrs Ngema's intentions were to shame Mandisa, and she does this by humiliating her publicly, in the presence of her peers and through staffroom talk with other teachers. I observed one such incident in the staffroom.

> Field notes: Date: 14 August 2012 Time: 14h00 Place: Staffroom
> It is towards the end of the school day (school ends at 14h30), and teachers generally come into the staffroom during this time. Mrs Ngema enters the staffroom and heads for her space at the far end of the table (Teachers have staked out their 'own' spaces) where she sits down and proceeds to mark her learners work, sometimes making comments about a learner whose book she is marking. When she brings up Mandisa's name, I asume that her book is being checked. I hear her say 'This girl….she has got so much attitude'. Another teacher agrees, saying 'Its all about boyfriends.' Another teacher adds: 'Ja. Teenagers. They are turning that age. They change, in the beginning of the year they were fine but as the year goes by they start to change, they start enjoying the [boys] attention.' Mrs Ngema continues: 'that Mandisa's case…she is a well structured girl…it is becoming dangerous now. The girls are challenging the boys by going and kissing them…kissing, kissing and there is something that is rising from these boys. They are grown up boys'

Mrs Ngema's conduct towards Mandisa shows how teachers function as agents of patriarchy and illustrates the oppression that learners experience in the unequal power balance in the teacher-learner relationship. It reinforces, too, the double standards that plagued my respondents at the school, in that Mandisa's boyfriend was free from Mrs Ngema's mocking and taunting, for example, while Mandisa was targeted.

This hostility and dislike that Mandisa expressed towards her teacher is further illustrated in how she recounts that she just "looked at mam" and in her questioning of Mrs Ngema's accountability in deferring rebuke to her. Mandisa's mention of holding eye contact with Mrs Ngema is significant as it indicates a challenge to Mrs Ngema's authority and insults, as well as her efforts to reject what she believes is unfair discriminatory treatment towards her and to reassert her presence within the classroom and amongst her peers. Chubin (2014) in her autoethnography argued that maintaining silence is simultaneously a display of oppression

and power. Chubin also states that silence should be also be interpreted as a person's active will to reject unjust treatment. In this sense, silence is viewed as a form of language that is both a response to and a critique of institutional powers (Foucault, 1980).This resonates here: Mrs Ngema's shows her discomfort in her response: "don't look at me like that". However, Mandisa 's response, "looking down" and "playing with her fingers", show that, despite the bravery of her challenge, Mrs Ngema did indeed succeed in shaming her. She also sent out a clear signal that contestations of her authority would be dealt with seriously—in this case, with her taunts.

According to Mandisa, Mrs Ngema's badgering of her made her so angry that she felt predisposed to violence. Murphy et al. (2013: 599) found that when girls in her study responded with anger, as Mandisa does, it was an expression of girls' resistance and agency in their efforts to "self-advocate" in order to reject "inequitable treatment and assert their presence". This observation resonates with Mandisa's attempts to vindicate herself:

> Mrs Ngema always does something that makes you feel ashamed and embarrassed in front of the class. Mrs Ngema was like… if you talk in class she would say that you want attention, so that the boy can see you, and I was like 'Oh!' And everyone was like… 'aaaaahhhh!' She makes you feel left out. Mrs Ngema [anger and strong dislike emanates from Mandisa]… Mrs Ngema acted like she has never been there. That day I wanted to put Mrs Ngema on the wall and [Mandisa punches her palm with her fist], I wanted to hit her. I was so angry!

Unlike Mandisa's seemingly passive resistance, as the following extract shows, Thiele challenges her marginalisation within the classroom by verbally expressing her disapproval in a way that forces Mrs Ngema to reflect on her own sexuality during her youth. In so doing, Thiele reinstates both herself and Mandisa by emphasising that girls are sexual beings and that their sexuality is developmentally normal despite her (and the school's) effort taint their sexuality:

> Thiele: You know Mrs Ngema, every time, every time [Thiele speaks with a lot of anger and animosity] the boy you were with on the stage or if you are in another class, when you do something wrong, it's like you are his mother because she comes to you and say 'Hey, this one did that and that and that' and you… like

> in your heart and mind… ask ‘What must I do?’ All the time we tell Mrs Ngema we don’t like it but she says ‘Oh jaaaaaaaaa! You want them [the boys] to notice you’. And one day I actually back-chatted her. I said ‘Mam, you’ve been there, you’ve done that, so stop talking like this is a new thing!’
> PJ: What did she then do?
> Thiele: She said that I was rude, that now I have a boyfriend I became a rude girl, and I, like, look at her and she, like, shouts ‘Don’t show me that attitude!’ and I’m like ‘Oh! Oh! Go tell your son!’ and I’m sitting down. Mrs Ngema, she must go. Someone must fire her!

Thiele’s disclosure that she “back-chatted” the teacher suggests an awareness that she was breaching the learner/teacher relationship boundaries by challenging Mrs Ngema’s authority within the classroom and the school. Mrs Ngema considers Thiele “rude”, and that her rejoinder is both as disrespectful and highly irregular. Thiele’s silent response “I just looked at her” invokes Mrs Ngema’s anger, but Thiele is undaunted, as is illustrated in her assertion that she sat down after she had had her say. I believe that Thiele’s spirited exchange also emanates from the fact that she was not a prefect and therefore, unlike Mandisa (who was a prefect), whose response was less aggressive, she did not have any vested interest in her position within the school.

These incidents suggest that the relationship between the girls and the teacher was extremely damaging in nature. In attempting to suppress the girls, Mrs Ngema deliberately misinterprets their concerns, dismissing them as deliberate attempts to attract the boys in the classroom. Later in this chapter I show that it is unlikely that the girls would deliberately seek attention knowing that the boys would take it as an opportunity to mock and ridicule them. The girls’ constant efforts to establish their autonomy and to upset inequalities within the classroom is evident through how they question the teacher, whom they see as marginalising and isolating them in the classroom. In the following section I further explore how girls were marginalised during teaching, and how teachers responded to their complaints of boys harassing them.

8.3. Girls’ experiences of discrimination during teaching time

In one focus group discussion, Paleesa, Loanda, Lettie and Azande explained that their verbal retaliation to incidents of harassment perpetrated by boys during class was often

misconstrued as misbehaviour and that they were blamed for provoking the boys. They also explained that when they attempted to defend themselves, teachers downplayed or discounted their complaints in favour of the boys. According to my respondents, this was because the boys were able to manipulate the teachers into believing that the girls had provoked them, that they (the girls) enjoyed the harassment, and that, because of this, the teachers felt the girls were lying when they reported misconduct. When the girls tried to disagree and explain the true situation, they were accused of having "attitude"—which they affirmed that they do have, and while is clear from the focus group discussion that this was their resistance to be being misunderstood, the teachers interpreted it as being disrespectful. This is problematic in three ways: first, the teachers' conviction that the girls are responsible for the harassment they receive is in itself problematic because it further entrenches the girls' marginalisation within the school. Second, it normalises the boys' harassing behaviour by endorsing the hegemonic male script that both exalts and normalises male sexual entitlement; and third, it draws attention to the oppressive nature of power by demonstrating how, although the girls use their voices to resist, teachers use their authority to reinforce the girls' oppression within the classroom. Thus, whilst the girls are agentic, as seen in their efforts to use their voices to resist, this agency is 'lite' (Bhana, 2017) because their efforts to regain power are obstructed by the teachers' continual perpetuation of unequal gender norms. It shows that classroom discipline practices are one dimensional in that the dominant ideologies pertaining to gender norms remain unquestioned.

Here is another extract from a focus group discussion after the group discussion about their teachers:

> PJ: When you are having lessons, do the boys interfere with you?
> (Many)Yes.
> Paleesa: And if it is a teacher that they take advantage of, then they will do it in that teacher's time. And if you report it the teacher will say that you are lying, that you were just entertaining it.
> Loanda: Attitude!
> PJ: Do you have attitude?
> Azande: I get angry.
> Lettie: I have, mam.

Loanda: When you are being lied to and then they don't want to hear your story and then you are like *nkeke, nkeke* [no, no] and they say that is attitude.
Lettie: Yes.
PJ: Why do you get cross?
Azande: Like one of the female teachers, mam, when you are trying to explain she just says 'shut up! I don't want to hear your story!' and then what will we do?
Lettie: Ow, mam! They don't want to listen to our story. They are lying that this one did this, this one did this, and they take the side of the one that is clever and they know that they are good.

Similarly, Corbett and Warrington (2013) study conducted with 11-12 year olds in Antigua and Barbuda in the Caribbean found that when girls attempted to evade sexual harassment within the classroom, they were castigated for disrupting the class. Skelton (2001) argues that such reprimand is located within a control agenda that underscores teaching and learning. Reprimands directed at girls who leave their places during teaching time neglects the cause of disruption, implying that gender and sexual harassment are not considered as serious issues within the classroom and possibly amongst young children. This argument seems to have great resonance both in the Antiguan context (Cobbet and Warrington, 2013) and at Westhills Primary School, where maintaining classroom control was a prime concern amongst teachers.

According to Lettie, her verbal retaliation towards the boys' harassment of her heralds 'trouble' for her and not for the boys. Similarly, Keddie (2009) study with 14 year old girls in Tasmania, Australia, also found that teachers disregarded girls' experiences and complaints and believed girls to be responsible for harassing behaviour. She states that subjective discipline practices and responses within institutional settings like the school reinforce, collude and support the perpetration of unequal gender relations. Robinson (2005) explained that institutional responses create and sustain an environment that is conducive to supporting the discourses of masculine entitlement that reinforce sexual harassment as an effective resource for boys to access power over their female peers and teachers.

Paleesa and Loanda also expressed concerns that they, too, were discriminated against during class. According to them, teachers focus their teaching towards the front of the classroom and at the girls who are, or appear to be, more interested or clever. During one of my classroom observations, I observed that both boys and girls were paired together in seating arrangement.

The quieter girls occupied mostly the first half of the classroom however, in one of the classrooms, I did notice that Thiele sat in the front of the classroom. I found the classroom arrangements very contradictory. For example, one teacher explained that they were paired to reduce talking during lessons. Yet the girls' concentration was still compromised because some of the boys whom they were seated next to, interfered with them. Also, I noted that boys harassed the girls covertly, and if there was no evidence, the girls complaints were dealt with a warning to boys to stop such behaviour or the girls were blamed for provocation. The 'clevers', as they called them, were always placed at the front of the classroom while other girls had to sit at the back, where they were mocked and irritated by some boys:

> Loanda: Mam, some [teachers] don't [give] support even in school work because they support only those who are clever. They take them from the back and let them sit in the front and they will talk soft. If you say 'I cannot hear', they say 'I don't give a damn'. How can you still be learning if you start talking and the boys will start irritating you?
> Paleesa: And mocking and all the clevers they will sit in the front only. How can you learn if they are mocking you?
> Loanda: And when you tell the teacher you didn't understand the sum and then they will say 'You was not listening to me' but you are very busy focussing but the boys keep on and then you didn't follow the sum and then like 'Sir, I didn't understand this' or 'Mam, I didn't understand this. Can you please explain this to me?'
> Many voices: No! You was talking! You was talking!

It seems, from the girls' description, that boys generally occupied the back of the class. This raises questions about classroom discipline practices and the culture of teaching and learning that prevails within the classroom. According to Paleesa teachers rewarded the 'clever' girls with front seats because they displayed characteristics such as passivity, quietness, obedience and politeness. The teacher's decision to keep such girls at the front of the class, however, reinforced gender inequalities that were operating in the learning environment, whilst also suggesting that there are 'rewards' for girls who conform to a stereotyped model or emphasised model of femininity (see, too, Connell, 2000), thus drawing attention to the problematic nature of school discipline, which itself is gendered (Murphy et al., 2013; Corbett & Warrington, 2013; De Shong, 2015). Morojele (2013) conducted in Lesotho with

grade seven learners aged 11-15 found that negative attitudes on the part of teaching staff came together to repudiate girls' experiences of sexual harassment in the school. Morojele noted that girls who went for food before the boys or went for refills (seconds) were castigated, ridiculed and called derogatory names (see chapter 3, p.73). These nuanced forms of violence—which included refuting girls' experiences of being harassed by boys, relegating them to the back of the classroom, denying them the right to query their marks, and calling their complaints 'lies', or suggesting that the girls themselves were responsible for what had occurred—connects to the everyday gender inequalities that girls are subjected to in Westhills Primary School. Thus, the violence that the girls experienced was not only verbal and physical (from the boys), but was also nuanced within authoritative relations in the school. Bhana (2013) has brought this important aspect of school violence into focus by arguing for more rigorous research in all levels of schooling in order to uncover the multiple and nuanced dimensions of violence.

According to my respondents, they also experienced discrimination in other areas of their schooling. One such instance, described by Thiele, related to her academic work. According to Thiele, Mrs Ngema tried to discount her concerns regarding discrepancies in the marks she obtained in a test. Her questioning of the marks lead to more tension between her and Mrs Ngema, who possibly interpreted Thiele's questioning as a questioning of her authority. Thiele's efforts to verify her marks, and the subsequent response from Mrs Ngema, is a good illustration of how teachers exerted their power within the context of teaching and learning. Thiele's questioning concerning the accuracy of her marks is met with hostility and anger suggests that the classroom can become a hostile environment for girls who challenge authority. Thiele's and Mandisa's response, both active and passive, shows how they attempt to vindicate themselves. It also shows their gender norms are used to regulate, control and discipline the girls. Since these girls are perceived to have boyfriends, they are perceived/presumed to have breached norms surrounding primary school girls' passive sexuality and are accordingly disciplined through subjective means rather than checking her marks. Audrey Osler (2006) study in London with 14 and 15 year old girls illustrated the relationship between teachers' beliefs and academic progress, saying that girls who transgressed normative gendered behaviours were more likely to underachieve. Osler asserts that unfair and unjust education practices are a form of systemic violence that contributes to girls' marginalisation and compromises their entrance and success in high schools, tertiary institutions and in the employment sector later in life. The marginalisation of school girls can

thus have far-reaching consequences throughout their lives. The girls challenge to their teachers demonstrates how oppression produces resistance (Foucault, 1978) both active and passive and is a good example of how the girls work to advocate for themselves. Thiele pursues in the discussion, saying that Mrs Ngema has been there and done that (implying that she too had one been a young girl who has interests in boys too) this does not sit well with Mrs Ngema. Thiele's resists oppression, indicating that this is not a new thing (having a boyfriend) and therefore does not see her questioning as an effort to destabilize the class or upset her teacher. She may also be trying to reassert herself in the classroom and get back at Mrs Ngema for humiliating her by picking on her and her boyfriend.

> Thiele: One day I was complaining about marks and she was like… [she was saying] I was showing attitude 'Oh-ho! You showing attitude at me. You think I am like Njabulo [Thiele's boyfriend]? You think I am Njabulo?' she said. 'You are back chatting, you are back chatting,' and I said 'No mam, it's because of what you are saying.'

Mrs Ngema's rebuke extended beyond the classroom setting as she drew Thiele's boyfriend into it. This further reinforced Thiele's challenge to passivity as it implied that she also transgresses gendered norms in her relationship by seeking to assert her voice. In attempting to suppress the girls, Mrs Ngema deliberately misinterprets their concerns, dismissing their questions as deliberate attempts to attract boys. However, their questioning could also be interpreted as efforts to re-establish themselves and their autonomy, and to reject disparities and inequalities within the classroom.

8.4. Blaming girls for boys sexually harassing behaviour

In Chapter six I presented girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence within the school. Their experiences suggested that the school was unstaffed at certain times of the day, for example in the mornings when learners reported to school, and during changes of class when there was no teacher present in the classroom. Sometimes teachers leave their classes to go to the office, or to talk to the teacher in the next door classroom, or a teacher might report late to class or the need for a relief teacher might have been overlooked. My respondents' narratives suggested that their classes lacked teachers more regularly than this, however, and this created opportunities for the perpetration of sexually harassing behaviour since it would have

been highly unlikely that the boys would touch and fondle the girls in the teacher's presence, nor would they have been able to hold a girls face to their private parts, or simulate sex with the desk (see Chapter 6, p. 143).

In this section I examine the girls' reports of their teachers' responses to their complaints of sexual harassment, including responses to their requests for assistance and attention. According to Buhle and St'bile, they verbally resisted the harassment that they experienced, however, their screaming was often misconstrued as unruly behaviour by neighbouring teachers. Buhle described how, when teachers heard her voice, she was called out and reprimanded for being 'rude' and 'ill-mannered' and her explanations went unheeded:

> Buhle: And that's how the class makes noise. The girls screaming!
> PJ: So when you're screaming it's not because you're behaving badly but because you're being harassed?
> Buhle: Yes we are being harassed. And when they [teachers] heard my voice, the teacher calls me outside and says that I am rude, ill mannered.
> St'bile: We start screaming: 'leave me, leave me!' and they [teachers] hear your voices and then [say] 'You! You! You are talking!' And you try to explain and she just says 'Shut up! I don't want to hear your story!' and then what will we do?

Of grave concern is the girls' assertions that, once again, teachers discounted their behaviour as deliberate and therefore deserving of the consequences (harassment). My respondents displayed strength: They resisted by using their voices and their feet (by leaving the classroom) and strove to contest the inequalities present in the classroom and elsewhere in the school. They challenged their teachers, but, as with the girls in the study by Murphy et al. (2013), using their voices (screaming) did not empower them, and leaving their classroom did not protect them either because they were subsequently blamed for wrongdoing—and consigning this blame to the girls was an indication that sexual harassment was not taken seriously by the school. Murphy et al. study in 25 schools in Southeastern United States concluded that found that while learning to use their own voices was an indication of finding their personal autonomy, it did not empower the girls as their voices did not result in change. Instead, they were further marginalised in the school, as they were seen as rude, lying and unruly girls. This resonates with my findings, as does Muhanguzi's (2011) findings in her

research with girls, 12 to 17 years old in Uganda that the school's sceptical response to girls' complaints of sexual violence showed that complaints were not taken seriously. The girls in Muhanguzi's study reported that their teachers' disbelief resulted in their complaints being ignored. Instead, they were blamed for the bad behaviour—just like the girls in my study. Such responses, as I will show, stagnate efforts to achieve gender equality both in school and in society more generally.

According to three other respondents, Mpho, JJ and Lettie, their attempts to alert teachers to their plight, and their requests for help from neighbouring teachers, were also dismissed. Instead, they were asked not to disturb the class. The girls also said that their lack of faith in reporting their experiences rested on their teachers' offhand responses to their complaints—sometimes, for example, a teacher would indicate that they were too busy to deal with the girls' complaints. Mpho, J.J and Lettie described another situation when they were harassed by boys:

> PJ: Was there no teacher around at that time?
> Mpho : No.
> JJ: There are in the staffroom. And even if we tell them, they will not do anything.
> PJ: Did you not go to the next door teacher's class and say what is happening?
> JJ: That is disturbing, Mam, they say: 'you are disturbing my lesson. Just go! You are disturbing, disturbing! We are busy!' The teachers don't support us, that's the problem. That's why we don't tell the teachers. They don't give us support.
> Lettie: It's just the same, Mam, it's just the same. Even if you just... [She shakes her head]. I cannot go.
> JJ: Sometimes when you tell the teachers they say: 'aai, no!' They say you are lying. 'This one lies. This person is a good person. You are lying! We are busy!'

Lettie' words: "It's just the same, Mam, it's just the same" gripped at the girls' emotions in the focus group discussion as they listened to other girls speak about their frustrations with their teachers. However, their silence also served to legitimise the boys' behaviour: According to the girls, if the alleged perpetrator was deemed a 'good person' their complaints were rejected as lies. Yet they had had plenty of bad experiences when, for example, a 'good

boy', a friend, simulated sex with his desk in their presence, or when a boy pushed a girl's head onto his private parts while other 'good' boys stood by and laughed, or when boys discovered that a girl was menstruating and told her she was smelling of fish—while other boys stood around laughing. Thus the word 'good' becomes subjective in its application.

Having their complaints trivialised, and their fear of being blamed for wrongdoing, silences the girls and, in turn, silences both their experiences and the teachers' contribution to their experiences of gender violence within the school. Hence, Lettie, Mpho and JJ felt that they had to protect themselves with little help from those in authority positions (the principal and their teachers). The teachers' attitudes thus served to remind the girls of their gatekeeper role and highlighted how there were consequences for transgressing the boundaries of the good girl/bad girl dichotomy. Similarly, a study conducted in California with girls (14-18 years old) by Leaper, Brown and Ayres (2013) reported that the girls in their study believed that they lacked the support of the school, and were therefore less likely to approach teachers for help. The study found that over 80% of their respondents indicated that they had not reported their experiences of sexual harassment.

In Chapter 6 I discussed how the word 'bitch' was used as an instrument by both boys and girls to shame and denigrate girls who were believed to have overstepped or transgressed 'sexual innocence'. In Travis County, Texas, the study conducted with 14-16 year old girls by Summit, Kalmuss, DeAtley & Levack (2016), explored how sexualized labelling was used as a mechanism to enforce proscriptions concerning female sexuality. These authors concluded that girls who have been given such labels become less valued within the classroom and within the school itself. This became evident in my study, too, as is clear from this extract from a discussion with St'bile and Lettie. When I asked the girls why did they not leave the classroom and stand on the balcony in order to evade boys' harassing behaviour they answered:

> St'bile: The time you stand on the balcony, the teachers downstairs see you and say that was the one that was walking around with the boys. If the teachers see you with the boys in our class, they start insulting you like 'you like boys' and they swear us.
>
> PJ: Like what?

> Lettie: Like ‘shit’. Some say it exactly like the word. They call us bitch. There’s one teacher that swore at me and still today I hate her and I was very angry.

Teachers are thus also involved in labelling girls in ways that both demean them as people and pollutes their sexualities. The teachers’ use of the words ‘bitch’ and ‘shit’ appears to be motivated by a desire to punish and humiliate the girls because of their sexuality and because of their sexual interest and their boldness. The words ‘bitch’ and ‘shit’ are particularly degrading when used by people who are tasked with the education and welfare of the girls. Accusations such as ‘you like boys’ showed that girls’ gender and sexuality was narrowly policed within the virgin/whore dichotomy. Calling the girls ‘shit’ and ‘bitch’ demonstrated how the girls’ sexual boldness and sexual reputation within the school disadvantaged them within the schooling context—and reminds us that they had failed to adhere to gender norms. Being called ‘bitch’ reinforced feelings of shame and deterred girls from seeking help in school. It also compromised the dignity of the girls and the respect that they are supposed to show towards their teachers. This raises new questions, for example, one might ask if boys’ engagement in sexually harassing behaviour towards the girls was associated with them witnessing the deprecating actions of the teachers towards the girls? Did the boys get away with the harassment because they had witnessed teachers showing disregard and disrespect for the girls?

Loanda’s explanation encompassed the other participants’ frustration with the principal and the teachers, who accused them of enticing boys by wearing shorts and tee-shirts, yet there was no alternative dress code for physical education (PE) lessons, for example. The prevalence of the myth that girls who dress in what is believed to be sexually provoking clothing that invites unwanted attention and sexual violence has been well documented (see, for example, Jewkes & Morrell, 2011; Rahima & Liston, 2011). Given that the teachers articulated this belief, it was unsurprising that boys also believed that girls who dressed in shorts were inviting harassment. Since the attire is necessary for PE, Loanda and St’bile abided by the dress code and accepted the harassment as inevitable. Their resignation resonated in their response that they could not fight over this every day. The girls’ lack of confidence in the school authorities was also derived from the principal’s response to their complaints, as reported by the girls:

St’bile: We [were] in the classroom, Mam, and then there was no teacher at that moment and there were two boys at the back with the books there and I was going to take a NS [Natural Science] book when one of the boys touched me and I said ‘Stop it!’ and then he did it again and I said ‘What are you doing?’ and he told me that I am touching you and I pushed him and we started fighting. And we went to the principal and the principal said that I should not be wearing shorts and tee shirt because boys will do that to me every time.

Loanda: But PE is part of our uniform.

PJ: What happened after that?

St’bile: The principal scolded the boy and we went back to class.

PJ: Did he do anything else after that?

St’bile: Yes. He came and even now, Mam, the same thing every time (meaning that the touching continued).

Loanda: Teachers are scolding us about our PE [clothing], saying that we will get suspended. And calling our parents for wearing PE [clothes].

Loanda: For wearing PE [clothes]! They say that after school we are going for the boys for dates, [at] PL [a local high school], Mam.

St’bile: Just imagine. Our teachers are telling us that we are going to PL. That we have a date because we are wearing PE clothes.

The teachers’ view that their PE attire was sexually provocative was not only problematic for the girls, but also for the boys, some of whom, it seemed, could not be held responsible for controlling their own sexual desires.

Kuhle and Paleesa also believed that their resistance, and their attempts to challenge perceptions regarding their reputations (that they were promiscuous and argumentative towards their teachers), contributed to the overall discrimination against and labelling of them within the school. They had had no altercation with some teachers, yet discrimination directed towards them emanated through staffroom talk. They believe that some teachers were predisposed to discussing them in the staffroom which resulted in preconceived ideas and general agreement that they, and not the boys, were to be blamed. The girls argued that there was thus collusion in this discrimination. There were always sad moments, in the focus group discussions, when the girls spoke about how they were not able to defend themselves when this transpired. Their voices were strong as they spoke about what they believed was

unfair discrimination against them, when they spoke about the staffroom gossip, they knew they were defenceless in that they had no voice: They had no choice but to put up with discrimination and stigma even if they had had no prior encounters with other educators:

> Kuhle: And then she will go the staffroom and talk and say that name and the teachers will not like you.
> Paleesa: I don't feel comfortable because when you tell a teacher something, Mam, they go and tell other teachers and stuff in the staffroom, then those teachers tell the other teachers and then they start to explode the whole thing and then when you do something they tease you.

This also shows how gender inequality was sustained within the school. It suggests that within the school culture teachers were inclined to act in ways that reflected their shared values regarding gender norms and appropriate behaviour, and that this contributed to the structural oppression of the girls. The unquestioning, authoritarian and victimising behaviour of the other teachers reinforced the girls' subordination and marginalisation, allowing for demonstrations of authority, such as punishments for failing to adhere to the proscribed terrain of socially constructed gender norms. Whilst being marginalised, isolated and discriminated against were key features of the punishment that the girls endured, a more physical form of punishment was also instigated against the girls. In the following section I focus on how insults and corporal punishment were used as a means to punish Paleesa for infractions such as talking in class.

8.5. Girls experiences of corporal punishment

According to Paleesa, she bore the brunt of a teacher's anger whenever a misdemeanour was committed within the classroom. Paleesa related an incident in which she alleged that she and another girl received a beating from a teacher. Paleesa accepted the beating and was undaunted by the teacher's actions. She understood that she was seen as a 'soft target'. However, she refused to position herself as a victim, resisting demands that being a good girl meant being passive, demure and asexual:

> Paleesa: There's this teacher…she hates me. Somebody made a sound, she asked who made the sound, and the others pointed to me. She had a pipe, she hit

wherever she like, she hit me with the pipe. The others used to blame me and she used to hit me with the pipe.

PJ: Did anyone else get into trouble, or get a hiding from the teacher?

Paleesa: I got into trouble, Minenhle got into trouble.

PJ: What about the boys. Did they get into trouble?

Paleesa: Two boys got into trouble.

PJ: Did they get a hiding too?

Paleesa: No. The teacher used to call us asses and when we say 'Ow' she says 'Did you know what ass means?' I lifted up my hand and said 'It's a donkey'. And she said 'Oh I know that you looked in the dictionary.'

The use of corporal punishment in schools has been well documented. Dunne (2007)in her study in Ghana and Botswana argued that corporal punishment can be seen as encouraging and validating violence towards girls, since boys and girls may read that violence towards 'problematic' girls is legitimate and necessary. Paleesa's revelation that the boys were not subjected to physical beating is worrying, too, as this has the potential to send conflicting messages to both girls and boys in the classroom. Dunne (2007) and Morrell (2001) also raised concerns that the use of corporal punishment has the potential to set in place enduring patterns of abuse in a girl's life as the gendered use of corporal punishment reinforces unequal gender relations that perpetuates notions of male superiority and dominance. While there is a danger of boys interpreting the punishment of girls as necessary in order to show dominance, it also teaches girls that they should be submissive and unquestioning.

The abuse of power and authority on Paleesa was also evident. Paleesa challenged the teacher by showing she understood the context of the teacher's use of 'ass'. The teacher made a feeble attempt to reassert herself, but it is clear that Paleesa could not have looked up the word in the dictionary given her immediate response. She knew the word—and she also knows that she is labelled 'stupid'. The teacher's use of corporal punishment can be interpreted as a means to coerce Paleesa into a desired behaviour. It is tied in with the school's construction as a patriarchal institution within which teachers were carrying out their mandate to mould and condition the girls (and boys) to behave in ways that synchronised with socially and culturally accepted gender norms. Teachers therefore adopted masculinist behaviour (physical violence) to show authority and power, and teachers—especially female

teachers—colluded in the girls' subordination, thus helping to erode the efficacy of policy and regulations designed to eradicate gender inequality within the school.

The girls also spoke about another incident that had occurred in their classroom. A female teacher had informed a learner that she was fed up with her behaviour and that she was going to report her to her parent. According to Mbali, the learner responded: "You can do what you want to do, I don't give a damn!' The teacher subsequently asked the learner to leave the classroom. This incident was repeated by many girls, and their approval for the girl who challenged the teacher was palpable:

> Mbali: That other girl wanted to hit Mrs Nene. I wouldn't say the name. Mrs Nene asked the girl to get out of the class and she was dragging her feet and walking slowly and Mrs Nene pushed her, and then she said 'why are you pushing me? Why are you pushing me? and Mrs Nene did like this [Mbali raises her fist] and the girl did it back, and Mrs Nene took off with the girl, and Mrs Nene pushed up her sleeves and said 'Let's go outside!'

Buhle also constructed the same teacher as cruel and unkind. Indeed, according to the girls, the teacher resorted to violence even if they did not produce their homework:

> Buhle: She is not a kind person. She always hits us in class, Mam. Mam, she is not kind. Other teachers are kind. If you didn't do his or her work they tell you that you must bring it tomorrow. Mrs Nene hits us with anything that is in her hand. Just like today, she hit someone with the book in class.
> PJ: Why does she hit you?
> Buhle: I don't know, Mam, when she gets irritated.
> PJ: What irritates her?
> Buhle: Like when someone is joking, she gets irritated, she hits all of us.
> PJ: Have you all tried talking to her?
> Buhle: Aaaai, Mam! We are scared! Like the other day, she hit the boy in class, and when that boy's father was here she said she didn't do that, and then the boy said that he can call the witness and she said no, [he] mustn't call them just because she didn't do that. Aaaai, Mam! She's a person who gets irritated fast.

This excerpt draws attention to the teacher's stronghold of fear that permeates the classroom. The girls recognised the power that the teacher wielded over the class, and they feared the repercussions of reporting her as they were aware that the teacher would deny any such incident. In this way, the teacher ensured the girls' and other learners' silence. This suggests a tense classroom environment in which authoritarian power was tangible.

St'bile recounted a teacher's response to her complaint that the chalkboard duster hit her instead of the intended target. According to St'bile, the teacher dismissed her complaint by responding that she was equally deserving of punishment:

> JJ: Some teachers don't even play. They take the duster and throw it at us. They don't care. Whew! [JJ demonstrates the duster flying through the air and expresses her disbelief].
> St'bile: And when it hit someone else! Sometimes it hit me here [she points to her shoulder] and I said 'Sir, you hit me not her!' and Sir says 'you are also disrespectful!'
> JJ: Yes and [the teacher is] like 'I don't give a damn!'
> St'bile: And they put the ruler together and hit you.
> PJ: Do you complain about being hit? Have you complained about being hit?
> JJ: No! Who would we complain to, Mam? Because the Principal also slaps us.

Once again, the girls' responses highlight their lack of faith in the reporting structures within the school. Hence, they accepted the teacher's uncaring attitude towards them for infractions such as talking in class, or forgetting their book at home, or for not doing their homework. It is, however, quite possible that the girls recognised that their behaviour challenged the teacher, which might also explain their silence surrounding the teacher's use of corporal punishment. In this way, the structural power of the school enabled the teacher to gain learner compliance. Whilst the girls resented teachers' use of corporal punishment, they were more accepting of male teachers using violence on boys. Here is an extract from a conversation with Paleesa:

> Paleesa: Mr Mahen is not that kind of a person. Yes, Mam, he does wrong things. Like today he hit Lefa with the bat. Now it's open here [she points to the eye area]. Now it's open here. He has a wound.

PJ: With a bat! What kind of bat?

Paleesa: A tennis bat, and Lefa said ‘Look what you did to me!’ and he didn’t even say sorry.

PJ: Why did he hit Lefa?

Paleesa: Sir was teaching and Lefa was saying something in Zulu and Sir, he don’t know Zulu and the other boys were laughing at Sir.

According to Paleesa this teacher was ‘different’ as he did not hit or threaten the girls. “He is not like that,” she said, and this suggests a complicity with male violence and power. Paleesa’s acceptance of the teacher’s violence to the boy suggests that she is buying into a discourse in which violence is condoned as being necessary to exert dominance and control, and to ensure compliance. It is also possible that the girls tolerate this teacher’s use of corporal punishment because he ignored their escapades with their boyfriends.

Field notes: Date: 06 September 2012 Time: 11h30 Place: Westhills Primary School

One day I myself went to his class and saw Thiele sitting at the front of the classroom. She had her head on the desk, a big towel wrapped around her waist, and a head scarf wrapped around her head. I was puzzled and asked the teacher why she was dressed so. He replied that she refused to remove either item, saying that she was feeling cold. He appeared quite irritated. Clearly, Thiele had challenged his sense of authority and he perceived her refusal to remove the head scarf and the blanket as an act of defiance. Later [12h00], I passed Thiele’s classroom and saw her sitting in the corridor, legs outstretched. I asked her why she was seated there. She replied that Sir had sent her out. I asked her teacher and he replied that she was not interested in the lesson. In order for him to continue with his lesson undisturbed, he excluded her from the classroom.

Thiele’s exclusion from the classroom shows how exclusionary disciplinary practices were instituted against girls who challenged their teachers. Furthermore, it also showed how Thiele, who displayed characteristics that opposed dominant gender constructions, for example, passivity, contributed to her marginalization within the classroom.

8.6. Conclusion

In this chapter I sought to address some of the gaps that Bhana (2013) has identified in researching gender violence in schools. Many studies conducted in South African schools view black girls' femininity as 'pitiful' (Bhana, 2013), sexually lacking, and powerless against a violent, strong, and virile masculinity. Bhana shows that we have yet to understand how school girls mediate, contest, and reproduce sexual harassment and gender violence: Gender violence extends beyond the school and is orchestrated by social cultural norms—including the socioeconomic conditions that create and uphold gender power asymmetries in institutions such as schools. Efforts to combat gender violence in schools must therefore take these influences into account.

The focus of this chapter has been my respondents' experiences of gender violence whereby their teachers displayed and engaged in discriminatory and harassing behaviour towards them in the classroom. My analysis of the focus group discussions revealed that teachers' knowledge of the girls' involvement in heterosexual relationships was core to the discrimination they experienced from their teachers. This setin motion a series of consequences virtually all of which were shaped by structural power within the school and within the sociocultural construction of gender that extend beyond the school. The girls' experiences, I argue, were therefore shaped by their teachers' unequal gender beliefs, which in turn were rooted in sociocultural norms that both prescribe and champion normative gendered behaviours for girls (and boys).

The impact of these influences on the teachers and learners, and the teaching and learning environment, is visible in the gender violence and sexual harassment that occurred in the classroom and at other sites in the school. For instance, girls were harassed by their teachers who punished them for transgressing idealistic notions of schoolgirl innocence and passivity. This is further demonstrated in the trivialisation of and apathy towards the girls' experiences and complaints of sexual harassment.

I am not alone in drawing such a conclusion. As I outlined in this chapter, other studies all had similar findings in their varied studies (Cobbett & Warrington, 2013; Keddie, 2009; Leaper, Brown & Ayres, 2013; Murphy et al., 2013; Morojele, 2013). Morojele concluded that such negative attitudes by teaching staff come together to repudiate girls' experiences of

sexual harassment in the school. Schools are institutions where change can and must take place, and teachers' attitudes, neglect, complicity and, indeed, engagement in unequal practices within the school lays the ground for girls' exposure to gender violence extending beyond the school into the greater community. The teachers themselves are therefore conduits through which gender disparities are enforced and maintained.

The education system in South Africa has evolved over time, and laws have been passed to address problems and inequalities (The South African Schools Act [SASA], 1996; White Paper on Education and Training [DoE], 1995). The South African Schools Act is intended to ensure that all learners have access to and enjoy free and fair education that is free of discrimination and violence in any form. It was therefore disturbing to find in my fieldwork that gender violence and corporal punishment was still being perpetrated by some teachers at Westhills Primary School. The silence around corporal punishment was equally disturbing as it points to the fear that permeates the school. The law sets out guiding principles for educators to identify and eradicate gender and sexual violence in schools, whether perpetrated by teachers or learners, yet, as this chapter has shown, in practice there is still much to be done.

Core to the girls' experiences of discrimination and harassment is their rejection of passive sexualities. The girls' experiences of sexual harassment, and the teachers' lack of interest in addressing it, suggest that whilst the education system has evolved over time, the violence that the girls experience is situated within a larger sociocultural construction of gender that has its roots in patriarchy which, whilst being malleable, remains steadfastly robust and resilient. Teachers' attitudes, my research found, were restrictive, and there was a disunion between policy and teachers' practice, ethics and values.

The frequent absence of teacher presence within the classroom also increased and exacerbated the incidence of sexual harassment. HRW (2001), Haffeejee (2006) and Burton and Leoshut (2013) also found that much of the more extreme sexual violence experienced by schoolgirls actually takes place in empty classrooms or in toilets on the school grounds. Gender violence is, however, clearly not only physical: it is deeply nuanced in different forms of discrimination, such as in learner achievement or neglecting to address issues that the girls raise as important—such as boys' harassing behaviour, gossip, and name calling. This suggests that the impact of the South African White Paper on Education and Training is being

stymied by entrenched gender inequality. Girls' rejection of passive sexualities, and their rejection of unfair practices, I argue, is core to their experiences of discrimination and harassment. Paradoxically, though, in rejecting passive sexualities, the girls are helping to address gender inequalities and discrimination in the stymied White Paper.
It is worth considering what resilience means in the context of the girls' experiences. In Westhills school, showing resistance and showing agency was situated in the girls 'chatting back', 'screaming', or walking out of harassing situations—all of which are also agentic practices and are necessary to avoid victimisation and harassment. Yet, the girls' resistance gives rise to pugnacious reactions in their educators—such as the teacher who described Mandisa as a 'wife' and the one who suggested 'rolling the sleeves up' to fight with the learner.

My findings in this chapter also suggest that the teachers were influenced by theories of childhood development in that the girls were constructed as too young to express their sexuality or their agency and autonomy. However, drawing on feminist theories (Butler, 1990; MacNaughton 2000; Stacy 1988), I have sought to argue that the girls are active social beings who have the capacity to act and do, to make decisions, and to contest gender inequality. To be seen as 'good girls' by their teachers, the girls have to show a lack of agency—which, in both the short- and the long-term, increases their vulnerability to sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Thus, I argue that the teaching attitudes at schools such as Westhills raise big ethical questions. I work at Westhills. I am situated within the school. I work with the teachers and I know the learners. While it is important that I share my findings with the Principal and alert her to the girls' experiences of corporal punishment, unstaffed classrooms and the neglect of girls' complaints, it is also evident that this is insufficient. What is required is a rigorous and concerted effort on the part of all teaching staff to examine our teaching practices, our accountability and our integrity in relation to our jobs as teachers and our ethics of care towards the learners. More importantly, it requires an analysis of our own gendered behaviours and beliefs, and a critical reflection of how these contribute to the regulatory capture of young girls' sexuality and agency. Once we have a better understanding of young girls' and boys' sexuality and agency, we will be able to reject practices that condone gender inequalities in our school and beyond for a deeper analysis of the critical role self-reflexivity has to play, and offer alternatives whereby the school can become a core site of change, and

where teachers are prepared and supported to challenge the widespread practice and tolerance of unequal gender norms.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

9.1. Introduction

This ethnography explored primary school girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence at Westhills Primary School. My key objectives were to understand the underlying factors that shaped my respondents' experiences, to develop an understanding of how teachers' attitudes contributed to these experiences, and to explore how the girls constructed their sexual identities. In this concluding chapter, I provide an overview of the study and discuss the main findings and how they contribute to existing research on gender and sexual violence in the primary school. Finally, I outline the implications of these findings and offer recommendations for developing interventions to address gender and sexual violence in primary schools.

9.2. An overview of the chapters

In Chapter One, I introduced the study, providing an account of my motivation and an overview of the concepts of gender violence, sexual harassment and sexual violence which run through it, acting as a backdrop to my respondents' experiences within the primary school setting. I stressed the importance of not romanticising girls' sexual agency, as other scholars have done, in order to show that girls navigate a heterosexualised and masculine domain which significantly reduces their opportunities to exercise agency. I also introduce the school and its wider socio-economic context in post-apartheid South Africa.

Chapter Two, then, constitutes an overview of the theoretical frameworks that shaped my analysis of the data. I explained the importance of post-structural feminist theory to the study and drew on feminist literature to explore gender, sexuality, heterosexuality, violence, power and girls' agency. Particularly salient to this discussion were gender theorists such as Butler (1990; 1993), Connell (1995; 2000), and Foucault (1972; 1977; 1978; 1982; 1991; 1995), which helped enable me to see that girls' experiences of sexual violence were a consequence of unequal gender power relations that manifested in sexual abuse and sexual harassment.

In Chapter Three I moved on to an in-depth exploration of the literature around gender, sexuality and school violence in order to contextualise my study. I drew on literature from an emerging body of research from all over the world, but most specifically from sub-Saharan Africa, especially South Africa. This literature helped to shape my argument that the girls were simultaneously vulnerable to and agents of sexual violence and sexual harassment. I also engaged with some studies that included 14 year olds in their first year of high school, necessary because of the limited number of qualitative studies exploring sexual violence within primary schools, and because this age correlated with the age range of my participants. I drew on studies that explored gender and sexual violence within educational settings and also beyond the school in order to establish that the ways in which girls position themselves in relation to violence is not restricted to the school context. I also drew on media coverage of sexual violence in schools.

Chapter Four provides an overview of the research methodology, the research methods and the research process that steered my fieldwork. I provided a rich and textured description of Westhills Primary School, complete with evidence-based photographs, in order to establish not only the background and context of the field site, but also to provide insights into the ethical dilemmas that beset me both as a researcher of primary school girls' experience of sexual harassment and sexual violence, and as a teacher at Westhills Primary School. In outlining these dilemmas I also drew attention to my own vulnerability as well as to the vulnerability of my participants.

In Chapter Five, I provided a description of the research site and its community. I also took the reader through a typical day in Westhills Primary School. The chapter is largely descriptive since it is meant to provide the reader a context in which to situate the girls' experiences. Chapter Six is the first of my analysis chapters and focuses on the girls' accounts and experiences of sexual harassment and sexual violence. A vital thread in this chapter is the recognition that primary school boys have already accrued cultural capital accorded to males and masculinity. I show how boys' perpetration of sexual violence is rooted in patriarchal notions of male power and dominance and that it is accorded valence by the social and cultural norms in society. I move beyond the positioning of girls as victims by recognising that they are sexual beings who are thoroughly invested in their sexuality. In doing so, I shift the binaries of victim and perpetrator and create a new space to address sexual violence in primary schools, particularly within the girls' heterosexual relations. I

ground the discussion in jealousy, conflict, and violence and show that the girls' ambivalence towards naming sexually harassing behaviour created much confusion over what constituted sexual harassment and sexual violence. I also establish that the school is the key site for the production of violent gender relations where girls are not just victims but are also agents of violence, and this thread is integral to the chapters that follow.

In Chapter Seven, I focused on one participant, Azande, who presented an opportunity to show the ways in which 'in school' and 'out of school' are interconnected with violent gender relations. Through presenting Azande's experience of a sexual relationship with an older male (he was 'twenty something'), I invite the reader into her life and show how gender and sexuality are influenced and compromised by structural and socioeconomic disparities. By positioning Azande's sexuality at the forefront of my analysis, I illustrate how agency and power are intricately interwoven and how Azande's tenuous power was eroded by male sexual entitlement. Azande's experiences are also included in this study as it shows also how sexual violence execabates young girls vulnerability to HIV and AIDS.

Chapter Eight, my final analysis chapter, is an exploration of how teachers contributed to the girls' experiences of sexual harassment within the school. I show how the girls' sexuality was frequently marginalised, discriminated against, subordinated and tainted by their teachers, how they experienced hostility during class (I also touch on corporal punishment), and how some teachers' repudiated their complaints of sexual harassment. I argue that teachers' attitudes and behaviour sought to regulate, capture and stymy girls' sexuality as a means of maintaining control over them, and that this served to entrench their subordination within the gender hierarchy.

9.3. Main findings

Exploring primary schools girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence has been a difficult task: while physical forms of violence are easily detectable, more nuanced forms often go undetected. Perhaps the most salient finding from my research, therefore, is that gender violence was a consistent feature in these girls' lives. While there were many reasons for this, it was evident that the school functioned to support gender inequality, which is a key driver of gender-based violence. The purpose of this section is to present an overview of my

findings and discuss what they mean for my study and, more broadly, for primary schools in general.

9.3.1. Boys are driven by masculine norms to demonstrate power over the girls

The girls' experiences showed that the exercise of male power is central to sexual harassment, a finding that resonates with studies by Bhana and Pattman (2011) and Cobbett and Warrington (2013). Sexualised verbal abuse, taunts and teasing, dominance, misogyny, objectification, physical violence and control all merge together into a conduit for hegemonic masculinity (see, too, Gervais & Eagen, 2017). Sexualised verbal abuse equates to hate speech and works to reinforce gender inequalities which seek to keep women in a subordinate position. Boys used sexualised swear words to shame girls for daring to challenge the sociocultural power accorded to males and masculinity.

Misogyny emerged as a key means for boys to subordinate, marginalise and discriminate against girls. Public humiliation, such as entering the girls toilets or peeping over the walls, stealing and soiling their pads with tomato sauce, writing their names on their pads and pinning them to the walls or the chalkboard, and saying things such as "you smell like fish" or "you're smelly" created much anxiety in the girls especially as menstruation is a private and taboo topic in isiZulu culture. As a result of such experiences the girls began to develop negative self-images during their menstrual cycles which thus became emotionally laden with fear, embarrassment, and shame, and these feelings impacted on the girls' sexuality. This finding resonates with other studies in sub-Saharan Africa that describe how girls' menstruation status is used to subordinate them by positioning them as dirty and contaminated (Jewitt & Ryley, 2014; Mason et al., 2013; Sommer, 2013).
Such misogynistic behaviour was part of an enactment and pursuit of hegemonic ideals and worked to destroy girls' self-image and erode their sexuality and dignity.

9.3.2. Sexual objectification of girls' bodies

Sexualised taunts and derogatory, sexualised verbal abuse created intensely negative emotional anxiety for the girls, and worked to erode and taint their sexuality and sense of desirability. Girls who were judged by the boys to have physical faults were denigrated and their bodies were insulted. This demonstrated both how misogyny and the objectification of

girls' bodies were steeped in heterosexuality and how the devaluing of the girls' bodies cleared a path for boys to achieve exalted forms of masculinity, gain social and cultural esteem amongst peers, and enable them to situate themselves within what Butler (1990) calls the heterosexual matrix. Paradoxically, girls also objectified their bodies, hence their despair and sensitivity to the 'faults' that the boys picked on.

9.3.3. Sexual harassment is perceived in contradictory and complex ways

Male sexual entitlement emerged as a key factor that underpinned harassing behaviours. Boys' specific attention to the girls' vaginas and breasts, their leering and ogling of the girls' bodies, their policing the girls' postures, and the ways in which they displayed suggestive sexualised movements towards the girls, all combined to reinforce boys' desire for sexual intimacy. The girls' recognition of boys' sexual desire also debunked notions of the girls as sexually passive. Their reactions to boys' attentions, for example their laughter, suggested ambivalence towards—or even interest in—boys' sexualised behaviour. The girls' responses indicated that their perceptions of sexualised verbal abuse was both complex and contradictory. Their experiences resonated with findings from other studies both globally (Owen, Shute & Slee, 2008; Renold, 2005; Cobbett & Warrington, 2013) and in sub-Saharan Africa (Le Mat, 2016). Interestingly, global studies tended to find that sexualised verbal abuse was common, while studies from sub-Saharan Africa reported physical sexual harassment as featuring more commonly in young girls' experiences of sexual violence (Lynch et al., 2018; Bhana, 2018).

My respondents' perceptions of the touching, as with their ambivalent attitudes towards sexualised verbal abuse, suggested that to reject the touching would also deny them heterosexual experiences and compromise their yearning to be seen as sexually desirable. These seemingly antithetical responses drew attention to the complexities and contradictions that surround young girls' sexuality: the girls had to tread a thin line in the ways in which they responded to boys as any indication of pleasure put them at risk of being labelled a slut, and heightened the possibility of them incurring violence both from other girls and boyfriends.

9.3.4. Girls as perpetrators of sexual harassment

While teachers and boys emerged as the key perpetrators of sexual harassment, I also found that girls, too, engaged in sexually harassing behaviour, and this finding challenges the perception that violence and aggression were a manifestation of power for boys alone. The girls' spoke of their fights over boys, and it became evident that they were situated within a gendered landscape within which girls appropriated both misogyny and the very discourses of gender inequality that widened the power disparities between girls and boys. Sexual reputations were protected and vindicated through aggression and violence toward other girls. Similarly, aspirations cast on a girl's virginity status was were often countered with violence since being seen as a virgin was important to them. On one level this showed that girls adopted alternate femininities to create hierarchies of power amongst themselves, but on another level their aggression and violent behaviour could be seen as transgressing a normative femininity—which was important as being called a slut, or viewed as not a virgin, for example, rendered a girl more susceptible to sexual violence (Renold, 2005; Owen, Shute & Slee, 2008). Girls' engagement in verbal and physical violence was not only gendered, but it reinforced their subordinate status within gender relations.

9.3.5. School playground games are gendered and highly sexualized

School playground games provided opportunities for traditional male and female practices to be upheld: they highlighted how girls were able to negotiate and navigate their sexualities to secure heterosexual experiences without being labelled sluts or having their sexuality endangered. The games also offered girls opportunities to mimic and act out heterosexual relationships while simultaneously subordinating themselves by accepting that submission was necessary to avoid violence in intimate partner relationships. The sexualised games served to reproduce power relations based on dominant understandings of what it meant to be male and female in their society. The girls situated themselves within a gendered discourse which favoured a one dimensional power that disadvantaged them as it was reliant on female subordination and acquiesce. Sexualised games also provided opportunities for both girls and boys who were not in relationships to exercise their sexuality in sexually related activities such as kissing, deep kissing and so forth. Girls who engaged in these games were thus able to exercise their agency in order to secure sexualised experiences.

9.3.6. Girls challenge gender inequality, gender violence and sexual harassment through their individual empowerment and self-advocacy

The assertion of the self by the girls was an indication of how the cultural capital afforded to school, society and gender had become troubled and unstable. The rejection of both implicit and explicit forms of violence is evident in how the girls' questioned their subordination within the classroom when they felt that they had been wronged (Murphy et al., 2013, noted a similar finding). However, while feminist researchers view speaking out as healthy resistance, it creates opportunities for both physical and systemic violence as self-assertion by primary school girls is viewed negatively, as a challenge to authority and power within the classroom and the school. Girls' rejection of gender disparities also points to the changing discourse around femininities, as noted by Jewkes & Morrell (2013). Furthermore, through expressing their active sexualities, girls were, in many instances, able to develop a more positive view of their sexuality—and of their expectations. This suggests that girls were rethinking unequal gender practices and challenging male domination, male sexual entitlement and the male prerogative for multiple partnering. The girls' nonconformity thus became a resource that allowed them to self-advocate and to assert their presence, rather than being merely a sign of transgressions or unruly behaviour. Considering self-advocacy as a means of rejecting inequitable treatment thus offers a new lens through which to view primary school girls' aggression.

9.3.7. Negotiating heterosexuality

The study revealed that the girls, at 12–14 years old, were engaging in heterosexual relations [romance, kissing and sex, as noted in Azande's case] despite popular societal assumptions of their sexual innocence. This finding echoes Gevers et al (2013) who argued that young people's engagement in relationships is developmentally normal, and that negotiations of heterosexuality requires balancing desire for romance with perceptions of the need to protect themselves from boys.

9.3.8. Sexual coerción

Poverty, and patriarchal notions of masculinity emerged as key factors that contribute to sexual coercion. Sexual relations are based around power, and sexual coercion and rape are

acts of power. Yet, coercive sex often goes unrecognised as it can be confused with love and romance. It is also an integral part of 'provider love' or the 'sugar daddy syndrome', characterised by the exchange of material goods and/or financial goods for sex. In poverty stricken conditions girls learn from an early age that the body can be used as a resource for material and financial gain. The age disparity almost always evident between male partners and girls in provider relationships disadvantaged girls by creating conditions for gender inequality, sexual violence and sexual abuse, as I illustrated through Azande's case. In such relationships, girls' lacked power, even to negotiate condom use and safe sex, a powerlessness exacerbated by the lure of money and material benefits. However, it is important to remember, as I highlighted in my argument, that girls are not only victims, but are also powerful agents able to negotiate their sexuality for benefits—although they may ultimately be disadvantaged within the confines of sexual intimacy.

9.3.9. Girls' mobility exposed them to sexual violence

Girls faced constant threats in their environments. Going to the shops, visiting with friends, and travelling to and from school all posed risks of sexual violence. It was during these journeys that the girls became alert to early signals and coded messages from adult men that signified their vulnerability to rape. Azande's experiences showed that her life was fraught with danger and, more especially, sexual violence. Lonely shortcuts, overgrown grass and empty spaces pointed to conditions within and around the informal settlements that exacerbated the incidence of sexual violence. The constant fear threats that the girls lived with suggested a lack of protective mechanisms within the community that indicated resignation to and acceptance of violence. The pervasive threat of sexual violence suggested that girls should remain close to home or inside the home and ultimately develop a fear of men—an unattainable strategy as most of the girls had to travel long distances even to get to school.

9.3.10. Hostile classrooms: Challenging age, authority and power in the classroom

My findings showed that teachers perceived that their authority extended to regulating young girls' sexuality since sociocultural norms dictated that girls should display passive femininities and sexual innocence. Thus, teachers drew on their institutional power to restrict, control and regulate girls' sexualised behaviours within the context of teaching and learning.

This was achieved through punishments such as name calling, hostility and ostracism, and through constant policing of girls' attitudes, their interactions with boys and their attire. This asymmetrical power, what Murphy et al. (2013) call the binary positioning of teacher and student, also renders girls as objects that can be manipulated within the school.

However, the girls challenged their teachers by verbally retaliating and through silent aggression to convey their anger. The strife between the girls and the teachers suggested a hostile classroom climate within which institutional boundaries had been breached and blurred. Complaints of sexual harassment were downplayed, overlooked and even rejected by some teachers, and this served, in part, to legitimise boys' harassment of girls. Malicious gossip compromised the girls' status and reputation within the school and contributed to their overall discrimination since teachers developed preconceived notions about them. Derogatory name calling from their peers, such as 'bitch' and 'shit', suggested to the girls' that their sexuality was tainted and seen as improper.

The girls indicated that their teachers also colluded in the sexual objectification of their bodies. Girls' attire (PE shorts and t-shirts), were blamed for their experiences of sexual harassment. The girls generally remained silent about their abuse because of their marginalised status, but their silence was also situated in their agency and their desire to hide their heterosexual relationships and also to protect a desirable femininity. They believed their efforts to be desirable would be thwarted by parents' restrictions regarding their physical appearance and length of their dresses, which the girls perceived to be fundamental to securing boys' attention, and therefore would stymie subsequent relationships and their ability to secure top spot amongst peers.

9.3.11. Corporal punishment

My participants' testimonies showed that learners experienced physical and verbal abuse in school. Teachers' use of violence as a form of learner discipline was also gendered in that corporal punishment was used differentially by female and male teachers. For example, female teachers hit, embarrassed and verbally insulted learners, especially girls, while male teachers were more tolerant towards the girls than the boys. It is clear, from my findings, that educators were quick to judge and stigmatise learners rather than providing support and pastoral care. Learners' experiences were spoken about by teachers which become public

knowledge in the staffroom. Educators' silence was also highlighted in the 'scared at school' report (HRW, 2005) which found that principals and teachers in some instances turned a blind eye and even sanctioned violence against girls in school.

The girls also did not report incidents of sexual harassment out of a fear of victimisation from teachers and a fear of being accosted and/or hit outside the school. In an effort to avoid violence, they accepted it as part of school life.

These routine practices within schooling teach children that masculinity is associated with aggression, while femininity requires obedience and acquiescence. In this way, male violence becomes accepted in adolescent relationships and thus perpetuated into adulthood. Girls receive messages that violence is necessary to preserve their passivity, submissiveness and compliance, and in this way such social constructions of girls are reinforced within the school environment.

It is clear, too, that the school was not acting in accordance with national policy, which requires reporting teachers who practice corporal punishment to the Department of Education. Failure to do so gives teachers the impunity to administer corporal punishment.

9.3.12. Ineffective response mechanisms at school level

The lack of proper channels for reporting harassment and violence was evident in the girls' fear of reporting due to the lack of confidentiality and their fear of being blamed and disgraced. This neglect to take girls' experiences seriously contributes to the systemic violence that operates in schools and that also contributes to school girls' continual exposure to sexual violence (HSRC, 2018). A lack of response also contributes to missed opportunities for teachers to intervene and address gender and sexual violence within the school.

The school's failure to adhere to policy on sexual harassment and sexual violence in the school comprised the school as a safe and supportive environment for the girls and its learners in general.[14] These findings suggest teachers' complicity in fostering and facilitating unequal

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[14] I spoke to the Principal regarding teachers' use of corporal punishment which resulted in a meeting with all teachers in which the issue of corporal punishment was addressed. The teachers acknowledged that the use of corporal punishment was illegal and in direct contravention of the South

sociocultural norms that seek to regulate the girls' sexuality for the benefit of masculinity and patriarchy.

9.3.13. Shortfalls in the delivery of life skills/life orientation lesson

The National Curriculum in South African Education has undergone major changes ranging from Outcomes based Education (OBE), to the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) to the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) and now Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The Life Skills/Life Orientation (LO) subject/learning area has specifically included topics that are aimed at orientating and empowering learners in matters related to gender, sexuality and reproductive health. Misnaming and confusion in naming sexual harassment for what it is suggests shortfalls in the delivery of life skills/life orientation lesson. This resonates with findings from other studies that report on teachers' discomfort with and avoidance of teaching sexual and reproductive health, values and skills to primary school children, which, they argue challenges gender equality driven goals (Ahmed, Flisher, Mathews, Mukoma & Jansen, 2009). Thus the school emerges as an obstacle that hinders the levelling of the playing field between boys and girls. Instead, it works in a myriad of ways, both explicitly and implicitly, to enable prevailing discourses around gender inequality to survive and thrive. It shows how, in the context of power struggles, the school becomes a powerful site that is policed by teachers who are endorsed by institutional power and authority. The system put in place by hegemonic norms of patriarchy enables the school, through the enforcement of authority, to regulate and capture girls' sexuality for the reinforcement of gender inequality. The impact of such practices is large: the greater growth of girls, like boys, as mentioned earlier, becomes stunted.

9.4. Recommendations

Based on these findings, I offer the following recommendations for interventions to address young girls' vulnerability:

African Schools Act and the child's Constitutional Rights as declared in the Bill of Rights. Teachers had to sign a letter to that effect. At the same meeting, the Principal also addressed the use of verbal abuse and discriminatory labelling and cautioned teachers that, as with corporal punishment, these offences were in direct contravention of the South African Schools Act and the child's Constitutional Rights as declared in the Bill of Rights.

Sexuality education must feature firmly on the primary school agenda and must move beyond the discourse of danger and the pathology of bad boys [and men]. Teachers must work with girls to explore how heterosexual patterns of conduct including verbal and physical violence are rooted in the operation of unequal gender relations and power. The design of intervention programmes in the curriculum must promote positive values in order to enable girls and boys to overcome entrenched gender biases and to prevent and deal with violence and harassment, including sexual harassment. Adolescent sexuality should not be embedded in doom and gloom. Teachers must work with girls to change the norms and provide training for girls to develop assertiveness in all aspects of their lives, including self-respect, self-esteem and rights. For example, if they experience corporal punishment, they should not be afraid to report their teachers. Similarly, they should be able to say 'no' to verbal and sexual harassment and any other form of violence.

Enable teachers to understand that they are in loco parentis and that any form of punishment, particularly corporal punishment and sexual harassment, marginalisation or discrimination against learners, eradicates the room for nurturing, care, love, respect and thus the healthy development of learners. Furthermore, educators must understand the laws relating to education and the consequences of breaking the law. This is specifically in regard to administering corporal punishment, verbal abuse, gender violence and sexual abuse.

Create systems that monitor the magnitude of sexual harassment amongst learners e.g., educators being on duty at strategic areas and times to ensure learner safety in the drop off and pick up zones which are outside the school gates.

Draw up a school code of conduct involving all stakeholders (including teacher, parent and learner representatives) that states unequivocally a zero tolerance and clear guidelines for both educators and learners to deal with sexual harassment and abuse at school. Most importantly, there must be adherence to the school policy and to procedures outlined. This will ensure that proper mechanisms are in place to protect learners who report corporal punishment, sexual harassment and sexual violence, and that schools follow the correct channels for reporting offences.

Provide positive information to parents and learners addressing adolescent sexuality, their vulnerabilities, and the risks they face whilst travelling to and from school, within the school

and within the community. Make learners aware of the potential risks that exist in the community, including paedophiles, opportunistic perpetrators and people who have been suspected of engaging in sexual harassment or coercive sex with school girls.

Provide parents and learners with a list of organisations that can assist with sexual violence and abuse, including domestic violence. Create awareness and zero tolerance of different forms of sexual violence, including sexual harassment, amongst learners, teachers, parents and the community (e.g., through the Life Skills/Life Orientation learning area/subject). There should be clear and consistent messages to learners that violence against girls (and boys) is unacceptable and a violation of human dignity. This should begin as soon as the child enters the school (Grade R).

School must function as a community resource and facilitate closer school–community linkages to address violence in and around schools, and must involve learners, teachers, parents, police, health services, social services, NGOs and religious organisations. The Department of Education should reinstate the services of counsellors in school to provide guidance and counselling to offenders and victims at the site of the violation. Similarly, nurses should be organised to visit schools and talk to girls about issues regarding their sexuality, unprotected sex, pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease, especially as 12 year olds are allowed to go to clinics to get abortions.[15]

One of the greatest problems that schools face is a lack of parent involvement in the school and therefore in what goes on at school. There should be greater involvement, e.g., in attending parent/teacher meetings, discussing concerns regarding delinquent behaviour and reporting any suspicions or incidents of sexual violence or sexual harassment concerning their child/children. Parents must convey strong messages to their children that sexual violence must not be tolerated, regardless of who the perpetrator is, including coercive and/or transactional sex.

[15] During my visits, in 2012, to the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences [FCS] unit in Sydenham Police station and Pinetown Police Station, I made requests for police personnel to visit the school and talk to the learners about sexual violence. I also asked the medical manager and the nurses who worked in paediatrics and also attended to cases of sexual violence at KwaDabeka Community Clinic (KCHC) and the nurses at Westhills Community Clinic to come to the school and talk to our girls about sexuality and reproductive health matters. The nurses did respond but the police did not.

Community Fora with representatives from all sectors of society (including parents, youth, religious organisations, the school and government services such as the police and community clinics) should be formed, and be responsible for sending out strong messages that sexual violence will not be tolerated.

9.5. Recommendations for further research

In light of the results of this study, I recommend more qualitative studies be conducted with primary school children to explore, understand and bring to light their experiences of gender and sexual violence within the school setting. Such research must be conducted with both boys and girls since, as this study as shown, experiences of sexual harassment and sexual violence are complicated by how boys and girls construct and negotiate their own understandings of their gendered and sexual identities.

I also recommend further qualitative research with primary school teachers since, as this study has shown, young girls experiences of sexual harassment and sexual violence are also complicated by how teachers construct their own understandings of young girls gendered and sexual identities.

9.6. Concluding thoughts

Physical forms of violence are easily detectable, but more nuanced forms often go undetected. Whilst there are many reasons for this, my study shows that the school works to support gender inequality. Gender and sexual violence in South Africa is rife, and this begins in primary school, where tensions between girls and boys lead to sexual aggression and sexual violence in attempts (re)negotiate females' position within society. I see my respondents' negotiation of their sexualities as a response to the reality of their everyday lives within the context of Westhills Primary school and beyond, to their families, community, society and country. It is bounded by the sociocultural norms and values attached to the meanings of what it means to be a girl in a South African school. Understanding how acts of violence are perceived by school girls and boys is essential to determine and influence the interventions employed to prevent or counteract gender and sexual violence.

I am drawn to reflect what this study has meant for me and for the girls in Westhills primary school. Throughout the study, I felt deeply involved because I saw myself as a conduit, able to give the girls' a voice to express their experiences of sexual violence. Despite knowing the girls and being a teacher at the school, their disclosures were nevertheless unexpected because their experiences had been so well concealed by the girls themselves. I am filled with a brooding sense of disquiet. I know that feeling is embedded in my awareness that the girls have been marginalised and discriminated against by some of their educators. I believe that this study, quite possibly for the first time in their lives, offered the girls the freedom to talk about their experiences, their concerns and their boyfriends without fearing blame, punishment or disgrace. I use these words 'blame, punishment and disgrace' deliberately because this is exactly what the girls experienced in Westhills Primary School. As this study draws to a close, I find it necessary to offer one last field note which I believe shows, in both an explicit way and nuanced way, Paleesa's awareness of the discrimination and marginalisation that she (as representative of the other girls, too) experienced:

> **Final field note: Last day!**
> *It is the last day of the school term for the learners. I had just finished saying goodbye to my learners. I wished them a safe and happy holiday and told them that I looked forward to seeing them next year. I was so glad that it was their last day at school as I would now have a few uninterrupted days to take care of my administrative duties. As I made my way along the corridor, heading towards the office, I heard what can only be described as yelling and screaming. I saw the Senior Primary Head of Department, a whole lot of other teachers, the Principal and the Deputy Principal outside the teachers' staffroom. Then I saw Paleesa. She was being shouted at. Paleesa had graffiti on her uniform. It was not unusual for grade seven learners to write farewell messages on their uniforms—indeed most grade seven learners engage in this kind of behaviour, in an attempt to immortalise their final year in primary school and their last day in the school. However, Paleesa (one of my research participants), had done the unthinkable. Her uniform read 'Fuck Westhills'. These two words were written all over her uniform. Also written on her uniform were the words 'Fuck Westhills, Hello Woodhills' (a nearby high school). The principal had gone ballistic. She raged while other educators and some parents who had come to pay school fees and collect reports watched, their silent approval palpable. There was no restraint*

and no one tried to intervene. Rather, their silence applauded her punishment. I saw her face, I saw her tears. I just asked softly: "Why Paleesa?" But I already knew the answer. In fact we both knew the answer. I was saddened that her lasting memory of primary school would be horrible. As I drove out of school, at around 11h30, I saw Paleesa with a group of girls on the road. I noticed her dress again. I saw that she had a koki (felt tip) pen and that she and some other learners were still writing on their uniforms. I stopped to talk to her. I was drawn to her face. She looked older and even more beautiful, despite the disfigured uniform. She had applied eye make-up, lip gloss and false eyelashes.

As I read through this last field note it struck me how Paleesa's power was again reduced through the humiliation she suffered in front of the crowd of teachers. However, I also sensed that she would leave all of this behind her and regain her power, starting by displaying her rejection of both her primary school and her teachers: she was happy to leave Westhills Primary. I was struck, too, by how both the parents and the educators colluded in their support of Paleesa's punishment. I thought about the words on her uniform 'Fuck Westhills' and I wondered why she word use these words instead of perhaps 'class of….' or getting her friends to sign their names on her uniform. Was it because of the marginalisation and discrimination that she encountered at this school? Or did it reflect the excitement of going to high school where she would encounter new experiences that would perhaps not earn her the label of 'damaged goods?' Or was it merely that the phrase ''Fuck Westhills' was just bandied around without any true meaning or intention? Upon reflection, I do not believe that it was.

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Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance Certificate

RESEARCH OFFICE (GOVAN MBEKI CENTRE)
WESTVILLE CAMPUS
TELEPHONE NO.: 031 – 2603587
EMAIL: sshrec@ukzn.ac.za

18 FEBRUARY 2010

MRS. D JEWNARAIN (203520677)
EDUCATION STUDIES

Dear Mrs. Jewnarain

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0889/09D
PROJECT TITLE: "Gender, sexuality and HIV and AIDS: Young children's construction of identity in the context of AIDS"

FULL APPROVAL NOTIFICAITON – COMMITTEE REVIEWED PROTOCOL

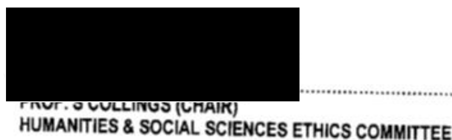
This letter serves to notify you that your application in connection with the above was reviewed by the Social Sciences & Humanities Research Ethics Committee in 2009, has now been granted full approval following your responses to queries previously addressed:

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. Please quote the above reference number for all queries relating to this study.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol

Yours faithfully



PROF. S COLLINGS (CHAIR)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES ETHICS COMMITTEE

cc. Supervisor (Prof. D Bhana)
cc. Mrs. R Govender/Ms. T Khumalo

Founding Campuses: Edgewood | Howard College | Medical School | Pietermaritzburg | Westville

Appendix 2: Ammended Ethical Clearance certificate

12 April 2013

Mrs Dhanasagrie Jewnarain 203520677
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/0889/09D
New Project title: Primary School girls' construction of gender and sexuality.

Dear Mrs Jewnarain

Full approval notification- Amendment

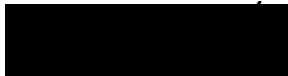
This letter serves to notify you that your application for an amendment dated 20 March 2013, has now been granted full approval.

- **New project title.**
- **Information and consent form for participants.**
- **Information and consent forms for adult participants.**
- **Semi-structured interview schedule for participants.**

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through an 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

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully



Professor Steven Collings (Chair)

/px

cc Supervisor Professor Deevia Bhana
cc Academic leader Dr MN Davids
cc School Administrator Ms B Bhengu

Humanities & Social Sc Research Ethics Committee
Professor S Collings (Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa
Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 3587/8350/4557 **Facsimile:** +27 (0)31 260 4609 **Email:** ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Appendix 3: Change in title

16 November 2018

Mrs Dhanasagrie Jewnarain 203520677
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Jewnarain

Reference number: HSS/0899/09D
Project title: Beyond schooling primary school girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence.

Full approval - Change of project title

Your application dated 05 November 2018, in connection with the above the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the application and the research protocol has been granted **Full Approval.**

- **Change in project title** from: Primary school girls' construction of gender and sexuality.
  New project title: Beyond schooling primary school girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence.

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/Methods must be reviewed and approved through an 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 discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully

Prof S Singh

/px

cc New Supervisor: Prof D Bhana
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza
cc School Administrator: Ms M Ngcobo, Ms S Jeenarain and Mr SN Mthembu

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair)
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Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
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Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

Appendix 4: Permission to conduct research - School Principal

Date:

School:

Dear Principal

Re: Permission to conduct research at Westhills Primary School

I, Mrs D. Jewnarain, Student Number: 203520677, am a PhD student (Gender Education) at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Edgeweood Campus. It is the requirement of the Faculty of Education to undertake a research study. This letter seeks your permission to allow me to conduct my study with a selected number of learners in your school.

Title of the study: Beyond Schooling: primary school girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence.

During the data collection period, I found that the girls in grade 7 had a great deal to say about sexuality. I wish to include the data and expand the focus of my work more specifically on girls in grade seven since it is girls in this age group who need to be addressed because of the great risk they face in relation to gender and sexual violence.

The peak in HIV infection rate in the 15-24 age group suggests that young girls are engaging in or have been exposed to sexual activity before 15. The high infection rates also suggest that gender and sexual vulnerabilities are established earlier than 15 years. This recognition has resulted in greater curriculum coverage in Life Skills where aspects of sexuality, HIV and AIDS education have been introduced. However, the construction of primary school children as still too young together with interventions drawn from studies with older youth have shown that there are huge gaps. Whilst primary school boys and girls can recite the ABC (Abstain, Be faithful and Condomise) mantra, it remains a misfit in the midst of their burgeoning sexuality and other factors such as socially ascribed gender norms, patriarchy, socio-economic status, age and structural inequalities. This study attempts to bridge this gap. The research methods include observation of the participants in the school, during lunch break and during instruction time, focus group discussions, individual interviews and perusal

of relevant school documents. I shall meet with the participants and explain the nature of the study and I shall ask for their voluntary verbal consent to participate in the study. Then I shall seek permission from their parents for their participation and select participants only where consent is obtained. The participants will also be informed as to their rights to withdraw at any time during the study. Participants in the group will be asked to respect, maintain and uphold the confidentiality of all members of the focus group discussions. Whilst every precaution will be taken to maintain the confidentiality of the participants in every group, there will be limits of confidentiality. Participants will be informed that should there be a disclosure/s which indicate that their well-being is being compromised or at risk, the researcher will seek their consent in addressing the matter. The interviews shall last approximately 40 minutes each and will be conducted during the Life Skills period. I shall also meet with the teachers and seek their permission to observe the participants during instruction time and also to interview the selected participants during the Life Skills period. The transcripts of the interviews shall be available for your perusal should you so desire.

If you would like further details pertaining to the validity of the study then you are most welcome to contact Prof Deevia Bhana, my supervisor of the study on bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za or on 031 260 2603.

Permission to conduct research

I, ____, Principal of Westhills Primary School (pseudonym) consent to Mrs D. Jewnrain's request to conduct her study with girls (7-12 years) in Westhills Primary School. I have been informed as to the nature of the study and I am also aware that the participants can withdraw at any stage of the interview should they wish to do so. I am also aware that all information obtained from the participants and the school will be treated with the strictest of confidence. I also understand that anonymity of the school and the participants will be maintained through the use of pseudonyms.

___________________ ________________

Signature of Principal Date

Appendix 5: Permission to conduct research with learners - Parent

Date:

School:

Dear Parent

Re: Permission to conduct research with learners - Parent

I, Mrs D. Jewnarain, Student Number: 203520677, am a PhD student (Gender Education) at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Edgeweood Campus. It is the requirement of the Faculty of Education to undertake a research study. This letter seeks your permission to allow me to conduct my study with your daughter.

Title of the study: Beyond Schooling: primary school girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence.

The peak in HIV infection rate in the 15-24 age group suggests that young girls are engaging in or have been exposed to sexual activity before 15. The high infection rates also suggest that gender and sexual vulnerabilities are established earlier than 15 years. This recognition has resulted in greater curriculum coverage in Life Skills where aspects of sexuality, HIV and AIDS education have been introduced. However, the construction of primary school children as still too young together with interventions drawn from studies with older youth have shown that there are huge gaps. Whilst primary school boys and girls can recite the ABC (Abstain, Be faithful and Condomise) mantra, it remains a misfit in the midst of their burgeoning sexuality and other factors such as socially ascribed gender norms, patriarchy, socio-economic status, age and structural inequalities. This study attempts to bridge this gap.

The research methods include observation of the participants in the school, during lunch break and during instruction time, focus group discussions, individual interviews and perusal of relevant school documents. I shall meet with the participants and explain the nature of the study and I shall ask for their voluntary verbal consent to participate in the study. Then I shall seek permission from their parents for their participation and select participants only where consent is obtained. The participants will also be informed as to their rights to withdraw at

any time during the study. Participants in the group will be asked to respect, maintain and uphold the confidentiality of all members of the focus group discussions. Whilst every precaution will be taken to maintain the confidentiality of the participants in every group, there will be limits of confidentiality. Participants will be informed that should there be a disclosure/s which indicate that their well-being is being compromised or at risk, the researcher will seek their consent in addressing the matter. The interviews shall last approximately 40 minutes each and will be conducted during the Life Skills period. I shall also meet with the teachers and seek their permission to observe the participants during instruction time and also to interview the selected participants during the Life Skills period. The transcripts of the interviews shall be available for your perusal should you so desire.

If you would like further details pertaining to the validity of the study then you are most welcome to contact Prof Deevia Bhana, my supervisor of the study on bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za or on 031 260 2603.

Permission from Parent

I, ____, Parent of ________________ consent to Mrs D. Jewnrain's request to conduct her study with my daughter. I have been informed as to the nature of the study and I am also aware that she can withdraw at any stage of the interview should she wish to do so. I am also aware that all information obtained from her and the school will be treated with the strictest of confidence. I also understand that anonymity of the school and the participants will be maintained through the use of pseudonyms.

________________ ________________

Signature of Parent Date

Appendix 6: Permission to conduct research – girls

Date:

School:

Dear Participant

Re: Permission to conduct research

I, Mrs D. Jewnarain, Student Number: 203520677, am a PhD student (Gender Education) at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Edgeweood Campus. It is the requirement of the Faculty of Education to undertake a research study. I have identified a group of girls (12) to participate in my study and you are one of them. This letter seeks your permission to allow me to conduct my study with you.

The title of my study is: Beyond Schooling: primary school girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence.

I am interested in exploring how primary school girls construct their gendered and sexual identities within Westville Primary School. I shall meet with you and explain the nature of the study and I shall then ask your parents for permission for you to participate in the study. Only those who have permission to particpate will be included in the study. Once you are in the study, you will be expected to follow some rules. The most important rule is that you uphold the confidentiality of all members in the group. However, should there be any disclosures that might indicate that your well-being is being compromised, or at risk, I will seek your permission in following the correct procedures to address the matter.

The research methods include observation of the participants (you and other members in the study) in the school, during lunch break and during instruction time, focus group discussions, individual interviews and perusal of relevant school documents. The interviews shall last approximately 40 minutes each and will be conducted during the Life Skills period.

I shall also meet with your teachers and seek their permission to make observations during instruction time and also to interview the selected participants during the Life Skills period. The transcripts of the interviews shall be available for your perusal should you so desire.

If you would like further details pertaining to the validity of the study then you are most welcome to contact Prof Deevia Bhana, my supervisor of the study on bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za or on 031 260 2603.

Permission from Participant

I, ____, (participant's name) consent to Mrs D. Jewnrain's request to participate in her study. I have been informed as to the nature of the study and I am also aware that I can withdraw at any stage of the interview should I wish to do so. I am also aware that all information obtained from me and the school will be treated with the strictest of confidence. I also understand that anonymity of the school and the participants will be maintained through the use of pseudonyms.

____________________ ____________________

Signature of Participant Date

Appendix 7: Information sheet and assent for participants

Participant details

Name: *Age:*			*Female*	*Male*
I live with: (Please tick)			*I live in the: (Please tick)*	
Mum and dad			*Township*	
Mum only			*Suburb*	
Dad only			*Informal settlement*	
Older brother				
Older sister				
grandparents				
caregiver				
relative				

I come to school by (Please tick)			***After school, I go home to (Please tick)***	
Public transport (bus or taxi)			*Mum and dad*	
School taxis			*Mum only*	
Car (parents own)			*Day only*	
Walking			*Older brother*	

			Older sister	
			Grandparent/s	
			Caregiver	
			Relatives	

Tick in the middle box if you agree		What does this mean?
I shall participate out of my own free will in the interviews that has been explained to me and that I know that I will not be disadvantaged in any way if I choose not to participate.		Voluntary Participation You are not forced to participate
I understand that the interview is part of a research project and that my information will be published anonymously for research purposes.		Publication of results Your name and school will not be made public
If I know that I do not want specific information to be recorded, I will tell the researcher and I will expect her to keep that information private.		Your privacy will be respected. All information will be treated as private.
I agree to interview sessions of approx. 40 minutes each which will take place during the school day.		How much time will it take?
If I am uncomfortable or if something upsets me in the interviews, I am free to withdraw.		You can leave the interview at any time
Counselling will be provided should I need it.		If you are upset, counselling can be arranged at no cost for you.
Signature of Participant: ……………………………… Date: …………………..		

Appendix 8: Letter informing the Principal about a disclosure

Date:

School:

Dear Principal

Re: Participant disclosure of a coerced sexual relationship

A participant was granted permission to be part of my study in 2010 and in 2012. In 2012, the course of the interviews, the participant disclosed that she had engaged in a sexual relationship with her boyfriend, an individual who was more than two years older than her. In terms of the law, this relationship is identified as statutory rape which is a criminal offence since the participant is 13 years old. In terms of the law and my study, I am required to report this relationship to the South African Police Services (SAPS), the Department of Education (DoE), to you and to my supervisor. According to her mother, she had reported a case of statutory rape to the Police. Further to this, she mentioned that she had taken her to Addington Hospital, where she received treatment and counselling. In the light of her disclosure, I humbly request a meeting with you to inform you in person of my obligation and therefore my intention to report a case of sexual violence (coercive sex).

Thanking you

____

Researcher: D. Jewnarain
Tel: 0834429399

Appendix 9: Informing Azande of my obligation to report a case of sexual coercion

Date:

School:

Dear Participant

Re: Informing Azande of my obligation to report a case of sexual coercion

In the light of your disclosure of your past relationship with an individual that was more than two years older than you, I am compelled to report a case of sexual violence (statutory rape). This is despite the fact that you have informed me that your mother had already reported this matter to the police and that you have received medical treatment and counselling. I am also obligated to report this matter to the Department of Education (SNES), your mother, the Principal and my supervisor. Please note that this matter will be treated with utmost confidence.

Thanking you

____

D. Jewnarain
Tel: 0834429399

Appendix 10: Request for a meeting with Parent

Date:

School:

Dear Parent

Re: Request for a meeting

Your daughter, ____________________ was granted permission to be part of my study in 2010 and in 2012. In 2012, during an interview, _________________disclosed that had engaged in a sexual relationship with her then boyfriend, an individual who was more than two years older than her. In terms of the law, this relationship is identified as statutory rape which is a criminal offence since _______________ is 13 years old. In terms of the law and my study, I am required to report this relationship to the South African Police Services (SAPS), the Department of Education (DoE), to you and to my supervisor. According to _________________, when you found out about the relationship, you had reported it to the Police. Further to this, she mentioned that you had taken her to Addington Hospital, where she received treatment and counselling. In the light of her disclosure, I humbly request a meeting with you to inform you in person my obligation and therefore my intention to report a case of sexual violence (coercive sex). Please contact me on the number below to arrange for a suitable time when we can meet. Alternately, please give me your contact number and an appropriate time for me to contact you.

Thanking you

____

D. Jewnarain
Tel: 0834429399

Appendix 11: Request for a meeting with Parent (2nd)

Date:

School:

Dear Parent

Re: Request for a meeting

This letter serves as a second request to meet with you regarding Azande's disclosures relating to a past relationship with her boyfriend. Your daughter, ____________________ was granted permission to be part of my study in 2010 and in 2012. In the course of the interviews, _________________disclosed that had engaged in a sexual relationship with her boyfriend, an individual who was more than two years older than her. In terms of the law, this relationship is identified as statutory rape which is a criminal offence since _______________ is 13 years old. In terms of the law and my study, I am required to report this relationship to the South African Police Services (SAPS), the Department of Education (DoE), to you and to my supervisor. According to _________________, when you found out about the relationship, you had reported it to the Police. Further to this, she mentioned that you had taken her to Addington Hospital, where she received treatment and counselling. In the light of her disclosure, I humbly request a meeting with you to inform you in person my obligation and therefore my intention to report a case of sexual violence (coercive sex). Please contact me on the number below to arrange for a suitable time when we can meet. Alternately, please give me your contact number and an appropriate time for me to contact you.

Thanking you

____

D. Jewnarain

Tel: 0834429399

Appendix 12: Renegotiating participant consent - Parent

Date:

School:

Dear Parent

Re: Permission to interview ____________________ and use the data in the study

This letter seeks your permission to continue interviews with ____________________ and to use the data collected. All information gathered from her will be recorded anonymously and pseudonyms will be used to protect her privacy. If you decide to terminate her participation in the study, please be assured that this decision will be respected and the data will not be included in the study. Please complete the attached consent form and return to me.

Thanking you

____

D. Jewnarain
Tel: 0834429399

Appendix 13: Renegotiating participant consent - participant

Date:

School:

Dear Participant

Re: Permission to interview __________________________ and use the data in the study

Whilst you have given me verbal permission to use your disclosure in this study, this letter is to inform you in writing and to get your permission in writing. This letter seeks your permission to continue interviews with you and to use your disclosures in the study. All information gathered from you will be recorded anonymously and pseudonyms will be used to protect your privacy. If you decide to terminate your participation in the study, please be assured that this decision will be respected and the data will not be included in the study. Please complete the attached consent form and return to me.

_______________ _______________

Participant Date

Appendix 14: Information and Consent Letter for Parent

Date:

School:

Dear Parent

Re: Consent for Parent to participate in Research Study.

I, Mrs D. Jewnarain, Student Number: 203520677, am a PhD student (Gender Education) at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Edgeweood Campus. It is the requirement of the Faculty of Education to undertake a research study. This letter seeks your permission to allow me to include you in my study.

Title of the study: Beyond Schooling: primary school girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence.

The peak in HIV infection rate in the 15-24 age group suggests that young girls are engaging in or have been exposed to sexual activity before 15. The high infection rates also suggest that gender and sexual vulnerabilities are established earlier than 15 years. This recognition has resulted in greater curriculum coverage in Life Skills where aspects of sexuality, HIV and AIDS education have been introduced. However, the construction of primary school children as still too young together with interventions drawn from studies with older youth have shown that there are huge gaps. Whilst primary school boys and girls can recite the ABC (Abstain, Be faithful and Condomise) mantra, it remains a misfit in the midst of their burgeoning sexuality and other factors such as socially ascribed gender norms, patriarchy, socio-economic status, age and structural inequalities. This study attempts to bridge this gap.

The research methods include observation of the participants in the school, during lunch break and during instruction time, focus group discussions, individual interviews and perusal of relevant school documents. I shall meet with the participants and explain the nature of the study and I shall ask for their voluntary verbal consent to participate in the study. Then I shall seek permission from their parents for their participation and select participants only where

consent is obtained. The participants will also be informed as to their rights to withdraw at any time during the study. Participants in the group will be asked to respect, maintain and uphold the confidentiality of all members of the focus group discussions. Whilst every precaution will be taken to maintain the confidentiality of the participants in every group, there will be limits of confidentiality. Participants will be informed that should there be a disclosure/s which indicate that their well-being is being compromised or at risk, the researcher will seek their consent in addressing the matter. The interviews shall last approximately 40 minutes each and will be conducted during the Life Skills period. I shall also meet with the teachers and seek their permission to observe the participants during instruction time and also to interview the selected participants during the Life Skills period. The transcripts of the interviews shall be available for your perusal should you so desire.

If you would like further details pertaining to the validity of the study then you are most welcome to contact Prof Deevia Bhana, my supervisor of the study on bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za or on 031 260 2603.

Permission to conduct research – Parent

I, ____, parent of ……………………….

consent to participate in the study: **Primary School girls' construction of gender and sexuality.** I have been informed as to the nature of the study and I understand that I am under no obligation to participate in this study. I am also aware that I can withdraw at any stage of the interview should I feel uncomfortable. I am also aware that all information obtained from me will be treated with the strictest of confidence. I am also aware that my anonymity will be maintained through the use of a pseudonym.

________________ ________________

Parent Date

Appendix 15: Affidavit

SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICES : SYDENHAM

AFFIDAVIT

NAME :

SEX : FEMALE AGE: 49

ID. NO.

RES. ADDRESS :

TELEPHONE : (h) TELEPHONE : (W)

BUSINESS ADDRESS :

STATES IN ENGLISH IN UNDER OATH

DURING THE DATA COLLECTION PERIOD 2 PARTICIPANTS DISCLOSED THAT THEY HAD RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR BOYFRIENDS, SINCE BOTH GIRLS WERE UNDERAGE I WAS ASKED TO REPORT MY FINDINGS. I WAS ALSO ASKED TO CALL FOR THE PARENTS / GUARDIANS OF THE PARTICIPANTS WHICH I DID ON TWO OCCASIONS VIA LETTERS. THERE WAS HOWEVER NO RESPONSE. ONE OF THE PARTICIPANTS HAVE SINCE LEFT SCHOOL (INCOMPLETED GRADE 7) AND ONE PARTICIPANT IS STILL AT SCHOOL). ACCORDING TO THE PARTICIPANTS THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WERE CONDUCTED SECRETIVELY AND WAS TERMINATED WHEN SHE WAS FOUND OUT. 2 OTHER PARTICIPANTS SPOKE OF ATTEMPTED RAPE WHICH THEY MAINTAINED WERE REPORTED BY THEIR PARENTS. (MOTHERS)

I know and understand the contents of this statement.
I have no objection to taking the prescribed oath.
I consider the prescribed oath to be binding on my conscience.

SIGNATURE OF DEPONENT

I certify that the deponent has acknowledged that he/she knows and understand the contents of this statement. This was sworn to before me and the deponent's signature was placed thereon in my presence.

AT : SYDENHAM ON : 2012/08/07 TIME : 11:55

FULL NAMES :

RANK :

ADDRESS : 3 McCAFFERTY ROAD, SHERWOOD

AFRICAN POLICE SERV...
COMMUNITY SERVICE CENTRE
2012 -08- 07
KWAZULU-NATAL

Appendix 16: Reporting to Child Welfare

6 November 2012

Re: Participant disclosures

In June this year disclosed that she was subjected to an attempted rape. According to man living in the informal settlement attempted to rape her. She said that she managed to get away from the would be perpetrator by saying that she was sent to the shop by her mother. According to she informed her mother about this incident. She maintained that this was reported to the police and she said that she had received counseling. also mentioned that she had a boyfriend with whom she had had a sexual relationship. According to , her mother hit her when she found out. According to her mother reported this to the Sydenham Police Station. Her mother also took her to Hospital, where she was also referred to a social worker. According to she received counseling as well.

Earlier this year, I met one of the participants who is no longer at our school, I heard that she shared a relationship with a boy from the informal settlement. I asked her about this and she acknowledged this.

I mentioned these findings to my supervisor and to my principal and informed her that I am obliged to report these findings. I contacted the police station and drew up an affidavit, stating what was said to me by the participants.

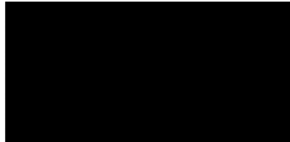
D. Jewnarain

Appendix 17: Letter from Child Welfare

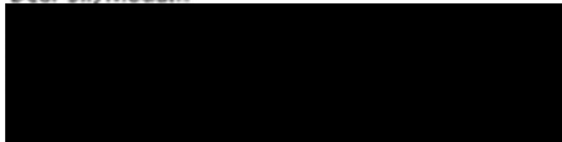
CHILD WELFARE
Durban and District

You Ref:

Our Ref:



Dear Sir/Madam



Kindly note, this Society acknowledges receipt of your faxed referral in terms of the form 22 abuse notification in respect of the abovenamed received on 20/11/12.

This Society wishes to inform you that the child concerned had approached the Social Worker on 14/09/12 at the school after the career presentation held for grade 7 learners. She reported that she had been raped by a stranger in 2011 at the community she resides in. She informed that the incident was seen by a community member who reported it to her biological mother. According to the child concerned the mother had reported it to the police, and she was taken for medicals at [redacted] Hospital and seen by the hospital social worker for the necessary counselling. At that stage the child was informed about the Society's role in terms of speaking to her mother and ensuring the necessary investigations and support are offered.

On 17/09/12 a school visit was undertaken. [redacted] who is the Head Of Department – Junior Primary at your school informed that the child concerned had revealed to her that she had a boyfriend who had sexually abused her last year. According to the Educator the child was a group participant for [redacted] University Studies. This Society's Social worker informed her of the protocols of this Society, as the child had approached the social worker, and the necessary investigative process would have to take place. The teacher was also informed that, prior to this, the Society had not received any notification of abuse from the school. According to the Educator she had reported the matter to the Principal who had completed the form 22 and directed it to Department of Education Social Worker. However this Society had received no child abuse notification.

Tel: (031) 312 9313 • Fax: (Admin):(031) 312 3147 • Fax: (Social Work): (031) 303 4780
Email: director@childwelfaredurban.org.za
20 Clarence Road, Durban 4001, P O Box 47589 Greyville 4023 • Website: http://www.childwelfaredurban.org.za
Nonprofit Organisation (002-259 NPO). A Community Chest Member

On 20/09/12 another school visit was undertaken to meet with the child, and to do a joint home visit with the Social Auxillary Worker. However, the child was not present at school and she informed her mother is in employment. A telephone call was made to the child's mother on the same day and she informed the incident occurred in May/June 2011 by a known male that the child had reported was her boyfriend. Prior to this, the mother did not know that the child had a boyfriend.However after hearing about the incident from a community member, she reported to South African Police services at Sydenham Police Station in August 2011.The child was then taken for medicals at [redacted] Hospital and seen by a social worker at the hospital for the necessary counselling services.

A follow up telephone call was made to [redacted] Hospital –Department of Social Work and it was confirmed that the child was seen by a social worker for counselling and referred to Childline for therapy on 01/09/11.
It was also confirmed that the case was reported to the Police and that medicals was completed.

On 14/11/12 a telephone call was received from your educator, [redacted] requesting a reference number or feedback regarding the case. This Society's Social Worker informed that the form 22 Notification of Abuse was not received from the school after the incident was reported according to Educator by the child in May/June 2012, and that if the school requires feedback it must be requested from the Principal. Further to this if the University requires feedback about the case in terms of the case being reported then the request should be in writing from the University and directed to the Society.

We thank you

Yours Faithfully

[redacted]

SOCIAL WORKER

[redacted]

[redacted]

SOCIAL WORK MANAGER

Appendix 18: Proof of editing

Imprimatur Editing
Professional Academic Copyediting
31 July 2018

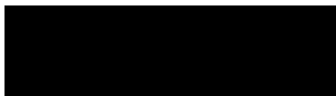
Editorial Certificate

This document certifies that the PhD listed below was edited for English language, grammar, punctuation, word choice and spelling by Sarah A Bologna Editing.

Manuscript Title: Primary school girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence.

Author: Dhanasagrie Jewnarain.

Signed:



Sarah Bologna
Sarah A. Bologna Editing

Appendix 19: Turn it in Report

Turnitin Originality Report

- Processed on: 17-Nov-2019 03:06 PM CAT
- ID: 1215361059
- Word Count: 82764
- Submitted: 1

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