

**Sweetening the pot: Negotiation of agency and
(re)construction of self for young, Black African
UKZN female students in Sugar Daddy relationships**

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Date: 14 December 2018

DECLARATION - PLAGIARISM

I, Nolwazi Pearl Ngcobo, declare that this dissertation is my own work. It is submitted for a PhD (Social Work), at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). The research described in this thesis was undertaken in the School of Applied Human Sciences, University KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, under the supervision of Professor Vishanthie Sewpaul

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DEDICATION

In Memory of

My late Paternal Grandfather Mkhulu Adam Zietzman Khowa

“uNolwazi – The possessor of knowledge”

1928 –1999

AND

My late Maternal Grandmother Gogo Nokuhlakanipha maMbatha Ngubane

1917 to 2004

Abstract

Informed by feminist post-structuralism and sexual script theory, in this study I investigated how young African women negotiate agency in sugar daddy (SD) relationships and their construction and (re)construction of self. The nineteen female students interviewed for this study drew on various religious, cultural, racial and class sexual scripts in their SD relationship experiences. Exploration of their formative sexual scripts or discourses brought to light how they understand, experience, and make choices about sexuality in their everyday lives as young African women who are students, in a post-apartheid context.

From home (*ekhaya*) to university (*evava*), participants' narratives suggested continuities and discontinuities. A discourse and content analysis of narratives revealed how these offer opportunities and constraints for young women in their attempt to exercise agency. Although in SD relationships, participants challenge the traditional scripts of love, intimacy and desire, the coercive effects of dominant ideologies of femininity are ever-present. Hegemonic masculinities in particular, function to regulate subject positions, and participants make choices within such regulations, thus highlighting the complementarity of emphasised femininity and hegemonic masculinity. It then appears that alongside choices and ability to challenge hegemonic masculinities in SD relationships, young African women's discourses and practices also act to reaffirm them.

The analysis of the narratives further revealed that young women are aware of the risks that SD relationships pose whether to their health, and or the 'self', and strategies to circumvent these risks within a neoliberal context are critically analysed. While these strategies position young women not as powerless victims, they simultaneously expose the broader societal conditions that constrain young women's choices. Drawing on the results of the study and the literature, I make recommendations for social work education, practice and research.

Keywords

Young, African women, femininity, feminist post-structuralism, sexual script, sexuality, sugar daddy relationship.

Glossary of Terms

TERM	MEANING
<i>African</i>	African, in this study, refers to historically, culturally and politically constructed experiences of young women, of indigenous African descent. These include discourses or scripts of being ‘black’ in South Africa.
<i>Ekhaya</i>	IsiZulu word for ‘at home.’ Ikhaya – ‘home’
<i>Evava</i>	Colloquial term for ‘at University.’ Ivava – ‘university’
<i>Female</i>	The word ‘female’ in its primary usage, is an adjective. In this study, I refer to female students, and not as a noun - instead I use ‘woman.’
<i>Sugar daddy (SD)</i>	Also locally termed a ‘blesser’, refers to an older man who bestows gifts or or money on younger women.
<i>Ukushela</i>	To propose love
<i>Ukuqoma</i>	To accept love proposal
<i>Young</i>	Young people in South Africa are defined as those between the ages of fourteen to thirty-five (National Youth Commission Act, 1996; National Youth Development Policy Framework, 2002).

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Chapter One:

Blessed to be a blessing

1.1 Introduction

“I had different types of men approach me and most of them would play with my feelings, fool around with me and after having sex they’d dump me. This got me thinking, ‘why can’t I get something out of this as well?’ We always have sex for mahala (free), why don’t we do it for our own gain?”

(Forbes Africa, 18 August 2017)

In an interview with Forbes Africa, Amanda Cele, a qualified Information Technology graduate from South Africa, openly narrated her experience of a Sugar Daddy (SD) relationship or “blesser” relationship. Within the South African context, blessers are older men who “‘bless’ young girls [‘blessees’] and in turn expect sexual favours and these blessings include but are not limited to cash, gifts –anything from mobile telephones to cars, or even apartments” (Bezuidenhout, 2018, p. 10). Amanda’s excerpt above suggests that she is a proud ‘blessee’, and has identified that she can “do sex for [her] own gain”, and in a way espouses sexual power.

Meanwhile, during an interview with Leanne Manas (SABC 2, 03 August, 2018), a Congolese blesser, Serge Cabonge, mentioned how ‘blessing’ was what he was brought on this earth for. He continued to say that he was willing to ‘bless’ young women who knew their ‘worth’, and most disturbing was his emphasis on having unprotected sex with so called ‘blessees’, since he had “a right to enjoy the power of his money to the fullest.” Soon thereafter, social media went buzzing with responses to Serge’s interview, and below I present a few from a total of 279 tweets.

Replying to @LeanneManas Leanne is promoting nothing but doing her job reporting news as they happen. You can't deny this is an interesting topic even Google says so. Many people are curious about this phenomenon so hey! Replying to @LeanneManas

But this trend is everywhere plus this Serge guy is overrated from that first time RSA saw him #Checkpoint episode on @eNCA in 2017. Serge guy wants to remain relevant really... Look, we all talking about him - he got a (good or bad) reaction out of all of us anyway...

#MorningLive can we acknowledge the truth. Families encourage their girl children to meet "someone who can look after you." My interpretation is; find a "Blessor," we are not encouraged to find love.

Replying to @MorningLiveSABC Having a sugar daddy or Blessor is more dangerous than being a prostitute #MorningLive

The above media extracts lay bare the multiple, gendered and contradictory interpretations of SD relationships. They also demonstrate how language shapes subjective and agentic experiences by providing the vocabulary for who can bless and who can be blessed. This thesis investigates the various discourses employed by young women as they engage in SD relationships, along with the discursive power within which they operate. Discursive power, according to Fraser (1989, p. 20), entails a “valorisation of statement forms and the concomitant devaluation of others”, one example being patriarchal power. Patriarchal power ensures that women retain positions of inferiority in society, while men remain in superior positions. However, in this study, patriarchy is not isolated from “class, race, ethnicity and other axes of power relation” (Butler, 1999, p. 6), which this study demonstrates throughout as intersecting, unstable, and contestable in SD relationships.

An understanding of SD relationships has thus far relied on HIV/AIDS statistics that highlight inordinate rates of infection for young women between the ages of 15 to 24 years (PEPFAR, 2018). These have found women three times more likely to be HIV positive than young men within the same age group and such statistics have been used to caution young women on the dangers of SD relationships, yet leave out the young women’s experience of navigating that ‘danger’, and if at all, they construct such navigation in these relationships as dangerous.

Knowledge about how young African women negotiate agency within SD relationships will deepen our understanding of these hierarchically structured relationships. This thesis provides space for young women’s narratives about their engagement in SD relationships, their negotiation of agency, and the meanings that they attribute to the relationship. This study subscribes to the view that young African women interact with multiple and competing discourses that shape constructions of self; these are not static but shift. In addition, this study rejects simplistic binary notions of power as suggesting ‘the powerful’ and ‘the powerless’, but accepts power as “concurrent and relational” (May, 2015, p. 4).

Power intersects, and its “oppressive practices can be hidden in plain view or subtly embedded in liberatory frameworks or political strategies” (May, 2015, p. 4). In this study, in order to locate hidden power and meanings, I needed to “think beyond [...] familiar boundaries” (p. 4) of oppression. An intersectional lens to operations of power in SD relationships is useful because:

“Intersectionality contests conventional ways of thinking about domination, subordination, and resistance: it approaches privilege and oppression as concurrent and relational and attends to within-group differences and inequalities, not just between-group power asymmetries” (May, 2015, p. 4).

In disrupting linear accounts of the privileged and the oppressed, particularly in SD relationships, this study presents the experiences expressed by the nineteen young African women, and does not include men. As “an antidote to centuries of ignoring women’s ideas altogether or having men speak for women” (Reinharz, 1992, p. 19), I have intentionally taken this political decision. This study aims to provide insights into sexual norms or sexual scripts that young women adopt, adapt, or challenge as university students, and how they negotiate agency and construct the ‘self’ in SD relationships.

In this chapter, I provide a brief background on SD relationships against which I formulated the study’s problem statement. Thereafter, I discuss research questions that guided the study, the rationale and anticipated value of the study, brief methodological reflections, the theoretical framework, lastly a preview of the thesis chapters.

1.2 SD relationships in Africa

A SD relationship, according to Luke (2003; 2005), involves a young woman who exchanges sex with a man, at least ten years her senior, for gifts or money. My introduction of this chapter suggests that Amanda and Serge are somehow in agreement with Luke’s definition. SD relationships have also been referred to as transactional sex, or sex with benefits. There have been contestations around their distinction from prostitution, which often involves a predetermined once off payment, agreed upon by both parties, unlike the boyfriend/girlfriend resonance in SD relationships (Hunter, 2002; Wojcicki, 2002). This distinction, however, between the two is somewhat blurry (see chapter two), even blurrier is the question of what qualifies as a ‘sugar daddy’ relationship, and what does not?

Categorisation of ‘sugar daddy’ relationships is complex and fluid as young women often straddle betwixt and between contradictory subject positions (Hoefinger, 2013; Miller, 2012). As such, this thesis accepts that young people enter university with scripts, be it racial, gendered, classed, cultural, or sexual scripts (see chapter five). Therefore, I recognised the multiple subject positions that participants in my study straddled, as ‘young’, ‘African’, ‘women’, and ‘students’ and how these multiple subject positions may intersect to constrain or enable certain choices for them, such as the choice to engage in a SD relationship, as well as choices during the relationship. In this sense, SD relationships provide a platform for scripts to be enacted, challenged, re-appropriated, a process which Simon and Gagnon (1986) render infinite.

For feminist post-structuralism, the subject is always in the process of formation, thus can never be completely formed (Butler, 1990, 1997, 1999, & 2004). Therefore, while I do not deny that SD relationships may resonate with the girlfriend/boyfriend script, and those involved may not identify as sex workers (Wojcicki, 2002), searching further for this difference violates the theoretical underpinnings of this study. Instead, one of the feminist post-structural aims is to destabilize discourses that sustain this distinction of one against the other. This study aims to use ‘talk’ as framed by young African women themselves in order to gain insight into how dominant feminine sexual scripts are constructed, and how performances in SD relationships accept, challenge or reinforce their dominance. It is thus significant to understand dominant and contextual scripts and their negotiation within SD relationships.

In South Africa, specifically in KwaZulu-Natal, where the current study was conducted, conceptualisation of young women’s engagements in sexual relationships, with older men, have been viewed through a risk or danger lens. I discussed earlier how this is influenced by reports of the increased HIV prevalence for young women between the ages of 15 to 24 when compared to the prevalence for young men within the same age group (HSRC, 2018; PEPFAR, 2018; UNAIDS, 2012, 2014). In their 2017 survey, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) noted progress made by South Africa in addressing the HIV epidemic as prescribed by the UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets (HSRC, 2018). At least 85 percent of people aged fifteen to sixty-four years, living with HIV (PLHIV) were aware of their status, with at least 70 percent of this group already on antiretroviral treatment (ART), and 86 percent reported from the latter group virally undetectable. However, the study also found that women generally had higher rates of HIV prevalence than males, with more pronounced disparities among young women

between the ages fifteen to twenty-four years (HSRC, 2018). This suggests a continued gendered spread of HIV.

Such statistics have informed health and social interventions, such as the ‘Sugar daddies destroy lives campaign’ championed by the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), Minister of Health. In an attempt to address the high rates of HIV infections among young women, Dr Sibongiseni Dlomo launched a campaign in 2012, titled; ‘Sugar daddies destroy lives’, which featured in billboards, newspapers and other print media sources around KwaZulu-Natal (City Press, 2012). This campaign aimed to highlight the dangers of sex with sugar daddies, which include amongst many, unplanned pregnancies (Nkani, 2012), gender-based violence and HIV infection for young girls. Such a strategy was significant, considering that the province of KwaZulu-Natal had been (and continues to be) found to have the highest HIV prevalence in the whole of South Africa since 2005 (PEPFAR, 2018; Shisana, Rehle, Simbayi, Zuma, Jooste, Zungu, Labadarios, Onoya, et al., 2014; UNAIDS 2012). Below is one of the billboards:



Figure 1: Caption translation: Careful! This could be your daughter

Bhana (2017, p. 1) criticized “parameters” of the above campaign as “shallow” because of failure to acknowledge the multiple ways in which power relations in SD relationships are contested, reshaped, and challenged by young people who experience them. Even teenage girls in Bhana’s study refused to define their romantic ideals with SDs as framed within the survival sex paradigm (see chapter two) and instead identified as “active agents, seeking meaning and hope in their lives” albeit within the constraints of township life (Bhana, 2017, p. 1-2). This is how I perceived participants in my study, as active young African women (agents) who in their everyday relations seek hope and meaning. This study also understands how young women negotiate agency and make meaning “in the context of [...] choices” (Myumbo, 2018, p. 53) that are available to them, as students at university.

1.3 SD relationships at universities

There is a misconception that university students' dating practices seldom prioritize love beyond just 'hooking up' (Lamont, Roach, & Kahn, 2018). In their study, Lamont et al. (2018) observed how hook-ups amongst LGBTQ students in America were "premised on mutual respect and pleasure" (p. 2). However, this study also highlighted the extent to which participants drew upon essentialist understandings of gender, thus reinforcing what they sought to challenge. Paying attention to how young African women in my study framed their understanding of their gender performances was significant, which like Allen (2013) I perceived as not devoid of love, intimacy and desire.

Caldwell, Caldwell, and Quiggin (1989) have been blamed for propagating understandings of loveless African sexuality, and were criticized, even by their fellow Anthropological scholars (Ahlberg, 1994; Heald, 1995; Hlabangane, 2014). The loveless African sexuality script is deeply entrenched not only in Western views of African sexualities, but also by Africans themselves. A significant study undertaken in Africa with young women at a Zimbabwean University by Masvawure (2010a), found that students put their pursuit for flashiness on campus at the forefront. Being flashy was demonstrated through young women's association with rich older men – the *mudhara*'s, wearing of expensive outfits, and through eating food not bought at University canteens. This did not suggest absence of love, but rather its coexistence with flashiness.

Prioritization of this neoliberal flashiness may, in the above case, mask the constraining milieu of SD relationships, and simultaneously re-inscribe Caldwell et al.'s claim of a loveless Africa. However, Masvawure (2010a) did find that 'love' was present in these relationships, which then expands our understanding of love as socially constructed, and inextricably linked to money in Sub-Saharan Africa. Radebe (2012, p. 3) in her South African study of young people's sexual meaning, argued that "relationships are complex, and that, for young people may simultaneously provide space(s) to explore life", yet also space to circumvent the constraining conditions within which they find themselves. Exploration in this study refers to young people's explorations or negotiations of love, intimacy and desire albeit within constraints, which may include the neoliberalist demands of university spaces (see chapter two).

This study disrupts the dominant public health discourses, which often portray young African women's sexual experiences from a perspective of coercion within SD relationships. Such

discourses justify the need for ‘saving’ young women from being ‘destroyed’ by older men with power. This study thus unearths the complex nuances of young African women’s experiences in SD relationships, and within a university context. This finds support in Chege (2011, p. 110), who argued that “exploring the [*discursive*] setting and the reasons why women have continued to experience what they experience... helps to validate women’s claims about their worlds [*italics added*].” It is against this background that I constructed my key research questions.

1.4 Research questions

In this study, I examine how young African women negotiate, accept and reconstruct meanings during their involvement in SD relationships. To do this I conducted in-depth interviews with nineteen young African female students who were in SD relationships, guided by the following key research questions.

1. What are the sexuality scripts adopted by young African female students in SD relationships?
2. How do these female students construct and negotiate love, intimacy and desire in their sexual exchange ‘relationships’?
3. How do they construct their control and agency in sexual exchanges within SD relationships?
4. What are the limitations [and possibilities] of agency within these relationships?

The above four questions are consistently interrogated throughout the thesis, and I deliberate more in-depth on them in the conclusion and recommendations chapter.

1.5 Rationale and anticipated value of the study

South Africa (SA) upholds a constitution that provides for the equal rights of all racial groups, with emphasis on addressing imbalances imposed by colonial and apartheid policies (Fihlani, 2012; RSA, 1996). One of these was the racial and gendered imbalances of the past, particularly in the education and workplace environment. In heeding this call, the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) aspires to be “free of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, race, gender, class, nationality, religion, sexual orientation and disability” (UKZN Transformation Charter¹, p. 1).

¹ <https://www.ukzn.ac.za/wp-content/miscFiles/docs/general-docs/the-ukzn-transformation-charter.pdf>

Out of 46 520 registered UKZN students in 2016, at least 72 percent (from 64% in 2012) were African (33 292), and the 28 percent comprised Indians (10 172), Whites (1 885), Coloureds (968), and 199 categorized as ‘Other’ (UKZN @ a Glance², 2017). Fifty-seven percent of the student population comprised women, a consistency since 2012 (58%) (Portfolio Committee on Higher Education & Training, 2015)³. Notably, these figures show that women dominate the university space.

What do these numbers mean? South Africa’s Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill (SAWEGEB) insist that, fifty percent of decision-making positions should be held by women (RSA, 2013). This legislation, at a macro-level, is deemed responsible for deploying mechanisms of enforcements, thus qualifying as an apparatus of power (Foucault, 1978). The results from the recent UKZN 2018 SRC (Student Representative Council - SRC) elections suggest that we have an even longer road to travel. Out of the thirty-seven newly elected SRC members across four campuses, only ten were women, and one campus with zero women representation.

Although SRC elections, or women representation in the SRC, are not the focus of this study, they resonate with the arguments of this study, that render gender as socially and discursively constructed. The question I reflect on is, how the subject position of African female students had been constituted, and if in any way the script of ‘leadership’ had been included. Ely and Fletcher (cited in Dlamini, 2017, p. 20) provide some wisdom in this regard.

“Gender does not exist in isolation from other dimensions of difference, such as race, ethnicity, class, sexual identity, religion, age, and nationality. We all inhabit, enact, and respond to many different social identities simultaneously. Similarly, institutions are not only gendered, they reflect and reinforce divisions along other axes of difference as well [which] operate simultaneously to create interlocking systems of power.”

My study carries this argument throughout, in that I seek to explore the extent to which young women’s ideologies of femininity presuppose and normalize their subject positions, and to what extent women themselves challenge, or reaffirm those ideologies. In my acknowledgements, I thank my ‘home manager’, who is my ‘helper’. We often engage in dialogue around gender inequalities, whether while watching ‘soapies’ or news. She often remarks by saying, “*sisi nina kungcono nifundile, uthini ngathi?*” which loosely translates to

² <https://www.ukzn.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/At-a-Glance-2017.pdf>

³ <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/23398/>

“sisi, at least you are educated, what about us?” Indeed, she is correct in that ideology can be constraining, and limits one’s access to possibilities, on the other hand, Sewpaul (2016) argued, “if people are provided with alternative learning experiences, whether formal or informal, they have the ability to disrupt dominant thinking” (p. 120). As a lecturer, who teaches a module on Gender, AIDS and Violence, this argument speaks to the extent to which curriculum design and pedagogical approaches allow students, and us to challenge commonsensical scripts that are *inscribed in our blood*, as reflected in the title of Sewpaul’s (2013) article. I concede that this demands for a lengthier study. In this study, I sought to gain insight into how sexual scripts are constituted across contexts, how they frame choices and how young African women re-appropriate or challenge them in SD relationships. Nonetheless, embedded in the theoretical and methodological strengths of the study, I explicate moments where I was able to challenge scripts that participants had naturalised over time (see chapter four, five & six). With a sample size of nineteen, this may seem like a drop in the ocean, but it is one of many ways of ‘undoing’ gender (Butler, 2004), which this thesis attempts to stimulate.

This study recognises that the ‘doing’ and ‘undoing’ of gender, race, ethnicity, class, sex, and religion, occurs within power operations that intersect, and without knowledge of how these powers operate, how we intervene as social workers may in fact confirm rather than disrupt them. Before joining academia in 2013, I had worked in the field of HIV for eight years, which also inspired me to explore narratives of HIV positive women within a health care setting for my Masters study (see Ngcobo, 2012). Upon reflection, I recall incidences where I went beyond the call of duty to protect the women I worked with from partners who had repeatedly caused them physical harm and infected them with HIV.

As a young social worker, it was my professional duty to protect the ‘interests’ of the women. This often backfired. I recall one particular incident where I had arranged shelter for one ‘survivor’ and arranged for her employer to transfer her to another work site, only to get a call later in the day, telling me everything was ‘sorted’ and how I had been of assistance. I was perplexed, until months later, I came across the woman who explained that she had threatened to leave him –him being the ‘perpetrator’, and told him that if he abused her again, she would tell his family that ‘he’ was HIV positive. Also, he had to decide how their relationship proceeded, she was tired of cohabiting, and especially since he (allegedly) had infected her. Her experience was not unique; a number of women remain in abusive relationships for various reasons, with conceptualisation of self and other being deeply imbricated in this. I still wonder how many other women “on the basis of biological manifestations” have embodied “social

descriptors and cultural extensions that have come to be widely accepted and naturalized” (Sewpaul, 2013, p. 117). My concern did not end there, I wondered how entrenched this script is within communities, how various institutions leave it unchallenged, in the name of ‘family matters’ and at what point can we say, it is ‘sorted.’

This is just one of the many cases that I came across as a social worker; many of them left me questioning whether I was in the right profession. I was left with more questions than answers: Was it the money? Did he threaten to kill her? Was it love? Did her ultimatum work – that he changes or she leaves and tell his family? All these questions were left unanswered. As I matured in my profession, I became more aware of the discourses and scripts that shape our choices; how, not one, but multiple scripts shape our decisions, and how power transcends the ‘survivor’/ ‘perpetrator’ dichotomy, and is characterised by fluidity.

As social workers, we are expected to not only gain insights from studies that utilize a feminist post-structural lens to problematize this power, but to act on these. This is consistent with Sewpaul’s (2016, p. 117) assertion that:

“Social workers are at the forefront of dealing with various forms of discriminations and their consequences. Thus, understanding the underlying dynamics, our roles in their reproduction, and the strategies that we may use to deconstruct dominant racist and gendered thinking is important in our teaching, practice, and research endeavours”

This coheres with the vision of the Global Social Work Statement on Ethical Principles (IASSW, 2018, p. 1), which recognises “the inter-subjectivity and inter-relatedness of human dignity and human rights” and I situate my study, within this agenda. Spicker (1990) argued that a self-determining subject is not one who is free or autonomous, and my study provides narratives that portray this (mis)understanding by participants (and myself). In essence, this study contributes to a nuanced understanding of “*the right to self-determination*” in the context of SD relationships, and to what extent this right is constrained or enabled.

Situated within a “premier university of African scholarship⁴”, this research contributes towards the decolonisation agenda. Questions have been raised about who qualifies to research and write about women’s sexualities within the African context (Bennett, 2008; Tamale, 2014). This study recognises the historical harm caused by researchers such as Caldwell and colleagues and their demoralizing discourses on African sexualities, and thus rejects universal

⁴ <https://www.ukzn.ac.za/wp-content/miscFiles/publications/ResearchReport2005.pdf>

notions of African women. Doing so is not to discount the African philosophies, such as Ubuntu – Humanity, and interconnectedness of all things that have underpinned African ways of ‘doing.’ Instead my theoretical stance embraces “the Power of One, the Power of Many and the Power of Now, which when realised – grants one moral authority and integrity” (Sewpaul, 2016, p. 37).

1.6 Theoretical Framework

Deciding which theoretical framework to use for this study was not easy, due to my obsession with finding the ‘correct’ theory that could skilfully address the questions posed in this study. This proved impossible for a study that sought to explore sexual scripts or discourses that shape the process of ‘becoming’ a young African woman, specifically how young women position themselves within those discourses (Weedon, 1987) and how their engagement in SD relationships produces, enhances, or contravenes pre-existing sexual scripts (Gagnon & Simon, 1974). It was evident that “no single theoretical perspective better accounts for the complexity of human sexual motivation and behaviours” (McCormick, 2010, p. 91).

In this study, I draw from feminist post-structural theories, namely Butler’s (1990, 1993, 1997, 1999, & 2004) theory of gender performativity and Foucault’s (1977, 1985, 1987, 1990) analysis of power, which open up conversations for non-essentialist views of young African women’s negotiation of agency, not as universal and fixed, but as intersecting, relational and discursive. I also draw from Gagnon and Simon’s (1973), and Simon and Gagnon’s (1986, 2003) sexual script theory as a conceptual framework within social constructionism, which is premised on the argument that all social behaviour, including sexual behaviour, is socially scripted (*ibid*). Sexual script theory allowed me to analyse young African women’s sexual scripts across all levels of engagement.

While both feminist post-structuralism and sexual script theory were developed in reaction to dominant essentialist models of human sexuality, there are points of divergence and convergence (Beres, 2013), particularly in their conceptualization of power and gender. In this study I follow Jackson and Scott (2010), who argue for sexual script theory’s “continued relevance to contemporary feminist concerns, particularly in its utility for theorizing the complexity and multidimensionality of sexual life” (p. 812). Below, I discuss sexual script theory and its relevance to feminist post-structural theory, which is the overarching theoretical framework of this study.

1.6.1 Sexual scripts: intrapsychic, interpersonal and cultural

One of the objectives of this study was to explore sexual scripts of young African women in SD relationships. Dominant to social constructionism is the notion of scripts (social or sexual), which Wiederman (2015, p. 7) describes as “mental representations individuals construct and then use to make sense of their experience, including their own and others’ *social or sexual* behaviour [italics added].” Gagnon and Simon’s (1973) sexual script theory provided this study with an appropriate framework for understanding the SD phenomenon along with other options available for sexual behaviour among university students. This social constructionist framework renders “sexual behaviour as guided by sexual scripts [which include] culturally constructed social norms internalized through socialization and modified in interpersonal interaction” (Berntson, Hoffman, & Luff, 2014, p. 150). Jackson (1999) along with other social constructionists (Burr, 1995; Frith & Kitzinger, 2001; Gagnon & Simon, 1973; Gergen & Gergen, 2003; Weeks, 2006) view sexual behaviour as a complex learning outcome whereby:

“...the individual develops a capacity to interpret and enact sexual scripts. These scripts serve to organize both internal states and outward behaviour, enabling us to interpret emotions and sensations as sexually meaningful, and providing us with methods of recognizing potential sexual situations and acting effectively within them” (Jackson, 1999, p. 46).

The above definition suggests that sexual scripts are interpreted, enacted, and situational, thus changeable and adaptable which, in some way, complements the broader framework of this study. In essence, sexual scripts offer the guidelines for acceptable sexual conduct, which for Gagnon and Simon (1986) operate at three different levels, namely intrapsychic, interpersonal, and cultural which I discuss in relation to my study with young African women in SD relationships.

In the construction of individualized sexual scripts, which occurs at the intrapsychic level, this framework positions young African women in my study as capable of evaluating, interpreting, and synthesizing interpersonal and cultural scripts (Berntson et al., 2014). A criticism of this level has been its assumption that “individual women have the power to make change” (Beres, 2013), which indirectly espouses blame when change does not happen. Of significance within this level is the space it provides for participants to fantasise, memorise and rehearse sexual behaviour while also deliberating on the challenges of implementing these at an interpersonal level (Simon & Gagnon, 1986; 2003).

At the interpersonal level of scripting, I viewed young African women's everyday engagements within the university context, as not only enacting scripts but as creating and "adapting the general guidelines" acquired from their sociocultural encounters (Wiederman, 2015, p. 8). Within the university context, interpersonal sexual scripts are deployed by peers, close friends in particular –George Herbert Mead's (1934) significant others. This study accepts that the university context allows for significant others to communicate, perform and sanction normative sexuality. However, scripting theory has been criticized for failing to consider power relations that shape gender productions, in particular the scripting of 'choices' available for women (Brickel, 2006).

Although I viewed these performances as not unchanging, they still offered insight into the acceptability, or in Butler's (1999) language –intelligibility of various sexual behaviours, including within the university context. The methodological process of extrapolating these intelligible sexual scripts is discussed in detail in chapter four, while their mutually dependent and relational conventions are analysed in chapter six (see subtheme "Nika, Nika – I give, you give) –against the backdrop of even broader cultural scripts.

At a macro-level, cultural scripts or scenarios offer broad guidelines for sexual behaviour which generally dictate the who's, how's, when's and why's of sexual behaviour (Berntson et al., 2014). This lens enabled an understanding of how cultural sexual scripting takes place (see chapter five) and how young African women in an urban university enacted and negotiated these scripts in interpersonal SD relationship scripts (see chapter five). Scripting theory presupposes an individual who is able to "achieve intrapersonal desire" (p. 151) and this study problematizes the extent to which 'desire' can ever be a choice. Weedon (1987) argued that "everything we do", such as the doing of desire, "signifies compliance or resistance to dominant norms of what it is to be a woman" (p. 83) or a man. This study therefore uses feminist post-structural understandings of young African female students' 'doing' of love, intimacy and desire in SD relationships.

Simon and Gannon's (1986) theory does not consider other cultural forces, particularly gendered power relations that may constrain young African women's ability to make 'free' choices and exercise assertiveness" (Beres, 2013, p. 5) in SD relationships. This theory offers an understanding of how sexual behaviour is socially constructed, but lacks in its interrogation of "underlying assumptions and beliefs represented by the way people talk about their sexuality" (Beres, 2013, p. 8).

1.6.2 Feminist post-structuralist theory

Jackson and Scott (2010, p. 812) argued against what they call “theoretical amnesia”, which they criticized mainstream feminism for. Theoretical amnesia, although not universal, refers to the neglect by most feminists, of contributions by interactionist as well as other interpretive sociologists in understanding sexuality (ibid). In this thesis, I use feminist post-structuralism not to disqualify contributions of sexual script theory, but to deepen our understanding of power relations embedded in those scripts. In this thesis I refer to “sexual scripts” as a manifestation of “discourse” (Beres, 2013, p. 8), and thus use them interchangeably when analysing participants’ narratives of SD relationships.

Feminist post-structuralism is also not in opposition with other schools of feminism. Ramazanoglu (1993) emphasizes, using Foucault, theorists’ feeling of grandeur, and how even theorists that claim social justice, unknowingly deploy power. This study rejects such theoretical territorialism, which is in sync with the views of Ramazanoglu as well as Jackson and Scott mentioned above. In fact, Gavey (1989, p. 462) identified “its insistence on social and historical specificity” as a significant concern shared with social feminism. However, feminist post-structuralism further brings our attention to how language shapes our subjectivity (Weedon, 1987). For example, a young woman who has been accustomed to a certain way of ‘doing’ gender may be uncomfortable with accepting other ways of ‘doing.’ In the case of young African women moving to university (see chapter five), Weedon (1987) explains that universities may expose students to multiple and contradictory “ways of constituting the meaning of experience” (p. 33). As such, university students in my study may have been subjected to contradictory discourses which shaped their meaning of love, intimacy and desire, in relationships generally, and in SD relationships.

Drawing on Judith Butler (1990), as well as Foucault (1978, 1982, 1985, 1990), I discuss how feminist post-structuralism enabled my understanding of young African women’s multiple subject positions in their relationships with sugar daddies, and more broadly within their day-to-day relations. Below I discuss language, discourse, subjectivity and agency, as tenets of feminist post-structuralism, and how they relate to my study.

1.6.2.1 Language, Discourse, Subjectivity and Agency

Contrary to liberal humanist views of language as a transparent reflection and expression of how individuals experience their world, feminist post-structural theorists view “language [a]s

a site for political struggle” (Weedon, 1987, p. 9). Within this notion, “language is not the expression of unique individuality; it constructs the individual’s subjectivity in ways which are socially specific” (Weedon, 1987, p. 21). Feminist post-structuralists argue that it is not expression per se, but rather who owns the rights to express and whose expressions can become viable or intelligible (Butler, 1990). It is then through language that “gender norms produce the peculiar phenomenon of a natural sex, or a real woman” (Butler, 1988, p. 524). Therefore, it is not the natural, authentic sex per se, but the language used to naturalise the acceptable discourses of women within those contexts, and language offers individuals the vocabulary for ways of being, seeing and becoming.

Discourse in this sense is not synonymous with language, but refers to the socio-historically and socio-structurally constructed ideologies (Althusser, 1971). Butler (1990) and Sewpaul (2013) utilize Althusser’s understanding of the interpellated subject in order to engender understanding of how discourses shape and ultimately restrict subject position. Butler (1997) does so by including a famous scenario by Althusser depicting how an individual, upon hearing ‘Hey you there’, suddenly turns, thus taking up the subject position conferred to him/her by a police officer. Thus, through “interpellation or hailing”, individuals are recruited and transformed into subjects (Althusser, 1971, p. 162). For example, within a university context, a young woman may originate from rural areas and hailed by some as ‘rural or farm girl’, she may respond to that name and in turn perform that subject position. Therefore, by responding and performing the ‘rural/farm girl’ interpellation, she achieves subjectivity (see chapter five).

Using Butler’s definition of subjectivity, Aston (2016, p. 258) argued that becoming a subject requires one to “actively participate in their own social constitution” which then renders them subjective. Subjectivity, for Weedon (1987, p. 32) “refers to the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world.” Rejecting essentialist notions of subjectivity, the feminist post-structuralist movement contests the categorization of ‘woman’ for they argue that gender is socially constructed, and far from being stable. The instability of these constructions suggests that there can be no single definition of woman, in as much as there is no common “structure of patriarchy or masculine domination” (Butler, 1990, p. 3) oppressing women. Recognizing participants’ subjectivities as constantly fluctuating further engendered an understanding of subjectivities as multiple and fluid, thus not biologically fixed.

Subjection, according to Butler (1997, p. 84) is “neither simply the domination of a subject nor its production, but designates a certain kind of restriction in production”, and she adds that these designations’ “genesis” (p. 405) cannot be traced, thus constructing them as a given, and compelling individuals to accept them as natural and necessary. Therefore, discourses of sex, gender, race, class and ethnicity interpellated young African women to perform specific subjectivities, while rejecting others. For these performances to gain and retain intelligibility, they need consistent enactments, and this Butler refers to as performativity.

1.6.2.2 Performativity and agency

Performativity refers to the “stylized repetition of acts...that seek to approximate the ideal of a substantial ground of identity” but also recognises that through repetition, grounded identities become groundless, thus losing permanence (Butler, 1990, p. 97). Individuals thus perform specific identities, such as femininity without much consciousness, and these may appear as portrayal of fixed identities, although subjectively produced. Through repetition, Butler (1997) argues that, enactments become less predictable, some challenging and resisting the norm. Although this then suggests agency, it does not denote freedom from the norm, for “the subject who would resist such norms is itself enabled, if not produced by such norms” (Butler, 1993, p. 15). Young women in my study constantly negotiated agency in SD relationships, and agency in the Butlerian sense is “a reiterative or re-articulatory practice immanent to power, and not a relation of external opposition to power” (p. 15).

Agency by young African women in my study does not imply annihilation of power differentials, but rather power as discursively produced in and by SD relationships. Moreover, agency in SD relationships is not my denial of the constitutive conditions upon which these relationships occur, but I argue that the participants and I are “constituted by a social world they never chose” (Butler, 2004, p. 3) and that agency is negotiated within that world. It is not my intention to depict young African women as neither powerless nor powerful in SD relationships, but instead I aim to depict power as situationally and relationally produced within broader historical and shifting contexts, thus not fixed. The meanings that these relations produce were of significance to this study, specifically, participants’ “capacity to make meaning in interactions” (Willis, 2009, p. 98) with sugar daddies.

An understanding of agency as situational, discursive and relational opens up possibilities for all young women, irrespective of circumstances, to negotiate agency, while acknowledging heterogeneity in subject formations. This study sought to understand the ways in which young

African women negotiate agency, whilst navigating heteronormative feminine identity in SD relationships. How do young African women accept, adapt or reconfigure feminine identities in SD relationships? Moreover, to what extent choices made by young African women, are constrained, or enabled within heteronormative femininities.

1.6.2.3 Agency, choice and power

Feminist post-structural theorists argue that discourse creates subject (or subject position), and this occurs in a manner that is historical, contextual, and shifting. This challenges liberal humanist notions of choice and self-determination, as also reflected in the Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles (IASSW, 2018), which situate subjectivity outside of discourse but within “sovereign intentional consciousness” (Weedon, 1999, p. 116). The latter view suggests that young African women in SD relationships are autonomous and knowledgeable subjects, who make informed choices, as young adults and ignores the broader context that influences the construction of ‘informed choice’ (see Cannon, Lauve-Moon, & Buttell, 2015).

Simply assuming that all students make choices, such as the choice to engage in SD relationships, with consciousness and intentionality undermines what Sennet and Cobb (1972) referred to as ‘hidden wounds or injuries.’ These ‘hidden wounds or injuries’ include experiences of structural injustices i.e., class, race, gender and ethnicity, which students arrive with into university, which may be misunderstood. In the late 1970s Bourdieu, wrote about experiences of working-class students within middle class schools, and how their habitus (way of being) was interpreted as substandard by teachers and peers of middle class (Bourdieu, 1977). Therefore, for Bourdieu, young African women's choices in SD relationships need to be explored in relation to their location(s) of constitutionality. Doing such helped to circumvent what Foucault refers to as dominance in the pedagogical “truth game” (Foucault, 1985, p. 44). As a researcher, I needed to be aware of how I interpreted the ways of being of participants, within and across multiple contexts.

As such, I heeded Foucault’s (1985) instruction to not claim to “know more in a given truth game” in order “to avoid the effects of dominance” (p. 44) over participants. What strikes me as significant in Foucault’s (1985) quotation above is the recognition that power is ever present, thus cannot be avoided, and that it is not necessarily problematic, but as researchers, we need to employ research approaches that seek to minimize or ideally “avoid the effects of dominance” (p. 198). I discuss this at great length in chapter four (Methodology), and how this

‘dominance’ was not fixed, but shifted throughout, meaning that participants were not docile during the research process.

Criticizing liberal humanist notions of domination and subordination as separate categories, Allen (2008, p. 566) argues that this ignores the “contradictory state of being.” Like Allen (2008), a feminist post-structuralist lens enabled me to understand that “young people’s agency involves a simultaneous mastery and submission, which is a consequence of the process of subjectivity” (p. 565). In turn, this is how I interpreted their subject positions in SD relationships, as including mastery (possibilities) and submission (constraints).

Discourses enable and also constrain subjects (Allen, 2008). Recognition of constraints and possibilities provided deeper insight into how discourses of femininity (African) are taken up, rejected or reconfigured by young African women in SD relationships. Although this can simply denote agency, Davies (1991, p. 46) terms it “illusory”, bounded yet also profoundly familiar, which I found consistent with my study findings. For example, in SD relationships, participants often shifted “within and between discourses” which at times culminated in the invoking of “terms of one discourse to counteract, modify, refuse or go beyond the other” (p. 46). In a post-structural sense, we, and in this case young African women, “can only ever speak ourselves or be spoken into existence within the terms of available discourse” (Davies, 1991, p. 42), this disrupts liberal humanist understanding of ‘choice.’

Davies’ (1991) feminist post-structuralist understanding of choice, which I apply in my study, suggests that young women choose to engage in SD relationships, not because it is the only choice available, but because they have been shaped through discourses that enable such choice. For instance, within the university context, certain ways of ‘doing gender’ carry greater social currency, like exhibiting flashiness on campus (Masvawure, 2010b) while others may not.

As such, through discursive subjectification, one interesting example I found across most participants was their insistence of their SD relationships as not synonymous with ‘prostitution’ (see chapter six), even though I had not raised this distinction. A critical reading of their narratives suggests that reputational damage (see Ragonese, Bowman, & Tolman, 2017) invoked by this subject position, demands that this distinction between ‘sugar babies’ and ‘prostitutes’ be made. However, as I argue in chapter six, assuming a subject position that denies association with prostitutes is, in itself, circumscribed choice, as it discursively

normalizes SD relationships while stigmatizing or othering prostitution. This example epitomizes the discursive operations of power (Foucault, 1985).

In order to understand how power manifests in SD relationships I draw on Foucauldian (1982) understanding of power. Foucault (1982) argues that power creates subjects, and power alone does not exist but is relational. Unlike humanists' understanding of power as exerted over individuals, Foucault refers to power exerted through individual relations, as such "certain actions modify others" (Foucault, 1982, p. 212). Foucault's conception of power relates to how post-structuralists emphasize language and discourse, which I discuss throughout this section.

The concept of relational power, discussed earlier, challenges normative assumptions about power as being possessed by one, without the possibility of it shifting or being resisted. Understanding power as relational means that interactions are socially and institutionally constructed. As such, in this study, I needed to examine how discourses shape individuals' thoughts and behaviours such as in SD relationships, and how participants themselves attempt to shape multiple discourses. Power interweaves in my discussions, including how power operates parallel with discursive operations of resistance.

Resistance, as a discursive operation, suggests the presence of multiple and often competing discourses, which then creates binary distinctions "between contradictory subject positions" (Weedon, 1987, p. 125). In chapter five and six, using an intersectional lens to analyse discourses of race, class, gender, ethnicity and disability, critiquing binary discourses as dangerous (May, 2015), I specifically analysed how often participants invoked binaries to narrate authentic identities, or rather 'how things should be.' Like feminist post-structuralism, intersectionality rejects binary and one-dimensional thinking about power and subjectivity (Crenshaw, 1989, hooks, 1996; Lykke, 2010; May, 2015; Sewpaul, 2013). Oppressions, in this sense are multifaceted and manifest in horizontal and hierarchical ways, within and across groups.

In his study of experiences of 'Coloured' women from marginalised communities, Hulme (2012, p. 2) mentioned how feminist post-structuralism's focus on language opened "ways in which power relations are structured and maintained through the operation of discourses that legitimise the control that some people exert over others." As a white theologian in South Africa, Hulme admits limitations in his prior understandings of "complexities associated with 'Coloured' poverty" and thus states: "Feminist post-structuralist analysis therefore provided

me with the tools with which to question the rules by which social relations, including my own, have been and continue to be structured” (Hulme, 2012, p. 2).

Similarly, feminist post-structuralism enabled me to recognise ways that my privilege as a married woman, who is also a lecturer, could potentially create blind spots in my ability to adequately listen to, observe and understand nuances in discourses of young African women in SD relationships. I discuss this in detail in chapter four. I focus on language, not because it reflects meaning, but rather because it (re)produces meanings of experiences of young African women in SD relationships. Therefore, “meaning is not guaranteed but changes depending on the setting,” (Aston, 2016, p. 257).

Postcolonial thinkers have argued against nonchalant acceptance of universal (Western) categories by non-Western cultures (Mohanty, 2003). The danger lies not only in the acceptance of Western (see chapter three) definitions of gender oppression, but how this “oppression is subtly explained as symptomatic of an essential, non-Western barbarism” (Butler, 1990, p. 3). Olaniyan (2007) also adds that theories of subjectivity, such as feminist post-structuralism are “liberating for African studies” (p. 642) and suggest “epistemological humility of the West” (p. 61) thus furthering the decolonisation agenda. Feminist post-structuralism renders postcolonial subjects, in this case young African women in my study, as agentic, and that their agency is negotiated within constraining and enabling “situations and statuses conferred on them” (Scott, 1992, p. 34).

Agency for young African women in SD relationships manifested in many ways, such as in the manner in which they chose to respond, and interpret feelings and thoughts in these relationships. However, Bhana (2013) writes that the dominant constructions of young African women as submissive or epitomizing ‘*inhlonipho* – respect’, suggests that African women should at all times uphold ‘*inhlonipho*’ and submission, even if it is to their detriment (see chapter five and six). This study highlights the extent to which femininities are emphasized (Connell, 1987), resisted or re-emphasized by participants in SD relationships and how in the process, the self is continuously being formed.

The self, although constructed, can never be rendered stable but is always in a state of formation and reformation. As such, young African women’s sense of self can be formed during interactions and adaptations to a university context. In bringing the context upon which the self is constructed (see chapter five), I considered how participants navigated the transition from home to university (see *ikhaya* and *ivava* – chapter five) and how in the process some

scripts were redundant, adapted, or even falsified in order to fit in to 'university life' expectations. I discussed earlier Butler's (1999, 2004) concept of interpellation, which expands our understanding on how individuals perform their roles according to societal expectations. Understanding that there is not one expectation, but many and that there can be "no doer before the deed" (Butler, 2004, p. 194), the construction of the self or rather selves for young African women must be viewed as a complex process between dominant scripts and internalized scripts. Lloyd (2007) and Powell (2012) found feminist post-structural understandings of the self as relevant to social work practice and research as it rejects linear accounts of a coherent self towards a self that is shifting, and malleable.

Both scripting theory and feminist post-structural theory accept that there are guidelines for performances of femininity, and that young African women do not always strictly abide to these guidelines. For example, Weeks (2006, p. 57) insists that if that was not the case, "immorality', deviance and transgression would scarcely exist." This study recognised that feminine scripts or discourses of young African female students "set the parameters within which individual choices are available" and that these may be "oppositional as well as regulatory" (p. 57). Using a feminist post-structural lens to examine the discursive accounts of young African women in SD relationships, alongside sexual script theory to bring to light how sexual behaviour is scripted, was beneficial for this study.

1.7 Outline of chapters

The main aim of this study was to examine the discourses of young African women who are students, in order to understand how they construct gender and sexuality broadly, and more specifically in SD relationships. Dominant health discourses portray young women's participation in SD relationships as coercive, and the young women as passive. **This chapter** began with excerpts from a sugar baby and sugar daddy, and social media contentions around SD relationships in South Africa. Research questions, as well as the study rationale, and the anticipated value of the study, are discussed, and lastly the theoretical lens that guided the study is elucidated.

Chapter two provides a detailed overview of the discourses on SD relationships in sub-Saharan Africa. A critique of the literature reviewed suggests that SD relationships carry different and contradictory meanings across contexts. A focus on language used to frame this ambivalence, was however lacking in literature. This chapter highlights how no single understanding of SD or transactional sex relationship could be 'puzzle fitting', which may be unwelcome within essentialist rationalisation. Lastly, I look at discourses of SD relationships at institutions of higher learning. A prologue to chapter three points to the need to understand the socio-historical and socio-cultural constructions of African women's sexuality, along with power deployed within those constructions.

Chapter three explores the power/knowledge regimes in relation to young African women's social and sexual constructions, within the context of KwaZulu-Natal. This includes historical and contemporary constructions of young women's sexuality. Institutional structures such as colonialism, religion, capitalism, globalization, and politics provide insight into how young women have been constituted, as well as areas of continuities and discontinuities in constitutionalities.

Chapter four provides the methodology employed in this qualitative study. Fieldwork experiences are shared, my role as a researcher – and being researched, and reflexivity as a feminist research tool, is highlighted. I explain discourse analysis tenets and show how this guided my analysis, and lastly, the ethical considerations of the study are explained.

Chapter five presents the findings of the study in four themes: 'becoming a young African woman' looks at constructions and negotiations of gendered scripts from home, peers, schools, religion; 'university space: old and new scripts at intersection' looks at enactments of sexuality away from home and how scripts from home are disrupted or re-calibrated; 'heteronormative

markers of love and intimate relationships’ analyses relationship norms; and ‘stage surveillance’ turns the gaze towards sugar daddies, by profiling them to challenge normative discourse around them. This stage surveillance sets the tone for chapter six.

Chapter six thickens the plot by providing the stage, in this case, the SD relationship, as a gendered stage, and inclusive of many ‘stylized rehearsals’ and actual performances, that were mastered, and some mastered with misery. Multiplicities and contradictions are presented in four themes: ‘Negotiating courtship: ‘Ukushela/ukuqoma’; ‘negotiating love, intimacy, desire and money’; ‘negotiating safety in pleasure’; and ‘(un)managing threats and negotiating the self’. Together these themes demonstrate the nuances of agency, choice, and power in SD relationships and the strategies that young African women employ to navigate relationships, as well as the language they used to communicate this navigation during our engagements. The chapter focuses on the language used by participants to explain their strategic manoeuvres in SD relationships, as well as the periods where these strategies proved ineffective, or were just not recognised.

Chapter seven is presented in rewind, pause and forward mode. In rewind mode, I look back at the rationale of the study, the research questions and the literature that foregrounded my initial arguments. Still in the rewind mode, I observe and applaud notable performances with/without participants, and intermittently I pause to reflect on my power battles that I won, battles I surrendered, and power battles I shifted – all of which challenged and shaped my ‘sense of self’ as a woman in South Africa. In forward mode, I highlight significance for the future, and lastly recommend possible ‘choices’ for future studies. By doing so, I stress the pragmatic approach of social work’s use of theory to inform practice by moving beyond theoretical understandings of young African women in SD relationships.

Chapter Two:

Contesting the binaries: SD relationships in Sub-Saharan Africa

2.1 Introduction

In chapter one, I discussed how SD relationships have been found as the leading cause of HIV infections for young people between the ages of 15 to 24 years, thus providing biomedical understandings of the SD relationship. Various health interventions have been implemented, such as the ‘sugar daddies destroy lives’ campaign, in order to address this phenomenon in sub-Saharan Africa (Clowe, Shefer, Fouten, Vergnani & Jacobs, 2009; Leclerc-Madlala, 2003; Luke, 2005). These campaigns hold the perception that because young women enter into these relationships, whether by ‘choice’ or ‘coercion’, heightened awareness and empowerment may enforce change.

Defining what constitutes a SD relationship is not the focus of this study. However, I take cognisance of the many terms used to explain sexual exchange relationships that occur between young women and older men. In this study, I follow Okonkwo (2016) by interchangeably applying the terms transactional sex and SD relationships, to refer to “various non-professional and intermittent exchange of sex for indeterminate amounts of money and/or consumerist gifts” (p. 6). Noting the fluidity of discourse, this definition anticipates the ‘various’ meanings that young African women in my study constructed in SD relationships.

Literature reviewed highlights that SD relationships are not only difficult to define, but that they carry different and contradictory meanings across contexts. In addition, these relationships are neither unique to Sub-Saharan Africa (Niven, Jose, Rastorne, Nathan, 2018; Parker, Caćeres, Cayetano, Lima, Pecheny, & Aggleton, 2015; Wentzell, 2014) nor to heterosexual relations (Berg, Schmidt, Weatherburn, 2015; Masvawure, Sandfort, Reddy, Collier, & Lane, 2015). In this literature review, I critically review discourses on SD relationships within Sub-Saharan Africa, and this study focuses on sexual exchange relations that occur between men and women – for reasons mentioned in chapter one and chapter four.

Furthermore, this study recognises the multiple context specific “vocabularies” which bring attention to “socially relevant distinctions” (Formson & Hilhorst, 2016, p. 7), contested by this study. In contesting the binary notions of SD relationships in Sub-Saharan Africa, this review draws from Stoebenau, Heise, Wamoyi, and Bobrova’s (2016) analytical review on discourses of transactional sex in Sub-Saharan Africa, and in South Africa, Bhana and Pattman, (2011);

Hunter (2002); Leclerc-Madlala (2004); Shefer (1999) are amongst the few but emerging scholars that my study follows.

2.2 Discourses of SD relationships

Dominant discourses of young African women in SD relationships feature two lenses, firstly, the victimhood lens, which emphasizes economic dependence and vulnerabilities of women (Higgins, Hoffman, & Dworkin, 2010). The second lens is that of transactional sex beyond the need for survival. Thus, providing insight into the relationship possibilities extending beyond the transaction, and acknowledging the presence of love (Mojola, 2014; Selikow & Mbulaheni, 2013). In explicating the discourses of SD or transactional sex relationships in Sub-Saharan Africa, Stoebenau et al. (2016) succinctly explain:

- How SD relationships are shaped by various socio-economic and political factors that may be for consumption or basic survival needs.
- How meanings of SD relationships are located in discourses used by individuals – and implicit in these discourses are norms of acceptable and unacceptable sexual behaviours.
- How constructions of love, intimacy and desire feature strongly and exchanges coexist amongst these.
- How constructions and choices by young African women are constructed within unequally gendered contexts.

These discourses highlight the complex and multifaceted nature of transactional sex in sub-Saharan Africa. More importantly, they complicate colonial understandings of relationships in Africa as “loveless” (see chapter one), and they further highlight the inseparability of the love/money labyrinth in Africa (Hunter, 2002; 2010). These complexities of SD relationships invite theoretical tools that embraces these complexities, thus this chapter further deepens chapter one’s arguments.

2.3 The transacting victim paradigm

Biomedical innovations to manage the scourge of HIV infections have drawn attention to groups that are considered most at risk of transmitting the disease which include, although not limited to, men who have sex with men (Klingelschmidt, Parriault & Melle, 2017), drug users (Epprecht, 2008) and women who exchange sex for monetary or material gains (Elmes, Skoval, Nhongo, 2017).

The transacting victim discourse depicts young women as defenceless victims who, due to gendered or socio-economic exclusion, become choice-less, and thus exchange sex to meet basic survival needs. This worldview emerged from the HIV/AIDS discourses that attribute inordinate infections among women, to their vulnerability and victimhood (Higgins, et al., 2010). Researchers argued that the emphasis placed on structural and gendered economic imbalances exonerates African sexualities (Caldwin, Caldwell, & Quiggin, 1989) as the driving force for the rapid spread of HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa, yet resituates it in African women.

The concern for Higgins et al. (2010) is how within this paradigm “HIV risk translates into vulnerability only for women” (p. 437) thus re-inscribing the discourse of a feminized epidemic (see Ngcobo, 2012). This discourse subjectively situates “women” [not men] as “deserving of protection from AIDS” (Higgins et al., 2010, 437) which in turn rationalises surveillance (see chapter three- Foucault, 1978). Evidently, the majority of studies advocating for this paradigm have done so primarily to solicit funding from donors (Hope, 2007; Lungu & Hüsken, 2010; UN Secretary Generals Task Force on Women, 2004). Some studies have examined the transactional sexual experiences of marginalised children living on the streets (Evans, 2002; Osthus & Sewpaul, 2014), and the relationship between transactional sex and sexual coercion (Dunkle, Jewkes, Nduna, Jama, Levin, Sikweyiya, & Koss, 2007; Masvawure, 2010b; Mojola, 2014).

Commendable within this discourse, is its insistence on constraints of broader societal structures, which Osthus and Sewpaul (2014) critically analysed in their study of children living on the streets of Durban. How their study deviates from essentialist notions of this discourse, is in their in-depth analysis of dominant discourses, and how young men and women challenged, and re-appropriated power within constraining conditions. Although it may seem patronizing for me to draw relevance from a study on ‘life on the streets’, I draw methodological and theoretical relevance, which resonates with how I analysed ‘life on campus’; a context that undoubtedly has its own constraints (see chapter five and six).

While I commend its macro-level focus, I do not support its positioning of women as inherently vulnerable, and thus destined for victimhood, which, in a way, presupposes fixed and unchangeable victimhood. Instead, my study on young women in SD relationships acknowledges macro-level complexities, which of course may vary across contexts, and that subjects within these situations may adapt, challenge or reconfigure their subject positions. The language that normalizes subject positions is a feminist post-structural focus of this study,

which renders subjectivity as discursively constituted and constituting (Butler, 1999; Davies, 1991; Weedon, 1987).

Exemplifying the intersecting process of constituted and constituting subject position(s), Elmes et al. (2017, p. 2) identified HIV risk. This risk they felt was aggravated by “various intersecting and interacting social, economic and political forces that constrain autonomous and rational decisions over safe sex and impede access to health services” (Elmes et al., 2017, p. 2) for those in sexual exchange relationships. These authors argued that without the interface of socio-structural and economic factors gaining recognition, biomedical and behavioural approaches to youth programmes will prove ineffective. This study extends this to include discursive and relational power operations (Foucault, 1985), which I discuss in chapter one.

Relational within this discourse may manifest in the material or corporeal exchange, which drives supply and demand, for example in human trafficking within and across borders. In this regard, economic dependence constrains agency – some constrained choices are made amongst other possible constraining choices. Sen (1999, xi-xii) argued that while individual agency and freedom are central to addressing all forms of social, economic and political deprivations, “the freedom of agency that we individually have is inescapably qualified and constrained by the social, political and economic opportunities that are available to us.” In this regard, he refers to ‘unfreedom’ and its constitutive effects. As such, “economic unfreedom can breed social un-freedom; just as social or political unfreedom can also foster economic unfreedom” (Sen, 1999, p. 4). Extending Sen’s thesis, Sprague (2018, p. 321) argued that, “for HIV positive women, the opportunity aspect pertains to women’s ability to exercise choice in converting their desires into reality.” Therefore, what matters are the opportunities available for them to exercise choice (also see Maluleke, 2012).

2.3.1 Economic dependence

The youth years are often marked with shortage of economic resources coupled with the demand to fit in with one's peers, and just 'finding yourself'; Honwana (2012) referring to 'youth in waithood' within the Sub-Saharan context. Waithood, according to Honwana is a "prolonged stage between childhood and adulthood" and a product of "failed neoliberal and global socio-economic and political crises" (Honwana cited in Ntaragwi, 2014, p. 59). In addition, this youth in waithood captures the daily realities of most young Africans, although it cannot be said to be universally experienced. Undeniably, in South Africa, young people are confronted with challenges that are often masked by what Gqola (2001, p. 130) refers to as the "rainbowism" of new freedoms. A major challenge is the youth unemployment, which stood at just below 53 percent in July 2018 (see graph 1 below), and slightly lower at the beginning of the year (Trading Economics, 2018⁵).

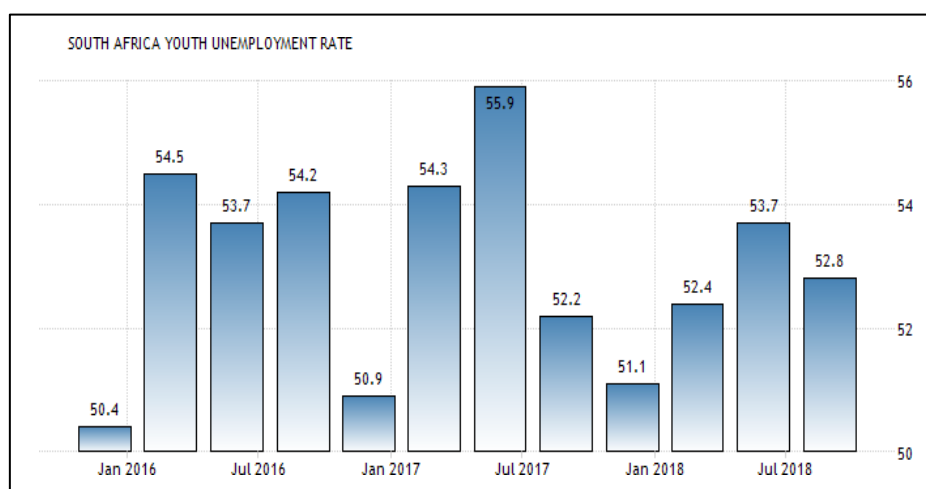


Figure 2: Youth Unemployment Rate in South Africa (Trading Economics, 2018)

Within the economic dependence paradigm, poverty due to unemployment, as depicted above, is responsible for rendering young women vulnerable and hence more economically dependent on men for their survival. Consequentially, these vulnerabilities have been found to expose women to unplanned pregnancies (Jewkes, et al., 2012; Luke, Goldberg, Mberu, & Zulu, 2011), termination of pregnancies (Gilbert, 2013), and increased exposure to sexually transmitted diseases (van der Heijden & Swartz, 2014). These authors suggest that economic dependence reduces the negotiating power of women (Jewkes, et al., 2012) especially in sexual exchange relationships where the financial needs may be viewed as superseding the potential dangers of

⁵ <https://tradingeconomics.com/south-africa/youth-unemployment-rate>

these exchange relationships. Forced sex is another risk factor that may accompany these sexual exchange relationships, especially when women refuse unprotected sex or attempt to leave the relationship (Wood, Moforah, & Jewkes, 1998). In their Cape Town study, Wood et al. (1998) found violence as omnipresent from young women's sexual debuts, which continued during the relationship. In fact, Wood and Jewkes (2005) found that coercion and violence had become normalized in relationships as a show of affection, with this behaviour being reinforced by women's continuing acceptance of gifts from their abusive partners. Bhana (2012) maintained that abuse in relationships instils consistent fear for young women, and reduces their condom use and negotiating abilities, especially in SD relationships.

Osthus (2011) in her study of street children found that the boyfriends of girls who engaged in sex work perceived their masculine provider role as dismantled and resultantly exerted violence. Consistent with dominant ideologies of femininities and masculinities, women in Osthus' (2011, p. 95) study "took pride in being provided for" or at least "presenting themselves as being provided for", even against the challenging street-life context (also see Osthus & Sewpaul, 2014). In poverty-stricken environments, even minor gifts may be irresistible to decline as evidenced in Elmes et al.'s (2017) focus group with young women in sexual exchange relationships. Participants in this study were each compensated with a bar of laundry soap for their time, and with an extra bar given if the focus groups lasted for longer than an hour, which in my view further emphasized their economically disenfranchised position.

Although it may be justified by their economic hardships, women in transactional relationships often experience regret and social stigmatization (Baba-Djara, Brennan, Corneliess, & Agiyarko-Poku, 2013). When asked about her perception of students in SD relationships, a 21-year-old female student mentioned that: "*they are stigmatized which tends to hurt them even when they work in bigger companies after school*" (Baba-Djara et al., 2013, p. 19), highlighting the extent to which economically driven relationships may impact negatively on future employment prospects. However, some women in the same study perceived transactional sex as normal, and those who engaged in it as having 'made it in life', aspiring towards "middle class consumerism", as similarly found by Bhana and Pattman (2011). This suggests the multifarious meanings associated with transactional sex, even within an analogous university space imbued with economic challenges.

Poverty at household level has also been associated with transactional sex (Cluver, Orkin, Boyes, Gardner & Meinck, 2011). In their quantitative study of adolescent girls, these authors found that young girls from HIV/AIDS affected families were at an increased risk of engaging in transactional sex relationships and experiencing sexual and physical abuse (Cluver et al., 2011). In some instances, parents have been found to directly influence their children, young girls in particular, to participate in transactional sex (Lungu & Hüsken, 2010; Komba-Maleka & Liljestrom, 1994). As evidenced in the local reality series, *Please Step In*⁶ (12 July 2017), a student from the South African University of Limpopo ('Turflor'), openly narrated her experience of exchanging sex for money in order to support her mother and five siblings, which the mother confessed to have demanded from her. Correspondingly, a respondent in Maclin, Kelly, Kabanga and van Rooyen's (2015, p. 125) Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) study found that "parents start relying on their daughter(s) to bring money in the house while she does not have a job or a husband to support her", indirectly influencing the continuation of economically driven material exchanges.

In the same study, some participants reported that sexual exchange 'relationships' impacted negatively on family relations. One participant reported that her involvement in transactional sex, although motivated by familial poverty, disturbed her father who saw his provider role diminishing and overtaken by his daughter (Maclin et al., 2015). In this instance, transactional sex, although promising some economic relief, dismantles and shifts pre-existing social constructions of idealised manhood. In addition, Wamoyi, Wight, Plummer, Mshana and Ross (2010) discovered that it was rare for parents to buy underwear and cosmetics for their children, yet they seldom questioned their source. In the same study, most respondents used money accumulated from sugar daddies to buy school requirements, while another study reported some sugar daddies, especially 'teachers' buying uniforms as gifts or giving higher grades to female learners in exchange for sex (Kaufman & Stavrou, 2004). Although education is a universal right for all, it appears in this instance as a sexually commodified 'right' constructed against the discourse of poverty.

Frye (2007) argued that women from impoverished backgrounds are socially and economically excluded in the first and second economy due to poverty as well as gender discrimination. In fact, Frye (2007), Rowlands (2002), and Sewpaul (2005) argued that neoliberal globalisation

⁶ *Please Step In* is a Mzansi Magic relationship show focussed on helping family members resolve a collective issue and revolves around families looking to resolve their challenges and problems with a particular member of their group - <https://mzansimagic.dstv.com/show/please-step-in>

has exacerbated the plight of impoverished women in third world countries who continue to suffer the negative effects of unjust economic policies. Even if women enter the economy, their unequal treatment is evident, and certain positions may require them to exchange sex (Mojola, 2011). This is clearly depicted in the ‘fish for sex’ practice within the fish trade industry down Lake Victoria, Kenya (Mojola, 2011). The changes in the lake’s environment, exacerbated by the gendered structures of the economy, as Mojola’s study reported, impacted on types of sexual relationships which fuelled the spread of HIV infections. Men’s greater access to employment and resources maintained the dependency of women on men for financial provision (Mojola, 2011), thus preserving heteronormative constructions and practices of employment. Wamoyi et al. (2010) also found that young women in Tanzania, although allowed to sell their labour to cultivate, earning five hundred Tanzanian shillings (then USD 0.83) per eleven-hour shift, could not manage due to other domestic demands.

To circumvent this, some women often asked men to assist them, and then later reciprocated by having sex, often with limited power to negotiate condom use. For Oyewumi (2002, p. 3) this is indicative of “how women's personal troubles in the private sphere are in fact public issues constituted by the gender inequality of the social structure.” In essence women’s subjugation and societal pressures to conform to ‘emphasized femininities’ (Connell, 2002), circumscribes their access to and maintenance of economic opportunities, thus propelling them to exchange sex for favours, as reported by Wamoyi et al. (2010), often to the detriment of their health.

In their Sub-Saharan study of condom use in cross-generational relationships, Luke and Kurts (2002) found that high amounts of money exchanged made it almost impossible to discuss condom use. While the age difference could also play an important factor in the study, the researchers found that even women themselves used ‘sex without a condom’ to negotiate for higher monetary/material exchanges (ibid.), suggesting the precariousness of sexual economies intersecting with agency (Maxwell & Aggleton, 2010).

In the *Stepping Stones* intervention conducted in Cape Town, South Africa, Jewkes and Morrell (2012) found that agency in economically driven relationships was often limited to the choice of partner, but after the consent (also see Hunter, 2002 – *ukuqoma*) appeared circumscribed. The above studies have correlated condom use with the amount of money dispensed in sexual exchange relationships. Non-condom use has earlier been constructed (above in Wamoyi et

al., 2010) as involuntary, while, in this instance, it manifests as negotiated by either partner for higher remittances, a clear demonstration of fluidity of discourses.

While the economic decline has altered socio-economic statuses of both men and women in Africa, African women remain inordinately subordinated in the economy (Raniga & Ngcobo, 2014). Hunter (2002) contended that in the township of Mandeni, North of KZN, women could only secure jobs as domestic workers or textile factory workers, while men worked in the SAPPI paper mill or various established metal companies. This inequality created a huge dependency on men by women for accommodation in '*amakwataz*' (*quarters – basic rental dwelling for migrant workers*). Even in their retirement, men still sustained their income by opening up *spaza* shops – tuckshops due to the relatively lucrative retirement packages secured, while women often suffered the “disastrous consequences” of being retrenched, laid off or given short-time (Hunter, 2002, p. 104). For Hunter (2002) and other proponents of this paradigm, these economic gender asymmetries subjected women to remain economically dependent on their partners and further increased their acceptance of men’s concurrent sexual practices.

Hunter (2002) argued that the mining industry in the early 20th century gave rise to African men who were able to provide *ilobolo* (bride-wealth) and build homes in the rural areas for their wives. During this period, polygyny was a normalised practice. According to Mkhize (2016, p. 13) polygyny may be practiced to: “increase the probability of children, particularly when a wife is barren or gives birth to female children only; increase labour supply within kinship network or to deal with the ‘problem’ of surplus women.” This definition constructs polygyny as a hegemonic practice that entrusts ‘men’, in this case Zulu men, with the responsibility for solving women’s problems of infertility, and increasing the household labour force. While I agree that polygyny may validate hegemonic masculinities, the meanings ascribed to it have been reconfigured over time and context.

It can be argued that industrialisation and other technological advancements, inherent in developing economies, like Africa’s, saw the disruption in the practice of polygyny. The weakening economy made it impossible for most men to afford the 11⁷ cows for *ilobolo*, consequently reclaiming their power through multiple sexual relationships, conflating the latter with polygyny (Delius & Glaser, 2002; Hunter, 2002). According to Hunter, this

⁷Traditional stipulation of bride wealth offered to the bride’s family when still a ‘virgin’. This has evolved over time. Even though it is not necessarily cows, the equivalent cash is accepted before permission to marry is granted.

unaffordability of bride wealth payment to the woman's family is the reason for the increase in the gifting by men to their multiple partners. Against this background of gendered financial inequalities and hegemonic masculinities, transactional sex thrives, rendering women vulnerable to various forms of abuse while attaining economic support. Support, which according to Maclin et al. (2015), fails to empower young women, has been found to influence high rates of HIV infections and unplanned pregnancies. Maclin et al. asserted that no amount of education will effect an elimination of HIV/AIDS, if not supplemented by programmes addressing structural drivers of poverty, and gendered economic inequalities (Maclin et al., 2015).

Although Hunter (2002, p. 105) agrees that it is due to these inequalities that "the sexual economy has become an important source of survival", he argued that these inequalities are "not enough on their own to explain 'transactional sex'" (ibid). There is a myriad of complex issues that need to be interrogated in order to extrapolate the experiences of young women and the meanings that they ascribe to these commodified relationships.

2.3.2 The vulnerable victim

UNAIDS (2012, p. 65) defined vulnerability as a measurement of "how much control people have over their sexual health and the risks they are exposed to" and in the case of SD relationships refers to the likelihood of HIV infections for young women. Findings by the UNAIDS (2012) also revealed that South Africa had at least five million people infected with HIV in 2011, of which 50% had become infected before reaching the age of 25 years. The disproportionately high prevalence of HIV among young women when compared to young men of the same group remains a worrying trend (HSRC, 2018; UNAIDS, 2012), which may be attributed to structural and gender inequalities (Gqola, 2007).

Within the transacting victim paradigm, emphasis is placed on the powerlessness of young women whose participation in SD relationships is often attributed to coercion, sexual exploitation and abuse. These relationships render women vulnerable. Even the language used to describe young women in SD relationships, depicts their vulnerability by often referring to them as children and sugar daddies as predators that prey on young girls (McCleary-Sills, Douglas, Rwehumbiza, Hamisi & Mabala, 2013; Mojola, 2011; Njue, Voeten, & Remes, 2011).

Women in these relationships are therefore seen as trapped without the agency to resist, as clearly accounted for in ‘sex for grades’ transactions within the education system (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Kaufman & Stavrou, 2004). Sex for grades views the social mobility of female learners as highly dependent on their willingness to use sex to progress, with refusal to do so resulting in negative repercussions (Bhana & Pattman, 2011).

In their study of young high school female learners in SD relationships with teachers, refusal to reciprocate the marks with sex resulted in learners being subject to corporal punishment for trivial school related misdemeanours, in the presence of peers. A video recording of a teacher severely beating a high school female learner in a class, filled to capacity, went viral over social media. In the video, captured in the rural north of KwaZulu-Natal, the middle-aged male teacher is seen both verbally and physically abusing the teenage learner who is also fighting back in defence. I do not aim to explain the full content of the video but the *Facebook* comments that I came across ranged from: speculation ‘*laba bebegomene bahlukana kabi – these two were lovers and it didn’t end well*’; to blame ‘*Eish, these girls and their love for money, they should know better and keep away from [male] teachers?*’; and lastly justification ‘*this girl must have really angered this man, now look he might lose his job*’. My analysis of the Facebook threads in relation to this classroom violence left me shaken more than watching the actual video – which I can confirm was ‘not for sensitive viewers.’

The three conclusions I drew from the comments were, (i) that violence is normalized (for schools, and society at large), especially when it is enacted within a ‘relationship’; (ii) violence is a masculine performance and justifiable when not performed by women; and lastly (iii) women, or young girls are constructed as money driven and immoral and ‘*should know better*’ –as to not trade sex with teachers. Dunkle et al. (2007, p. 8) argued that knowledge constructions for South African young women often occur against the backdrop of knowledge by some men that “proving heterosexual success with women and asserting control over them” is normalized.

Deployment of violence in African societies, discussed earlier, is fuelled by the changing socio-economic patterns, amongst other conditions. Consistent with this assumption, Maclin et al. (2015) found that in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, how some women, whose husbands lost employment, exchanged sex often to resuscitate household livelihoods. In this study, both women and men demonstrated shifts in the social order disrupted their sense of normalcy of family roles, with women angered by men’s inability to fulfil their

provider role, and men feeling inadequate and emasculated by their dependence on women (Maclin et al., 2015). Consequentially, women experienced violence from their partners. While I agree that it is neither against disrupted hegemonies that some men may resort to violence in order to reclaim their masculinities, not all men in these circumstances resort to violence, nor are all women in these circumstances subject to violence. What is evident though is how scripts or discourses that privilege “male sexual drive have been used to legitimize male domination over women” (Weeks, 2006, p. 44) and complicity of women in their own inferiority (Sewpaul, 2013) must be acknowledged.

The gendered basis of women’s vulnerability to transactional sex can be attributed to the prevailing discourse of hegemonic masculinities, a concept used by Raewyn Connell (1987). According to Connell, this is the most dominant form of masculinity that is context specific and is primarily responsible for reproducing dominant ideologies of what it means (or does not mean) to be a man (Connell, 1987). Jewkes and Morrell (2011) argued that these socially organised and agreed upon ideologies do not always denote discrimination and violence. However, the ability to control women, according to the latter authors, is a central tenet of hegemonic masculinity, which justifies and legitimizes violent and coercive behaviour.

Dominant constructions of masculinity span centuries. Conversely, hegemonic masculinity has come under greater scrutiny with the different waves of feminism and progressive men’s movements (e.g. Sonke Gender Justice⁸, Brothers for Life⁹) accompanied by some shifts in the behaviour of men. If this linear link is true, then logically the rates of gender-based violence and women’s vulnerability should decrease. Stoebenau et al. (2016, p. 189) insinuate that “emphasized femininity is complicit in upholding hegemonic masculinity”, which refers to women’s complicity in reproducing gender stereotypes and gender discrimination.

Emphasised femininity and hegemonic masculinity complement each other, implying that, due to the economic inferiority of women, women may find themselves compromised, leading to reproduction of gender inequalities (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Hunter, 2010). The continued endorsement and enactment of these two discourses, hegemonic masculinity and emphasized

⁸ Non-profit South African based organisation working with women, men, girls and boys throughout Africa to resist patriarchy, advocate for gender justice and achieve gender transformation <https://genderjustice.org.za/>.

⁹ Brothers for Life is a South African based non-governmental organisation that mobilises men to be responsible for their own health <https://www.brothersforlife.org/>.

femininity, are therefore seen to maintain the existence of the paradigm of vulnerability of young women in SD relationships. Baylies (2000) argued that the vulnerability in SD relationships should not be located in the women's ignorance of susceptibility, but in the "structural context in which behaviour occurs, including the gender ideologies and patterned relations which inform it" (p. 15).

This discourse highlights the importance of a gendered poverty lens, and the extent to which women's positions in society may render engagement in SD relationships a possibility. Women are seen as powerless victims whose role is to serve the needs and desires of men, and doing so may aid access to basic needs for survival. Masvawure (2010b, p. 858) argued that transactional sex relationships are more complex and encapsulate "more than just straightforward exchanges in which women give men sex and men give women money or other benefits." The assumption that money and sex are the only commodities exchanged in these relationships is therefore simplistic. For example, earlier researchers like White (1990) found that even sex workers in Nairobi provided their clients with more than sex. They termed it 'the comfort of home' whereby warm beds, meals and warm baths were provided in addition to sex, with these non-sexual services deemed equally essential for sustenance of these commercial sexual exchange relationships.

This then challenges the distinction emphasized by young women in SD relationships, a distinction which is consistent across studies (Hunter, 2002; Leclerc-Madlala, 2003; Nyanzi, Nyanzi, Kalina & Pool, 2004; Nyanzi, Pool, & Kinsman, 2001; Silberschmidt & Rasch, 2001). However, Nobelius Kalina, Pool Whitwork, Chesters and Power (2012), in their study of sexual exchange relationships in Uganda, found that participants who self-identified as sex workers were actually 'freer' to initiate sex or approach men. What I found missing in their argument, was the extent to which approaching men and initiating sex was a norm for this sub-group. Therefore, I find their conceptualization of 'freer'-simplistic, as although this might challenge dominant feminine sexual scripts, it reaffirms scripts within the sub-group of sex workers. On the other hand, Osthus (2011) found that the young women on the streets included in their discourses, the discourse of love, which clearly demonstrates a shift in norms. I return to Nobelius et al.'s study in chapter three, where I expand on dominant (cultural, historical, contextual) social constructions of young African women's sexualities.

What the above studies also point to is the fluidity of power, and how it exposes gender troubles (Butler, 1999), whether across - sex workers and men (clients), and within- categories of sex

workers and sugar babies. This epitomizes firstly, how gender can be done, and undone; secondly, it troubles the categorizations, such as the category of ‘united woman’, which was heralded by Second Wave feminists in the 1960s and 1970s. Anti-essentialists challenged this, and brought to surface hidden powers of ‘patriarchy’ and how various forms of power naturalized the man/woman dichotomy (see Chisale, 2017, p. 17-26 –Three Waves of Feminism; and Magezi & Magezi, 2017 –Man as Transcendental ‘God’)

Connell (1987, p. 184) however, cautions that “hegemony does not mean total cultural dominance” but involves simultaneous accommodation of and resistance to dominant constructions of femininity. Consistent with the previous paradigm’s conclusions, I maintain that nuanced meanings of sexual practices can be better understood from the perspectives of women involved in them, who according to Elmes et al. (2017) remain expert knowers of their social world.

2.3.3 Beyond basic needs, sex for improved social status paradigm

Early 20th century studies began to question the unidimensional paradigm of vulnerability (Leclerc-Madlala, 2003; Silberschmidt & Rasch, 2001) by arguing that transactional sex was not only practiced by those in dire economic conditions and that it transcended basic needs (Masvawure, 2010a). One of the first African studies to disrupt the ‘sex for survival’ paradigm was that of Silberschmidt and Rasch’s (2001), which asserted that young unmarried young women in sexual exchange relationships were “active agents, entrepreneurs who deliberately exploit their partners” (p. 1822).

While they appreciate the efforts of previous scholars to engender understandings of the structural forces that exacerbate HIV, Silberschmidt and Rasch, together with researchers within this paradigm, repudiated claims that all women in transactional sex relationships are passive, vulnerable victims. Instead, they maintained that these relationships may be concomitant with accomplishment of both economic and social status (not exclusive of love) created by ideals in the media and globalisation. This paradigm recognises the context specificity of sexual exchange relationships, in particular the meanings credited to attainment of both improved social and economic status, in particular for young African women (Leclerc-Madlala, 2003), reflecting perhaps the ideological control of consciousness through consumerist and capitalist forces (Althusser, 1978; Bauman, 1992; Leonard, 1997; Sewpaul, 2015). Leonard (1997, p. 37) writes of the “manufacture of desire”, constructed in the interests of the corporate elite, and widely entrenched in media marketing and liberal political rhetoric

to ensure, “that capitalism succeeds through ideological control of consciousness, designed to make us believe that neoliberalism is in our interests and is inevitable” (Sewpaul, 2015, p. 463). The market seduces people into constructing themselves as good consumers where one’s purchasing ability and choices define ones worth (Bauman, 1992; Sewpaul, 2015). Sewpaul (2015, p. 463) quotes Bauman and Tester who speak of the “disguise of the individual’s freedom of choice,” which is so taken for granted that it “seldom has a chance of being examined and questioned [...] an old sinister temptation [...] left to be exploited by commercial markets.”

Althusser (1998) identified capitalism and the state as powerful ideological apparatus, which engenders false consciousness that renders us subjected beings, controlled by dominant societal discourses. Sewpaul (2013, p. 120) borrows from Hall’s concept of “the theatre of consent” to emphasise the ‘voluntariness’ with which this subjection occurs, labels this as “the voluntary imprisonment of the free subject” (Sewpaul, 2013, p. 120), and points to the extremely complex relationship between structure and agency. Althusser (1998) considers capitalism as a socially engineered process, which needs to be performed for it to retain social relevance. This is where Butler builds her performativity theory (Althusser 1998), and in the next chapter, I return to this social engineering of sexual behaviour within a modernist background.

This discourse on SD relationships considers the pressures of modernity (Giddens, 2013) and how attainment of this modern lifestyle may require one to exchange sex. In addition, sex is constructed as commodified and worthy to be exchanged for financial gain. Choudhry, Östergren, Ambresin, Nyakato, and Agardh (2014) found, in their study of Ugandan youth in sexual exchange relationships, that transactional sex correlated with low levels of education amongst the youth. This rendered young women even more vulnerable to acquiring HIV infections at a very young age, because of lack of knowledge for condom negotiation, as suggested by the aforementioned paradigms.

Within this current paradigm, transactional sex is acknowledged as not only a phenomenon for the less educated but rather prevalent within many contexts, irrespective of educational level, thus contesting the arbitrary correlation between transactional sex and low level of education. Instead, I argue that although transactional sex may be shaped by the individual’s exposure to education, the meanings constructed within those educational contexts cannot be homogenised.

2.4 Relative deprivation, social capital and SD relationships

Within this paradigm, engaging in SD relationships may not always be premised on despondency, but can be seen as relative lack, taking into consideration the increasing economic disparities and popularised consumerist culture. Proponents of this paradigm regard women as relatively deprived, and entry into sexual exchange relationships is exacerbated by neoliberal globalization which benefit the few, leaving out many (Groes-Green, 2013). Studies in this paradigm maintain that the introduction of neoliberal economic policies imposed unwarranted pressure on young people to aspire and maintain a lifestyle that they (or their parents) cannot afford (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Leclerc-Madlala, 2003; Mojola, 2014; Zembe, Townsend, Thorson, Silberschmidt & Ekstrom, 2015).

In their study of township girls, Bhana and Pattman (2011, p. 965) found that the youth who identified with the cosmopolitan fashion culture differentiated themselves from “the poverty of the township but also from poorer rural-based counterparts.” This suggests that sexual exchange relationships allow young women to acquire a desired social standing that is dissimilar to their relatively average peers. Such aspirations were found by Masvawure (2010a, 2010b) and Shefer, Clowes, and Vergnani (2012) in their studies on transactional sex in university settings. In both these studies, it was found that even though SD relationships were denounced, the lifestyle they afforded was admired by many. Jewkes and Morrell (2011) argued, in agreement with Wetherell (1996), that sometimes this cosmopolitan lifestyle is aspired, but rarely actioned by some young people. These authors recommend in-depth explorations of the constraints experienced by women as they navigate unequal relationships, such as those with sugar daddies.

The increase in social networks and economic capital of women afforded by transactional sex may be seen to disrupt pre-existing constructions of femininity (Hunter, 2010). The decline in the economic provision by men has also been seen to fuel women’s pursuit of consumption (Hunter, 2010; Mojola, 2014). In his study, Hunter (2010) found that the inability to afford bride-wealth resulted in most men resorting to expressing desire and commitment through provision of fashionable commodities, thus circumventing the traditional trajectory of intimate relationships. This was considered a threat to the integrity and continuation of cultural practices (Delius & Glaser, 2002).

Transactional sex for acquisition of modern goods may also impose shame and blame on women by society, as they may be viewed as counterfeit and bad role models who contribute

towards moral degeneration (Stoebenau et al., 2016). Moralistic views on female sexuality, according to Chen (2016), have largely been influenced by religion, specifically Christianity, prescribing what is morally acceptable, and what is not. Although Chen writes in relation to Christianity, this is applicable to extant religions such as Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Judaism and Islam. In his study, Chen found that against Christian mores, young women in SD relationships capitalised on the dominant construction of the female body as a ‘precious’ and ‘valued commodity’, thus worthy of being exchanged for something (Chen, 2016). Chen (2016) interpreted this to imply the agentic potentialities of young women, and how that agency reshapes their negotiated meanings in SD relationships.

2.5 Women’s sexual agency in SD relationships

The paradigm of women in SD relationships is that of “sex for acquiring social status”, depicts that they are active participants who deliberately ‘use what they have to get what they want’ (Luke et al., 2011). The agentic power of women in transactional sex relationships (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Wamoyi et al., 2010) contrasts with that of the vulnerable, passive victim as purported earlier. Extracting money or goods from male partners by women in this paradigm has been described as ‘*ukuchutha*’ –plucking the chicken (Selikow, Zulu & Cedras, 2002, p. 26); ‘skinning the goat’ (Maganja, Maman, Groves & Mbwambo, 2007, p. 975); ‘de-toothing’ (Bell, 2012, p. 88), all these metaphors suggesting taking something valuable away from someone.

Consistent with this paradigm, women exercise their power and agency, as understood by them, by manipulating ‘emphasized femininities’ in relationships (Jewkes & Morrell, 2011) in order to gain access to social and economic capital. This enactment of power and agency, according to Nyanzi et al. (2004) is not immune to risk. For example, women in Tanzania who claimed to be ‘skinning the goat’ by extorting goods from wealthy men, without reciprocating with sex risked sexual violence and coercion (Maganja et al., 2007). Similarly, girls’ agency was evident during their acts of disappearing where resources were extracted, but sex avoided (Masvawure, 2010a). In Selikow and Mbulaheni’s (2013, p. 90) study, one female student in a SD relationship recognised the potential danger of disappearing and strategically brought friends as ‘security’ as elaborated by Sesi: “...*you bring a friend or something, he’ll (sugar daddy) take you out, and then you say ‘bye’.*”

The act of disappearing suggests that girls are active and reflective participants (Giddens, 1994) who can withhold sex, while extracting resources from sugar daddies. This however has

limitations, due to the transactional nature of the relationship, girls eventually have to relent in order to ‘meet their side of the bargain’ (Stoebenau, Nixon, Rubincam, Willan, Zembe, Tsikoane, et al., 2011). Jewkes and Morrell (2012) have maintained that although women may hold the power, or claim thereof– at the inception of the relationship, findings indicate that there are limitations to the sustenance of that power, especially in relation to condom use and the ‘where’, ‘when’ and ‘how’ of sexual activity. This is consistent with assertions of the vulnerability paradigm, as discussed earlier.

Within this paradigm, transactional sex is fuelled by the increasing economic disparities (needs) coupled with the emphasis placed on acquiring consumer (wants) goods for accessing social capital. I reassert that this boxing of transactional sex motivation into either the binary of survival sex and consumer sex is too monolithic as it disregards the possibility of their concurrence. In fact, Silberschmidt and Rasch (2001) found that while most sexual exchange relationships were premised on perceived needs, their sustenance was mostly motivated by what participants perceived as a combination of needs and wants. Because of the less formalised nature of transactional sex, what qualifies as a need may require one to deconstruct the *need* discourse within its discursive context before assimilating it to SD relationships.

For example, while items like mobile telephones or cars may be constructed as consumerist driven in one setting, their acquisition may be seen as ‘needs’ in another. In her study of urban young women, similar to the ones in this study, Leclerc-Madlala (2003) cautioned against simplification of motivation to engage in transactional sex into the categories of needs or wants. My study argues for an even deeper analysis of the choice that frames those needs and wants, and how this choice is constrained or enabled in SD relationship. In her study, Leclerc-Madlala (2003) found that there was an overlap in the execution of sex for needs and sex for wants, as these often occurred parallel to some degree.

2.6 Sex and material expressions of love paradigm

The first two paradigms discussed how vulnerability and aspiration for accessing social and economic capital propel women to engage and remain in transactional sex relationships. However, the emotional intimacy in these relationships has not received much attention (Groes-Green, 2013; Mojola, 2014), with overwhelming focus placed on the HIV infection risk posed by this practice according to the biomedical discourse.

Within the social sciences, there is a growing body of knowledge that has paid attention to the discourse of love and desire in transactional sex relationships (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Hunter,

2010; Lerclerc-Madlala, 2010; Mojola, 2014; Shefer & Foster, 2001). This paradigm takes cognisance of the inextricable association of love and money in romantic companionships, not necessarily restricted to SD relationships. In addition, it draws emphasis on the socially constructed beliefs about the role males play as providers of economic support, and women as responsible for reproduction (Mkhwanazi, 2014) and sexual satisfaction of men. Evidenced by Luke and Kurz's (2002) study, young women considered it a sign of disrespect when their partners didn't offer anything for engaging in sex. In this case, although termed in the context of 'gift-giving', transactional sex is performed against patriarchal constructions of males as providers and women as recipients; the receiving itself not denoting victimhood.

Contrary to previous assumptions on African femininities as passive and homogeneous, this paradigm suggests the simultaneous contestation and negotiation of power between men and women within a prescribed patriarchal field (Bhana & Pattman, 2011). Women are therefore perceived as strategic in constructing sexual meanings against the backdrop of sexually oppressive contexts (Bhana & Anderson, 2013), thus claiming agency.

Agency, according to Kabeer (1999), is the ability to decide and negotiate power in relationships, a process that may or may not occur manipulatively or deceptively. As such, the decision making in the case of SD relationships relates to what motivates young women to initiate and remain in these relationships. Furthermore, the discourse of choice presupposes the presence of other options, which if explored should yield similar rewards (ibid). Agency is discussed in chapter one, and in this study, I sought to explore how young African women negotiate this agency in SD relationships.

While the sexual exchange relationship may itself be seen as compromising and limited, the money and other materials exchanged can be viewed as counteracting. It is against this labyrinth of money, agency and patriarchy that Bhana and Pattman (2011) identified their coexistence with love and intimacy, or constructions thereof.

2.6.1 Intimacy, love and money

The inextricable link between love and money in relationships is widely researched (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Maganja et al., 2007; Selikow & Mbulaheni, 2013). Lerato, a South African university student in Selikow and Mbulaheni's (2013) study echoed the following: "I do love him, but at the same time food has to be put on the table", implying the inseparable nature of love and money, a sentiment shared by most student participants in Masvawure's (2010a)

Zimbabwean study. This paradigm illustrates that even relationships that are depicted as economically driven, are not exclusive of emotional connection (Brouard & Crewe, 2012). In fact, Luke (2005) and Osthus (2011) maintained that all relationships are to some extent transactional in nature, the distinctive feature lies in the language used to describe and understand that relationship as experienced by the individual.

Discursive formations relating to intimate relationships between men and women are social constructions. In the biblical discourse, a man is the one endowed with the capacity to love, while women have been relegated to submission to “husbands, as it is fit in the Lord” (Colossians 3 vs 18). Theocracy has, in some way, influenced how women see themselves as passive participants in intimate relationships, and have often interpreted such passivity to synonymize morality. Women who self-identify as involved in SD relationships may be considered aberrant and therefore in need of care and protection (Maganja, 2007), without consideration of the complex meanings that these relationships reflect, beyond economic provision.

Money has shaped meanings of intimate relationships among young African people. Selikow and Mbulaheni (2013) attribute this to post-apartheid global exposure and the materialist’ definitions of love. Consistent with this paradigm, Bhana and Pattman (2011) described how young township girls in South Africa set ‘money’ as a criterion to *qoma*- accept love proposals, while the boys prioritized ‘virgins’ as potential girlfriends, both these preferences being concomitant with peer influences.

This disjuncture was identified as influencing boys to resort to engaging in relationships with girls from rural areas, with the assumption that ‘rural’ presupposed sexual purity (Bhana & Pattman, 2011). Findings from these studies resembled largely those discussed by Gevers, Jewkes, Mathews, and Flisher (2012) in their study on young people’s negotiations of meanings in romantic relationships. For example, “girls associated caring with gift giving by boyfriends whereas boys associated caring with sexual behaviours and caretaking by girlfriends” (Gevers et al., p. 133).

Furthermore, in Selikow and Mbulaheni’s (2013, p. 93) study, young women considered it important to keep their side of the deal as evidenced in one excerpt:

“Men need support. They want you to be there for them... and women are good at that. You have got to make sure that you create a situation where he can do his best to take care of you and provide for you”

The above suggests normalised meaning constructions of love as materialistic for girls, and more corporeal for boys. These gendered binaries illustrate how romance may carry instrumental meanings, especially for young girls, although Mojola (2014) and Selikow and Mbulaheni (2013) found instability in these meanings.

Selikow and Mbulaheni (2013) recognised fluidity of meanings of intimacy in SD relationships. In their study of students in sexual exchange relationships for consumerist reasons, they identified the evolving nature of meanings within these relationships. This illustrates that the masculine provider role, as with other social constructions is not permanent, but subject to resignifications and reconfigurations. For example, sugar daddies were reported to be advisors, boyfriends and confidants, even when their financial status had depreciated. This then challenges the meaning of SD relationships as well as Okonkwo's (2016) definition adopted by the current study, which feature financial provision as significant. However, in Selikow and Mbulaheni's study, 'provision' carries multiple meanings, not restricted to financial provision.

Selikow and Mbulaheni (2013, p. 86) assert that analysing sexual exchange relationships within the dichotomy of "love as opposed to money is superficial... and is blind to the messy contradictions that girls creatively navigate within structures in their quest for both money and love ['at the same time']." Therefore, exploring individual discourses as opposed to assuming a 'one size fits all' repudiates homogenisation of experiences of young African women in SD relationships, a position taken in the current study.

In the review of Kenyan scholar, Sanyu Mojola's 2014 book titled *Love, Money and HIV: Becoming a Modern African Woman in the Age of AIDS*, Bhana (2016) appraises the manner in which the book shifts away from depiction of women as passive in SD relationships. Instead young women in Mojola's study, found older men with money attractive and thus negotiated love, sex and money within those relationships. Further enticing prospective readers, Bhana illustrates how young women in Mojola's study constructed "relationship[s], schooling, employment, and financial access in the context of HIV epidemic and economic inequality" (p. 160). Therefore modernity, educational achievement and desirability all seem to relate to the materialist pursuits (ibid). Although sexualised economies are not unique to Kenya, or sub-Saharan Africa, Bhana (2017, p. 161) contended that "the pursuit of love, sex and money has the added burden of the terror of HIV and death" within the African context where my study is located.

Fielding-Miller, Dunkle, Jama-Shai, Windle, Hadley and Cooper (2016), in the context of Swaziland, asserted that marriage aspirations were a significant construction in sexual exchange relationships. While many women associated the gifts with sex, that reciprocation was often conceptualised within the framework of love, with the hope of future socio-emotional stability (ibid). This finding is consistent with the notion of emphasized feminine ideals of marriage, even within relationships that society constructs as economically premised, thus suggesting the malleable and fluid trajectories of transactional sex against dominant ideologies of femininities.

2.6.2 The importance of gendered provision

In Sub-Saharan Africa, culturally inscribed constructions that portray sexual provision by women as dependent on men's ability to fulfil their masculine role of economic provision prevail (Conroy, McGrath, van Rooyen, Hosegood, Johnson, Fritz et al., 2016; Hunter, 2010; Leclerc-Madlala, 2009; Wamoyi et al., 2010).

The maintenance of dominant ideologies of masculinity and femininity (Jewkes & Morrell, 2011) remains inevitable against the backdrop of societal constructions of men as economic providers and women as sexual providers. This, according to Cornwall (2002), is irrespective of the woman's own earning capabilities. Against the economic decline, men have often expressed uncertainty about the actual intentions of women in relationships, whether or not it is just for the money or whether there is genuine interest in them (Nyanzi et al., 2001). In fact, men in Maganja et al.'s (2007) study admitted to making promises they could not keep in order to receive sex from women, while women engaged in concurrent sexual relationships in order to seek additional income when their partners were unable to adequately provide for them (Stark, 2013).

Within the economic dependence paradigm, I argue that the male provider discourse allows men to enjoy multiple sexual partner status – *isoka lamanyala* a discourse put forth by Hunter (2010). However, with economic restructuring and exposure to global trends, performance of the latter discourse has been reshaped, with more women also engaging in concurrent relationships (Mojola, 2014; Stark, 2013). Stark's (2013) depiction of women as equally capable of what I could refer to as 'multi-tasking' suggests possible enactments of counter-hegemonic discourses for women. Within this lens, African women are not absent from grand femininity constructions. Instead, they are equally strategic in their reconstruction and negotiation of sexuality in order to meet current demands.

This paradigm, therefore, emphasizes how transactional sex practice is highly dependent on societal gender constructions of males as providers of material and economic support. This provision is not seen to be exclusive of emotional intimacy, thus blurring the lines between intimate relationships and those categorized as transactional relationships. Gqola (2007) proposed that we challenge pre-existing gender norms, in particular those that position men as economically superior to women. In addition, we need to disrupt the dualistic binary constructions of young women as sexually inferior, passive victims who are not exploitative or agentic in their performance of sexuality.

Throughout this study, I highlight the significance of context, and how meanings are shaped and contested within those settings. The second part of this literature review looks at university as context and how transactional sex is understood within this context.

2.7 Transactional sex at tertiary institutions

In exploring female youth sexuality, this study drew upon the literature which discloses how learning spaces are viewed as sexualized sites and students as active agents, whose sexual selves shape and are shaped by social relations (Adam & Mutongi, 2007; Allen, 2008; Epstein, O'Flynn, & Telford, 2003; Seloilwe, 2005; Shefer et al., 2012). Adopting this epistemological position allowed me to not only question whether or not students perform sexualities, but to extend the understanding to the meanings that they attach to their sexualities.

Tertiary institutions are imagined by many to be places of learning, advancement and modernity where students are engraved with conservative and professional values (Armer & Youtz 1971; Lukose, 2000; Masvawure, 2010a) in preparation for formal employment (Dwyer & Wyn, 2001). While the majority of students endorse this formal view and undeniably expect to graduate from university armed with the essential skills and knowledge to fit into bourgeois society, this is not all that the university experience represents for students. More recently, university campuses are viewed as sites of sexual exploration (Berntson et al., 2014; Masvawure, 2010a).

It is worth noting that students enter the institutions of higher learning with existing sexual scripts as alluded to earlier that have been learned from their original socio-cultural environments. The university thus becomes a platform for the youth to realise and contest the potentialities of their sexuality, especially how it can be utilised for the purposes of status and achievement of neoliberal self-actualisation (Allen, 2012). Moffat (1989) used the term

‘college life’ to depict the space that students negotiate for themselves, which is representative of the kind of experiences they craft for themselves.

Performance of ‘college life’ has been documented by many scholars to include uninhibited fun which includes sexual exploration, partying, ‘dressing the part’ and consuming excessive alcohol (Magni, Christofides, Johnson, & Weiner, 2015). It is also a place where gender roles are consciously interrogated and reconstructed. Although this period is transitional, Masvawure (2010a) argued that university spaces offer legitimate terrain for a debut into the adult world of sex. In fact, some students narrated that they had ‘planned’ to initiate sex at university. In their study of newly enrolled students from the rural areas, Khalajabadi-Farahani and Cleland (2015) found that while some students could not wait to experience sex, there were some who conformed to the script of sexual purity. This suggests that institutions of higher learning are a melting pot of different sociocultural inscriptions, which may assume new meanings within a new context that symbolises freedom. Residences also offer some sense of spatial independence. Although regulated, students still manage to manipulate their space as they please (Gopal & van Niekerk, 2018). In fact, it is not uncommon for students’ sexual companions to sleep overnight in their rooms, some even ‘squatting’/cohabiting for the duration of the relationship.

Racial delineations are evident in campuses where white and African students generally converge separately. In the era of decolonization, race in higher education has been a highly contentious issue, with students embarking in protest actions in order to fight historical and structural forces of oppression. Examples of these include the ‘Rhodes must fall’ movement which escalated to the ‘fees must fall’ movement. In brief, the 2015 Rhodes Must Fall movement came about as a protest against colonially symbolic structures at the University of Cape Town.

Through social network platforms, the #FeesMustFall quickly gained traction across all institutions of higher learning in South Africa and abroad. Cecil John Rhodes’s statue was destroyed as its presence symbolised white supremacy and total disregard for the historical damage such colonialists inflicted. Ndlovu & Vraagom (2016) in their article titled: *‘Intersecting Oppression: Locating Gender within #FeesMustFall’*, cautioned against privileging one oppression over another. In the struggle against structural oppression, non-conforming gender (queers, transgender or cis-gender) bodies felt marginalised and voiceless, with those at the forefront of the Rhodes Must Fall movement symbolising the very face of the

oppressor they were protesting against. Consequently, a counter-movement called #PatriarchyMustFall was formed which aimed to destabilize the homogenization of protesting bodies.

The economic conundrum experienced by university students gave rise to the University of Witwatersrand led #FeesMustFall campaign, which, just like its preceding hashtags, gained immediate momentum (Glenn, 2016; Ndlovu & Vraagom, 2016). Social networks and the media were considered significant transmitters of updates (Glenn, 2016). In fact, students were able to use these platforms to ventilate their experiences of the campaign. One student's twitter update lamented her frustration over how Fort Hare University had long been striking for fees to 'fall', without any coverage from media houses. Conversely when 'rich' students – referring to UCT and WITS - started, the whole country noticed, a clear depiction of the social class division between and within universities emerged. In an interview with the Sowetan Newspaper, internationally renowned athlete Castor Semenya – a gold medallist, tactlessly remarked, regarding the Fees Must Fall movement, as follows: “...*you skip classes and do all those crazy stuff, people are doing, you are wasting time*” (Ndlovu & Vraagom, 2016, p. 1). Insurmountable retaliatory comments fuelled with gender discrimination trended across all social media platforms. These authors argued that Caster was attacked based on her cis-gender identity, rather than the utterances made. They contended that “the bone of contention should not be with the body; but rather with the idea that the body expresses” (ibid, p1). These contestations amongst students and the greater public, point to the discursive nature of popular discourses within university spaces.

At the Durban launch of the 'First things first' programme, the then Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Mr Mduzuzi Manana announced that “Universities and colleges provide the ideal environment within which to improve knowledge about HIV, other STIs and TB and to promote testing and other services to protect and care for young people” (HEAIDS¹⁰ 2016). The significance of such an initiative is reinforced by the ever-increasing rate of HIV infections amongst the youth between 15-24 years, residing in the East and South of Africa (UNAIDS, 2014).

¹⁰ “The Higher Education and Training Health, Wellness and Development Centre (HEAIDS) was established in 2000/2001 as a partnership between the then Department of Education (DoE), the South African Universities Vice-Chancellors Association (SAUVCA) and the Committee of Technikon Principals (CTP)” <https://www.heaid.ac.za/about/history/>.

KwaZulu-Natal has been found to carry the highest burden of new HIV infections out of the nine South African provinces (SA National HIV Prevalence, Incidence and Behaviour Survey, 2012). Similar Government programmes have been widely criticized for their overreliance on the biomedical discourse of risk, which subtly communicate preference for non-sexual students. There is a dissonance between what the educational environment views as sexuality, juxtaposed with the lived sexual realities of students (Allen, 2007), and this distinction is constituted differently across context.

Denying young people, as sexually knowing subjects, may have consequences for programme outcomes. MacPhail & Campbell (2001), in their qualitative study of condom use among youth from a Johannesburg township of Khutsong, found that even carrying a condom had reputational damage for young women. It was considered blasphemous not only by adults, but also by peers, effecting contradictions between constructions of heterosexual norms and safer sex practice, especially for African women (Jewkes & Morrell, 2012).

At the University of Venda, over 50% of female students who had come to the antenatal clinic requested the emergency contraceptive (Mavhandu-Mudzusi, Netshandama, & Kutame, 2011). Participants in this study attributed their non-condom use to spontaneous sexual encounters, while those who had used it, reported issues of bursting condoms or ‘how it slips and gets stuck inside’ (Mavhandu-Mudzusi, Netshandama, & Kutame, 2011, p. 39). Use of a female condom has been found to be minimal. However, there is evidence of some female students that see condom use as a priority in sexual relationships. Such findings indicate the need for the development of programmes that not only encourage safer sex, but also engender positive sexual experiences for young people (Allen, 2007). While various health programmes at universities have been implemented, I argue that they have also constructed a discourse of ‘danger’ when it comes to youth sexualities. For example, in his announcement on the rollout of Truvada¹¹, the Director of HEAIDS, Dr Ramneek stated: “In these age groups, rates of transactional sex are very high, and condom uptake is low, which is why they are good candidates for the roll-out” (Times Live, 26/09/2017). While such efforts can be praised, Nduna (2014) found that young people barely take advantage of them, for “fear of side-effects,

¹¹ “The pill that was shown to be safe and to help block HIV infection is called “Truvada” (pronounced truvá duh). Truvada is a combination of two drugs (tenofovir and emtricitabine). If you take PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) daily, the presence of the medicine in your bloodstream can often stop HIV from taking hold and spreading in your body” <https://www.drugs.com/truvada.html>.

fear of HIV testing and mistrust of clinic nurses” (p. 28), and this fear and mistrust should not be seen as free-floating, but socially, culturally and historically constructed (discussed in chapter three).

2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have reviewed the literature on multiple discourses of sexual exchange relationships in Sub-Saharan Africa. The literature suggests that SD relationships cannot be understood within a single framework. The studies across Sub-Saharan Africa also highlight how these discourses intersect, are not experienced uniformly across contexts, which are a demonstration of multiple experiences within Africa, and cannot be accounted for by singular, essentialist lens. The latter part of the review discussed transactional sex at universities, and the dominant discourses that often account for the experiences of young female students.

Foregrounding my arguments within in this chapter was the extent to which discourses reflect gender and sexuality as naturally occurring, naturally chosen, and often factitiously presented (Lyons, Manning, & Longmore, 2015). The contriving of evidence may be to normalize societal ideals relating to gender and sexuality, yet these are “involuntarily performed or negotiated within a given society” (Zibane, 2017, p. 92). My discourse has been vigilant of not privileging one discourse over another, which could render me complicit in reproducing the pedagogical “truth game” (Foucault, 1985, p. 44). To avoid the latter, I engender thinking in this *and* that, rather than this *or* that as well as taking care not to fuse understandings of different groups of people. For example, my sample (see chapter four), may reflect a more privileged group with greater agency e.g. compared with those living on the streets, refugees and women trafficked into sex.

In the next chapter, I discuss historical and contemporary constructions of African female sexualities and the process of ‘truth’ making that has influenced this social engineering, and how ‘becoming’ a young African woman occurs as naturalized, and constructs distinction between young men and women. I then explore how these distinctions have not only shaped gender, but also race, sexuality, and ethnicity within historical, political, and global contexts.

Chapter Three:

Historical and Contemporary Scripting of African Female Sexualities

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the theoretical landscape for understanding how sexual scripts of young African women have been constructed. To do this, I first trace the pre-colonial and post-colonial constructions of sexualities, in particular female sexualities in South Africa. My intention is not to present these historical sexualities as grand narratives, but rather to understand how they have shaped and continue to shape our understanding of African sexualities. This is in acknowledgment of sexualities as history graded and constructed, as reflected in Weeks' (2008, p. 29) argument that "sexuality is not a property that can be repressed or released, but a historically shaped series of possibilities, actions, behaviours, desires, risks, identities, norms and values that can be reconfigured and recombined."

Furthermore, considering that the participants of my study identified as African, I align my discussion with cultural traditions of black Africans, particularly in the KwaZulu-Natal context. Albeit my focus, I argue that, as with sexuality, culture is not a fixed construct. Young women in SD relationships in my study identified as Africans, their discussion of sexualities did not give precedence to cultural constructions of sexuality over other emerging constructions. Therefore, I argue that culture and tradition are dynamic and evolving discourses, not impervious to socio-political, globalisation, racial, class or religious influences.

Neoliberal globalisation, legislative changes and the AIDS epidemic have all significantly influenced the emergence of discourses and counter-discourses relating to sexual identities. It is also worth noting that my use of the terms 'Black' or 'African sexualities' in this thesis does not denote homogeneity of African people's experiences of sexuality. Instead, my use of these concepts recognises the distinctly intersectional classed, gendered, and racialized nature of African societies. I draw on Sylvia Tamale's (2014) reference to Africans as interconnected beings who (may or may not) subscribe to the *Ubuntu* (humanness) philosophy. Imbued with the ethos of solidarity, a universally shared history of colonialist and globalisation forces, Tamale (2014) brings to our attention the political inferences of *Ubuntu* and its construction of African cultures and sexualities. However true the latter may be, it would be disingenuous to assume that *all* African practices subscribe to *Ubuntu*. South Africa's former Constitutional Court Judge, Justice Mokgoro's metaphorical definition of *Ubuntu* recognises

“...the significance of group solidarity on survival issues so central to the survival of communities. While it envelopes the key values of group solidarity, compassion, respect, human dignity, conformity to basic norms and collective unity, in its fundamental sense, it denotes humanity and morality” (Sachs cited in Tamale, 2014, p. 151).

My discussion of African sexualities takes into account the complex multiplicity of contexts within which discourses of young African women are scripted, while some of the essentialists may prioritise the existence of a singular African sexuality discourse. Advocating for diversity and multiplicity, Sewpaul (2016, p. 30) argued that social workers need to “harness the contradictory and competing strands of their histories, traditions, and values, and the multiple identities within contexts.” She rejects dichotomous depictions of the West and the Rest, and calls for unity in diversity and recognition of the need for “dialogue; tuning into the life worlds of people; responsiveness; reasoned debate; recognizing the power of care, interdependence, reciprocity and validation” (p. 37).

Rejecting Western understandings, Epprecht (2008, p. 2) argued that the hypothetical notion of a singular sexuality for Africans may include “the supposed nonexistence of homosexuality or bisexuality, along with Africans’ purported tendencies towards heterosexual promiscuity, gender violence, and lack of the kind of internalized moral restraints that supposedly inhibit the spread of HIV in other cultures.” I agree with Epprecht (2008) who argues that the construction of African sexualities is not clear cut and simplistic, despite claims by some (Caldwell et al., 1989). In reaction, Ahlberg in Hlabangane (2014, p. 193) contended that Caldwell et al.’s simplistic assertions on sexual permissiveness of Africans failed to: “(a) acknowledge the limitations associated with sexual behaviour research; (b) to place moral and religious values in context; and [lastly] (c) to bring a historical perspective to bear on their analysis.” Ahlberg’s contemplations resonate with the assumptions of this chapter, which acknowledge sexuality meanings as socially constructed and history graded.

While my assertions may be misinterpreted as a repudiation of the assumed current ‘*realities*’ of youth African sexualities, I argue that reality is socially constructed and suggest the need for acknowledgment of many ‘*realities*’ constructed by many scripts. The Nigerian feminist and author, Chimamanda Adichie (2016), cautions against the ‘*danger of a single story*’, which suggests that when people have been repeatedly painted as one thing and one thing only, then that is what they will eventually become.

3.2 Sexual scripts

I introduced the sexual scripting theory (Simon & Gagnon, 1986) in chapter one and I refer to it in this chapter in order to understand their continual development and how they shape decision making of young African women over time. Scripts are metaphorical understandings of rules of acceptable social behaviour, but are not deterministic (Jackson, 1999; Simon & Gagnon, 1986; Weeks, 1986). In the previous chapter, I discussed the three levels of sexual scripting, cultural scenarios, interpersonal sex scripts, and intrapersonal sex script, and how these intersect. One of its major limitations is notably how the assumption that the playing field is levelled, ignores the structures that enable and constrain some behaviours.

In response, Jackson and Scott (2007) maintain that scripts are thematised versions of sexuality, and reflect culture, history, and experience. Sexual scripting positions individuals as social actors, who are capable of negotiating and co-constructing scripts for their everyday lives, including their relationships. Acknowledgement of behaviour as sexually scripted is a repudiation of behaviour as biologically determined, which this study welcomes. In this chapter I bring attention to the significance of time and how with time comes change, thus altering historical meanings, and placing pressure on individuals to reconfigure their choices or decisions of the past to suit the present (Jackson, 1999).

Sticking to the 'script' is not compulsory but the negotiations and dynamic interactions between intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cultural levels shape choices. Young African women in my study are at university during times of socio-economic instabilities, within which they may be required to construct experiences and meanings of 'love, intimacy, and desire' and they may seek legitimate constructions of femininity in order to make normalized judgements (Foucault, 1977). I discuss the process involved in the legitimization of these constructions, the process of taking them up, as well the monitoring process.

3.3 Regulation of private/public sexuality

Although the discourse of sexuality is commonly understood as privately performed, Nyanzi (2011) argued that it is simultaneously publicly politicised. For example, there are regulations that govern the practice of sexuality, particularly what can be considered acceptable or unacceptable sex. These sets of governing benchmarks assist individuals to measure their level of compliance and to self-correct any behaviour deemed abnormal. As further corroborated by Weeks (2008), those that act contrary to the set norms of heteronormativity may be subject to controls and regulations, resulting in them being '*othered*'.

Othering of specific sexual identities such as those of the disabled, young women or homosexuals, communicates stereotypes about particular groups. In fact, Steyn and van Zyl (2009) mentioned that previously, homosexuality was synonymised with promiscuity and mental deficiency, whilst young women and those living with disabilities were viewed as sexually unknowing, or incapable of acting out their sexuality. These discourses see continuity into the present in some contexts. This relegation of alternative forms of sexuality, according to Nyanzi (2011) risks the normalisation of heteronormative sexuality, and reinforcement thereof. It can, therefore, be argued that the governmentality of heterosexual normativity straddles both the public and private fields of sexuality, as put forth by Foucault (1978).

This chapter highlights how historical, socio-cultural, religious and governmental processes have been influential in regulating the sexuality of young African people, thus prescribing heterosexual normativity and constructions of young African people's discourses around sexuality. Here I argue that "sexuality is not exclusively driven by biology; a very significant part of it is socially constructed through legal, cultural and religious forces driven by the socio-economic agenda" (Stoddart cited in Tamale, 2014, p. 155). How young African women in SD relationships perform their sexualities cannot be viewed in isolation, but rather as largely influenced by external institutions, what Foucault (1978, p. 72) refers to as 'apparatuses of control'.

As discussed in the previous chapters, language is essential in the transference of discourses by societal institutions, which are inclusive of social relationships. While discourses linguistically influence how we understand and experience the world, Allen (2007) argued that they are similarly discursive products of institutions of power. In addition, reification of sexuality meanings is largely dependent on the embedded power of apparatuses, implying the inextricable relationship between knowledge and power (Foucault, 1978).

'Knowledge is power' is an old saying that denotes that the proprietors of knowledge hold the rights to what can be claimed as truthful, thus repudiating other 'truths' (Daldal, 2014). Gramsci¹² (1992) referred to this disregard for other truths as 'hegemonic power', a concept demonstrating the insidious transference of institutional ideologies without consideration for the overtly oppressive structures where constructions are enacted. This suggests the need for problematizing and deconstructing not only the internalised dominant constructions of

¹² Antonio Gramsci was an Italian Marxist who dedicated his entire life to the destabilization of what was often considered common sense or taken-for-granted assumptions

sexuality, but the structures that prescribe and maintain this dominance. In relation to participants in my study, understanding hegemony as a concept, facilitated questions around who or what has shaped their meanings of sexuality. And to what extent their performances in SD relationships are influenced by the historically dominant ideologies of femininities and masculinities, including their compliance and/or resistance to those ideologies? The above recognises that “...power operates through complex and overlapping – and often contradictory – mechanisms, which produce domination *and* oppositions, subordination *and* resistances” (Weeks, 2006, p. 35). Of fundamental importance is the cultural context whereby these contradictory performances are enacted and consequently sanctioned as ‘normal’ or ‘abnormal’ sexual performances.

In my preparation for this chapter, I reviewed literature that traces young people’s sexuality across several African cultures. However, I prioritised studies that are relevant to the context of my study, South Africa, with a focus on KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). While KZN cannot be arbitrarily described as a province reserved for *only* the Zulu people, given the dominance of the Zulu culture, and my sample representation, I focus on its influence on young people’s sexualities. Furthermore, I recognise that despite the fact that many people, myself included, may self-identify as Zulu, the Zulu culture cannot be viewed as a homogenous practice, free from contestations. Consistent with Butler (1990) my intention is to present historical and contemporary accounts of sexualities as complied and/or resisted upon, performances that may well resonate with young African women in SD relationships within KZN.

3.4 Families as regimes of sexual truth

Various scholars have sought to bring forth pre-colonial accounts of Zulu cultural processes in relation to sexuality. For example, Delius and Glaser (2002), Hunter (2005), Buthelezi (2006), and Tamale (2014) unanimously contended that sexuality discourses have not always been confined to private, conjugal spaces, but were normal conversations discussed without age restrictions within the Zulu culture. Although uninhibited discussions of sexuality are important, I argue that the actual meanings inscribed by those discussions are equally relevant. Nyanzi (2011) contended that these discussions precluded alternative discourses on sexuality practices whilst normalising those deemed appropriate.

The home, from pre-colonial to contemporary Africa, has been an institution where cultural values and norms are transferred (often through observation) from parents to children. There is a wider range of influences, which I discuss in this chapter, but the family remains central.

The surveillance, control, and disciplining power remains a revered duty of the parents (Delius & Glaser, 2002), as well as women as torchbearers of this regime of power (Buthelezi, 2006). Expectedly, young people have performed culturally prescribed and normalised roles and behaviours, whilst cognisant of repercussions for deviating from the norm (ibid). In essence, culture has somehow been instrumental in reinforcing the governing power of those who regulate behaviour, and in this case the parents.

In her research with African and Caribbean women (of African descent) living in Britain, Mama (1995, p. 90) noted how they often referred to “childhood experiences, to their parents and to the felt need for a strong cultural identity.” Invoking these cultural experiences outside their context of origin, was according to Mama “a way of identifying and locating themselves, and [...] distinguishing themselves from white people and white British culture and behaviour” (ibid). This demonstrates the continuities and discontinuities of scripts, and the significance of family in their formation during childhood.

The bodies of young people have long been at the centre of performance of cultural constructions in African societies. As such, Mama (1995, p. 89) “suggested that we need to start with viewing individuality as socially produced, while at the same time viewing sociality as produced within individual subjects.” Krige (1950) documented how Zulu boys’ and girls’ coming of age milestones are celebrated as emblemising sexual potentialities of their transitioning bodies. In practical terms ‘*izibulo*’ (wet dream) for boys and ‘*ukumensa*’ (menstruation) for girls respectively signify a rite of passage, which although biologically contingent, is embodied as sociocultural inscriptions, emasculating the biological meanings of sexuality (Butler, 1990).

In recognition of the inextricable connection between biology and social constructions, Delius and Glaser (2002) stated that African communities, especially in pre-colonial South Africa “...recognised the power and centrality of sexuality in human experience and were acutely aware of the strong passions which swayed pubescent hearts and minds” (p. 31). As a result, various governing systems were deployed to control or delay exhibition of these ‘strong passions’. However, these authors also recognised the incongruent surveillance and governing of ‘girls’ bodies over those of ‘boys’ (ibid). This is evident in the current day practice of virginity testing, discussed later in this chapter.

African practices, according to Mbiti (1970), Asante (2003) and Tamale (2014) have long been influenced by the concepts of ‘interconnectedness’ and ‘*Ubuntu*’ which, underscores a culture

of sharing, be it joy, pain, or even parental duties. Furthermore, the old saying: ‘it takes a village to raise a child’ is an essential embodiment as it resonates with the principles of Afrocentricity (Asante, 2003; Mbiti, 1970). This suggests shared conceptions (or/and misconceptions) of sexually appropriate behaviours of young people, coupled with the possible regulatory and disciplinary mechanisms deployed for non-conformity. While my intention is not to theorise around Afrocentricity (of sexuality), or even speculate that African sexualities are monolithic, I contend that its inclusion at this point bears significance for the context under which sexual knowledge is regulated and practiced.

Nkani (2012) argued that the regulation of sexuality, in the Zulu culture has not always been the responsibility of one’s parents only, but community structures have been relied upon for surveillance of courtships between young women (*amatshitshi*) and their boyfriends (*amasoka*). These structures, headed by relatively experienced older women called *amaqhikiza*, were considered bridges to prospective *tshitshis* (*prospective girlfriend*) hearts. Being guided by *amaqhikiza* is not so common nowadays, and Maureau (2014, p. 138) argued that this role has “not sufficiently been filled by other forms of sexual education.” A significant role of *iqhikiza* is to safeguard the interests of *itshitshi* (Delius & Glaser, 2002; Jewkes et al., 2011), of which one is to ensure the practice of *ukusoma* -non-penetrative thigh sex as opposed to vaginal sex. Any transgression resulted in repercussions, which were publicly denounced and consequently tarnished the credibility of *iqhikiza*. Delius and Glaser (2002) argued that if this transgression resulted in pregnancy, the ramifications exacerbated.

Pregnancy outside of the institution of marriage was considered as ‘troubling’ the governing powers that regulated female sexuality and its trajectories. Rankhotha (2004) argued that pre-marital pregnancies were considered as undermining the socially constructed norm of prospective ‘virgin brides’. The mother of the young woman also suffered the wrath of her husband, her in-laws, and ancestors who considered her as having failed to ‘*gcina*’-regulate/govern her daughter’s sexuality as delegated (Krige, 1950). This, for the mother, suggests a failed obligation of policing her daughter, whilst it exonerates fathers of any blame attributed to this ‘shameful’ occurrence (see Zulu & Munroe, 2017). To avoid this public shame, or even its recurrence, young people were informed on alternative sexual practices that did not involve sexual penetration, with possible disciplinary measures for deviation from the latter (Delius & Glaser, 2002). African women’s sexuality as at risk of moral decline ushered the urgency to prioritise its surveillance (Krige, 1950). In this chapter I discuss sexual scripts within African context, not to universalise young African women, but to explicate

“subjectivities and subject positions that are located in discourses” (Mama, 1995, p. 98). Furthermore, utilizing a feminist post-structural lens, I recognise that young African women in my study “have many discourses and discursive positions available to them, and the positions they take up are momentary, changing with the different social contexts and relations they find themselves in” (p. 99).

Contextual and relational changes, analysed broadly in chapter five (see *ikhaya* and *ivava* sexual scripts), and more specifically in SD relationships (see chapter six) justify my theoretical lens of feminist post-structural and scripting theory, introduced in chapter one. Within this lens, I recognise that young African women receive multiple sexual scripts across contexts and I discuss in chapter five, how these may be “conflicting and contentious –and [...] grounded in hegemonic gender norms” (Ragonese et al., 2017, p. 306).

The Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles (IASSW, 2018) defines families as ethnically and culturally diverse, and this then suggests cultural diversity in the deployment of gender norms, which I discuss in the following section.

3.5 Gender norms and young African women’s sexuality

Central to dominant ideologies of femininity and masculinity in Africa and elsewhere, is the need to control women’s sexuality and their reproduction (Tamale, 2014), ensuring that women remain subservient and unquestioning to male domination (Sathiparsad, 2007). Women in this sense would perform roles that revolve around child-care and prioritization of men’s physical and sexual needs, and their (women’s) sexual gratification not prioritized (Leclerc-Madlala, 2003). In her study of youth in the rural South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal, Sathiparsad (2007) found that although women expectedly satisfied their partners sexually, initiation of sex was still an act reserved for men. This prioritisation of men’s sexual needs over those of women, suggests sexuality as constructed against the backdrop of patriarchy.

A patriarchal society, according to Rich cited in Jackson (1999, p. 16), is perceived as ‘...serving the interests of men, [and] as coercing women into compulsory heterosexuality’, thus “producing gendered patterns of domination and submission intrinsic to patriarchal societies and written into their cultural representations” (p. 16). Jackson, however, cautions against the essentialist dichotomous conceptualisation of women as naturally loving and submissive, and men as domineering predators. Instead, there is a need to acknowledge the ubiquitous and complex power circulating within heterosexual relations, against the backdrop of dominant masculinities (Jackson, 1999).

Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity refers to the repeated performances of male domination and female submission (Connell & Messerschmitt, 2005), which serve to naturalise patriarchy (Butler, 1990; Jackson, 1999; Weeks, 2006). Hegemonic masculinity is, in this way, perceived as significant in the sustenance of a patriarchal society. While I acknowledge the historically constructed masculine control of female sexuality in the Zulu culture, I also do not subscribe to the simplistic view of *all* Zulu men as incapable of performing behaviours that display care and affection. I also acknowledge the binary discourse of emphasized femininity (Connell & Messerschmitt, 2005) and I contend that, as a social construct; it implies dominant and inscribed ideologies of femininity (Sewpaul, 2013), although it could be argued that its performance could be dependent on enacted masculinities (Butler, 1990). The discourse of female sexuality is in this instance relational and fluid.

Although I discuss hegemonic masculinities in the context of South African culture in this section, there have been several debates regarding dominance over women as universally practiced and experienced. Butler (1990, p. 5-6) reiterated several feminists' contestations regarding this universal subjugation of women as follows:

“Is there some commonality among women that pre-exists their oppression, or do women have a bond by virtue of their oppression alone? Is there a specificity to women's cultures that is independent of their subordination by hegemonic, masculinist cultures? Are the specificity and integrity of women's cultural or linguistic practices always against and, hence, within the terms of some more dominant cultural formation?”

In her deliberations on the above contentions, Butler (1990) argued that the notion of 'universal patriarchy' is dangerous in that it grossly misrepresents women by not considering the context within which patriarchy is performed, resisted and/or complied upon. In her theory of performativity (see chapter one), she referred to the roles played by both men and women in maintaining patriarchy, as does Sewpaul (2013). For example, *iqhikiza* was instrumental in teaching young women about their feminine duties, which, according to Delius and Glaser (2002) and Leclerc-Madlala (2003), implied prioritization of men's needs and ensuring that there was no penetrative sex before marriage. This, especially the 'no penetrative sex before marriage' discourse, carries no universal understanding, and I refer to the recent proposal by the WHO (World Health Organization) agencies to ban virginity testing and below is one of

the posters featured in a WHO article titled, *‘Virginity testing’: a human rights violation, with no scientific basis – WHO*, dated 18 October, 2018.



Figure 3: *Virginity testing’: a human rights violation, with no scientific basis – UN, 18 October, 2018*

In a joint statement issued at the Rio de Janeiro gathering of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, UN agencies stressed that virginity testing was not scientific, and violated human rights. In her closing address at congress, Assistant Health Director (World Health Organization -Family, Women, Children and Adolescent) appealed to medical and other health professionals to refrain from conducting virginity testing. Quoting the ‘Hippocratic oath’ of ‘doing no harm’, she urged all delegates to safeguard “the human rights of girls and women in their care.” Soon thereafter, outcries from those who advocate for the practice dominated the media space.



Figure 4: *Protest over call to ban virginity testing, The Witness, 8 November 2018*

Izintombi (young women) march from Dales Park, to the KZN Legislature Building on Langalibalele Street, on Wednesday in protest against the call to ban virginity testing (Ian Carbutt – The Witness, 08 November, 2018).

Virginity and virginity testing in traditional Zulu culture, in fact in most African societies, is valorised. This is evident in sixteen-year old Mandisa Khoza's appeal to those in power to allow 'them' to make 'their' own decisions, and is quoted, "no one is ever forced into virginity testing, it's voluntary; virginity testing hurts no one, in fact, it helps young girls practise abstinence" (The Witness, 08 November, 2018). What these articles reveal is the conflicting discourse of virginity testing, as also found by Bhana (2015), Leclerc-Madlala (2003) and Nduna (2014).

Participants in Nduna's (2014, p. 22) study, perceived *Inkciyo* (virginity testing in IsiXhosa¹³) as consistent with the health, religious, and cultural beliefs of their community, and thus saw "Inkciyo as a community practice that encouraged them to work hard towards building their future as 'good girls'." Inherent in this 'good girl' script, is a sense of pride, which Nduna's participant, Zolile (17) upheld, "*It [Inkciyo] provides me the platform of showing off my virginity . . . You know boys sometimes talk nonsense like saying "Uphelile" (you are finished) when they have slept with you. Me, I know that no one has ever slept with me*" (Nduna, 2014, p. 21). Virginity meanings vary across contexts (Xhaho, 2013), yet I admit that the practice of 'virginity testing' bears more relevance within African contexts.

Buthelezi (2006) contended that this cultural practice was unequally performed, as it exclusively emphasized the importance of female virginity and its association with bride wealth – *ilobolo*. The intact hymen of young women and girls was often termed 'mother's cow' – *inkomo kamama*; its presence suggesting the mother's (including *iqhikiza*) success in morally guarding her daughter. In appreciation, the groom's family would send 11¹⁴ cows to the bride's family in preparation for the wedding. This according to Rankhotha (2004) implied that mothers of non-virgins had limited power during *ilobolo* negotiations and would be subpoenaed to account for the 'damaged' young woman. This cultural practice was not without intergenerational contestations as some young women and their mothers felt it compromised marriage prospects (Delius and Glaser, 2002), hence the decision to refuse inspection, which Hunter (1936) traces back to 1930.

¹³ After IsiZulu, IsiXhosa is the second most common home language in South Africa the majority of its speakers, living in KZN's neighbouring province, the Eastern Cape <http://salanguages.com/isixhosa/xhoptg.htm>.

¹⁴ According to Professor Ngubane (UKZN lecturer) "Somtseu" was the one who promoted that families of grooms should pay 10 cows for the groom's future wife and 11 cows if the prospective wife was still a virgin. "At the beginning, lobola negotiations were not about what you are going to get. The important thing was to build relationships between the two families. You cannot tell me that you are building a relationship if you are going to put a price tag on it," said Ngubane (interview with journalist, Zondo, of News24, 01 October 2015).

The decline in virginity testing in the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape was attributed to the disputes that transpired between mothers and ‘*abahloli*’ – virginity examiners, which stemmed from mothers refusing to accept that their daughters were confirmed ‘non-virgins’. Refusing virginity surveillance against cultural prescriptions suggests that even during the 19th Century, young people (including their mothers) could resist conformity. Even though resisted by some, this cultural practice remains revered in most parts of KwaZulu-Natal for its ability to instil sexual discipline in women, and affirm the position of men. I acknowledge the non-monolithic meanings ascribed to virginity testing. However, as the current discourse stands, I contend that it fuels hegemonic masculinities, especially since young males are not subjected to similar testing, or any bodily surveillance.

Foucault (1977) contended that enforced discipline and punishment might yield morally appropriate behaviour, even in the absence of the disciplinarian. In the case of virginity testing, Tamale (2014, p. 157) refers to how young girls “...voluntarily submitted themselves for virginity testing in search of public approval”, suggesting the impact of cultural constructions of reality. My question is whether this act of self-surveillance can be considered free will? Perhaps the response is yes *and* no – given the dialectical and complex relationship between structure and agency.

Given hegemonic control of consciousness, the question of “free will” mentioned above, might be reflective of the “concealing function of common sense” (Sewpaul, 2013, p. 112), as found by Nkosi (2014) in her study of *ukuthwala*¹⁵ – *wife abduction* in KZN. Loosely referring to ‘carrying’ or ‘to carry’ on one’s head, *ukuthwala*, like virginity testing, is not without contestations. Nkosi (2014, p. xxi), argued how often, “women involved collude in the practice to solve a problem relating to love relationships.” While, I agree that in its origin, the practice premises on a ‘joint agreement’ between couples (such as to ‘elope’) who unanimously agree to ‘*ukuthwala*’, as a ‘staged abduction’, it is highly exploitative.

Research of *Ukuthwala* in relation to the Children’s Act 38 of 2005, found that it acts against the best interest of children, renders them powerless, and exposes them to risky sexual behaviours (Mwambene & Sloth-Nielsen, 2011). The practice also violates section 12(2) (a) of the children’s Act, which prohibits acceptance of *ilobolo* for marrying a child below the age of 18 years. Like Honwana (2012), I find this age categorization problematic, and instead

¹⁵ “Ukuthwala is a Zulu practice that opens up marriage negotiation process when it is difficult to have these started” (Nkosi, 2014, p. 6).

support legal understandings that consider children and young people as “all those who have not yet been able to attain social adulthood, despite their age” (p. 13). Young African women’s lives in this sense vary according to socio-economic, political and cultural contexts and these diverse backgrounds inevitably “affect their life chances and outlooks” (ibid, p. 13), rendering age an irrelevant distinction.

Under this section, I have explicated on cultural practices and meanings of female sexuality discourses as not so simplistic but fluid and history graded. I have argued sexuality as influenced by a myriad of factors, with culture being one, and I argued that culture is not a stable, fixed category but socially constructed, thus changeable. Below, I discuss the significance of Christianity in shaping the discourse of women’s sexuality.

3.6 Christianity, colonialism and sexuality

“Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Saviour. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also ought wives to be, in everything to their husband” (Ephesians 5 vs 22-24).

The advent of Christianity in the late 19th Century brought about new sets of rules that sought to destabilize existing sexual norms for Africans, and significantly the Zulu society, in a façade of modernity. Civilization and modernity were promises of religion (Christianity/missionaries) as explicated by Rovine (cited in Coly, 2015) to symbolize a Christianised, civilised and clothed body. This process was premised on the idea that African sexualities were primordial, dangerous and unclean when compared to Western ones. With regard to the above Bible verse found in the New Testament, man is synonymised with the powerful God, thus warranting deity privileges. It proposes that women’s submission is not by chance but ordained by God, and thus not subjecting to one’s husband is disrespectful to God. While colonisers were critical of aberrant cultural practices in traditional Zulu society and their epitomized immorality, Christianity brought with it documented ‘indoctrination of patriarchy’ in the form of a Bible (Delius & Glaser, 2002). What made this process even more believable was that the Bible was said to be written with God’s guidance, and therefore held absolute truth (ibid).

In the Foucauldian (1977) sense, Christianity is another apparatus of control that subjects individuals to new regimes of truth, accompanied by regulations and disciplines pertaining to sexuality. These knowledges and truths are based on Western constructed heteronormativity. According to Arnfred (2004), Christianity defined sexuality in heterosexual terms and

restricted it for reproductive purposes, with sexual pleasure (although *still* sinful) pardonable if experienced by men. This is corroborated by Shefer's (2010, p. 389) argument that "sexuality gets framed as a male domain in which men control and set the terms, and to which women must be inducted and guided." I argue that within precolonial Zulu culture, sex itself was not the issue, in fact albeit governed, alternatives to penetrative sex (as in thigh sex) were considered. Consistent within these two periods is the practice of sexuality within the heterosexual matrix of dichotomy and power.

Consistent with Butler's (1990) theory of performativity, power in sexual relationships was gendered in precolonial times, and continues to be post missionisation and Christianisation. Moreover, as stressed by Foucault (1978) power operates parallel with resistance, suggesting that even within enactments of dominant discourses of sexuality, counter discourses that repudiate the dominant one similarly bear significance. For example, although Christianity aimed to modernise Zulu societies by converting them from their primitive surveillance habits, more young people were unsure of its viability, and subsequently resisted its modern constructions of sexuality (Delius and Glaser, 2002). However, change brought about by Christianity was discernible. Monogamy became the only acceptable conjugal union and transitioning process for young people. Inherent within these transformations was the silencing of sexuality, which although suppressed impacted traditional Zulu family compositions during the 1930s.

Notwithstanding the significant changes brought about by missionaries, I argue that the process of Christianisation cannot be considered to have successfully eroded all customary practices. Instead, against Christian sexuality indoctrinations, it is probable that some Zulu communities argued the possibility of its coexistence with customary practices (Delius & Glaser, 2002), thus tampering with its original (European) discourse. In view of the above, I argue that Christianity in Africa has not enjoyed sovereignty, implying that it has not retained its 'purest' or original form, but has been revised, negotiated and reconstructed over time. This study also acknowledges its coexistence amongst multiple discourses, for example class, gender, ethnicity and politics are amongst many that script sexuality and regulate its enactments.

3.7 Capitalism and governmentality of women's sexuality

Capitalism heralded new forms of masculinities, which disrupted the spatial constructions of African families. Prior to the late 1940s, traditional Zulu society was agrarian, reliant on family members' investment in communal subsistence farming. The emergence of migrant labour

saw African men, as young as 15 years of age, drawn to mining industries, developed to meet demands by the West for raw minerals. Through colonial policies, men were forced to leave their families to work in the big cities, namely Johannesburg and Durban. This was met with resistance by some men. Soon after, the livelihood conditions for families left at home took a turn for the worse. In fact, the land was forcefully taken away for commercial use by colonialists, leaving African families with uncultivable land. With no other option left, African men surrendered to migrant labour, to the detriment of familial stability.

Colonialism and waged labour re-entrenched sex and gender divisions by drawing a distinction between 'men as paid workers' and 'women as unpaid carers' (Bhana, Morrell, Hearn, & Moletsane, 2007; Izugbara, 2004), endorsing a public/private divide. The social (and sexual) divisions were visible. Expectedly, newly acquired city discourses and those of wives or girlfriends left in the rural areas often conflicted. For example, Bhana et al. (2007, p. 132) claimed that these two worlds "...were in constant danger of undermining one another, [and] of polluting one another", as men found it challenging to reconcile the two worlds.

In the mines, young men were usually accommodated in overpopulated hostels with strict rules that prevented spouses from visiting. These gendered restrictions signified the disintegration of African family norms and values, and called for crafting of new social constructions to keep up with capitalism. Young women took up new roles, previously constructed for men, such as herding cattle, and went into the fields for hours with other herders without '*amaqhikiza*' to monitor behaviour (Delius and Glaser, 2002). The impact of migration thus led to the restructuring of roles which implied reconfiguration of the governing powers 'apparatuses of control' mentioned by Foucault (1978), which, in this instance, refer to '*amaqhikiza*' as mothers of young women. The mothers themselves had their own challenges to deal with.

The demands for production and unfair labour policies meant that men did not go home frequently. The traditional Zulu women had, until this period, defined themselves according to their roles of childbearing and provision of sexual pleasure to their husbands. Migration policies had noticeably disrupted the sexual scripts of women who had subscribed to submission to the 'head', and without the head, the submission 'script' had been altered. For Gagnon and Simon (cited in Jackson, 1999, p. 9) "...what is sexual is a matter of social definition and becoming sexual is a process of learning sexual meanings or scripts and locating oneself within them." As previously argued, dominant discourses of female sexualities are socially constructed and migration reshaped and redefined these constructions. This is not to

say that all traditional Zulu women experienced migration evenly, as the society itself, although identifying as Zulu, was far from homogenous (Delius & Glaser, 2002).

As contended by Foucault (1978, p. 114) building a capitalist society was characterised by “a new work ethic whereby sex was perceived to be incompatible with the need to form a productive labour force.” In migrant labour, colonially influenced work ethics dismantled sexual constructions for these men, and forced them to consider alternative forms of sexuality (Moodie, Ndatshe and Sibuyi, 1988). These authors included ‘sex with other men’ and relationships with local women who stayed near the mines. The concurrent occurrence of these seemingly alternative sexualities was also common (ibid). Within these complexities, there were also men who remained loyal to their wives or girlfriends at home and arranged for them to rent in nearby townships or informal settlements. Although costly, it helped to forge the family unit as previously enjoyed, although with immense financial and social repercussions, such as the cost of urban life, as well as the cost (social and financial) of distant parenting (Seepamore, 2016). Children left in the care of siblings, extended family or even unrelated community members are a reality in the South African context.

Correspondingly, women left at home redefined their roles. Some opted to follow their partners to the cities, with a view of finding employment in suburbs or near hostels, while some women, who were widows or abandoned by husbands, saw no prospects for them in the rural areas, and subsequently travelled to the cities in search of a better life. During this time, paid domestic work was still dominated by African men, which then forced many African women into illegal activities like concocting local beer – ‘*umqombothi*’ and prostituting themselves to survive the capitalist life of the city. With the increase in women migrating to the city, urban families formed. It became an acceptable norm for men to have ‘city girlfriends’ and ‘rural wives’. As probable, children were born from both these conjugal unions with a possibility of them never meeting each other. The aftermath of these rural-urban relationships is reflected in programmes like ‘*Khumbulekhaya*¹⁶’ and ‘*UTatakho*’¹⁷ where there is a depicted desperation for families, children in particular, to be (re)united with their loved ones whom they have never met or lost contact with, due to circumstances such as migration.

¹⁶ Khumbulekhaya – IsiZulu for ‘Remember home’ is a local TV programme that traces long lost relatives or family members that were born worlds/cities apart. The programme often involves children looking for their fathers or their fathers’ families, with a few tracing their maternal lineages.

¹⁷ Utatakho –Xhosa for ‘Your father’ is a local TV programme that seeks to track down fathers of children and to conduct paternity tests as proof of relation.

Some of the rural wives were hopeful that their husbands would return one day. In the interim, some women resorted to sexual relationships with other local men. Interestingly among women (including mother in laws), this was culturally justifiable, provided it was discretely performed. 'Isidikiselo' –referring to pot lid, was the name given to the secret lover of the wife, while the husband remained the main pot; 'isidikiselo' supplemented the role of the husband while away (see Arnfred, 2004; Delius & Glaser, 2002; Hunter, 2014). This was a secret taken to the grave by women, even if a child¹⁸ was born from the 'isidikiselo' relationship. In a current local drama series, *Imbewu – The Seed*, although fictional, it reflects the continuities of this practice, by depicting how, after realizing her husband's infertility, a wife together with her mother-in-law unite to 'provide' *him* with children, and the husband's brother offers assistance.

In view of the above, I argue that sexual meanings and performances are socially constructed (Butler, 1990), and situation specific. The above example also indicates the pressure to bear children that confronts many women and how "the more children a man has, the more masculine, he is seen to be" (Sewpaul, 1995, p. 82). Agreeably, 'isidikiselo(s)' are temporary relationships forged, amongst many strategies, within a context of unpleasant living conditions, with women carrying not only the reproductive burden, but also that of maintaining household livelihoods.

A conversation with my eighty-three-year-old mother-in-law revealed the following:

"Times were tough, my husband would leave only to return in December, and I even buried my daughter while he was away. I was 18 when I married him. Back in the days our parents did not see any value in sending "ingane yentombazane" (girl child) to school. I was groomed from an early age as to how I should treat my husband and my new family. The painful part was not that he had gone to work in Johannesburg; the people I was staying made my life a misery. My mother-in-law would be the one to receive money in the post from my husband, I would see her distributing the money to my sisters-in-law and their children. I just could not say anything because 'ngayalwa

¹⁸ If it happened that the 'isidikiselo' relationship resulted in a pregnancy, the wife would strategize and rush to the city – alleging an emergency situation and subsequently lured the man into sleeping with her thereby justifying the pregnancy. Of course, this did not occur without complexities...also read Delius and Glaser (2002)

ekhaya' (I had been prepared by my family for the harsh realities of marriage)''

Gogo Baso¹⁹ (Ndwedwe²⁰)

This indicated the extent to which migration strained familial relationships. My mother-in-law narrated the extent to which she suffered harsh treatment from her in-laws, who themselves may have considered themselves entitled to their son's possessions. When referring to how she was 'prepared', she made mention of many ways in which messages regarding marriage were conveyed. One that stood out for me was the significance of a '*kist*²¹'. This wooden box was symbolic of a bride departing from her maiden home and was regarded as both a container for your bed linen for your marital bed, and a 'coffin' signifying the demise of your life as a single woman. During my traditional wedding ceremony, the kist was just another piece of furniture, unaware of the deeper message it carries. Songs sung during wedding ceremonies also captured this discourse of marriage as irrevocable, as reflected in this Zulu song: '*Uyofela emendweni – you will die in your marital home*', depicting the bride's point of no return no matter the circumstances confronting them. This is still a reality, some entering the institution of marriage, already preparing to die at the hands of their abusers, as was the case with the woman from my hometown, Inanda who I worked with (see chapter one).

Messages, such as the one in the song '*uyofela emendweni*' cannot be considered as distinctly cultural, as this song bears a strong resonance to the Christian wedding vow of "till death do us apart", which similarly declares death as the only acceptable reason for marriage cessation. Another song: '*ubuhle bendoda 'zinkomo zayo uzungalibali ntombazane, uzuziphathe kakuhle emzini wakho ntombazane*' – "a man's beauty is in his cows (also implying money), don't you ever forget that young girl, behave well in your marriage." This song relates to how money (enough of it) makes a man attractive regardless of his age, behaviour or other physical characters. While I do not intend to overemphasize the discourse of Zulu songs, I do however wish to extrapolate on the power of cultural, religious, class discourses in constructions of marriage within Zulu marriages, and more importantly, how language used often reaffirms these constructions. This does not mean there can be no contraventions to marriage discourses, which in the case of my mother-in-law, after waiting for over ten years for her husband to return home, went to the Tribal court to plead her case, and in 1959, she became a twenty-four-

¹⁹ Permission to include Gogo Baso's lived experience was sought from her.

²⁰ Ndwedwe is a rural area in the North of KwaZulu-Natal, under Tribal Authority

²¹ Kist – a chest used for storing clothes and linen (Oxford Dictionary)

year-old divorcee. Gogo Baso's lived experience illustrates that although a discourse can be oppressive, it is not fixed.

The financial freedom accumulated from waged labour, positioned working African men as an exclusive group that brought with them their acquired independence (Hunter, 2002; 2010), thus were not subjected to sexual controls by regimes of regulation. In his study at Isithebe, North of KZN, Hunter (2002), found that migrant labourers became the source of envy for local young men as they performed new sexual subcultures that challenged both customary and Christian constructions of sexuality. Replacing 'ukusoma – thigh sex' with penetrative sex, not limited to one partner, were amongst the many subcultures that gained traction. Concurrent sexual relationships gained sexual meanings, albeit with ambivalence, 'isoka' took new meanings - both negative and positive, which continues to bear meaning. *Isoka*, as a negative title, depicts young men as morally corrupt and polluted by the city, whilst in a positive light, revered for the sought-after attention from women. However, it is common for women who perform *ubufebe*, the corollary of *isoka*, to experience violence from their partners (Mnisi-Weeks, 2017).

Regrettably, *isoka* evokes power for men, whilst, *ubufebe* by women, might destabilize that power. Mnisi-Weeks (2017) explains how men at Msinga, rural midlands of KZN, used violence to control their partners, some even using guns. These guns are, according to Mnisi-Weeks (2017) often used not only to instil fear in girlfriends but fear in other potential suitors as well as family members who attempt to intervene in couple discord. What was concerning for Mnisi-Weeks (2017) was the easy accessibility of guns within the area, and how a man without a gun was constructed as unmanly, and 'womanish'. Predictably, out of ten worst precincts, in the possession of illegal firearms and other ammunition, Umsinga was rated third with 109 reported crimes reported in 2018 (Crime Stats SA, 2018). Therefore, understanding the conditions under which physical violence and sexual coercion of African women is accommodated, resisted or renegotiated is important, and the possible choices within such contexts. Below I discuss the racially charged and oppressive political environment, upon which sexual meanings for young African women may be constructed.

3.8 Racial sexual regulation

"I was born in South Africa during apartheid, a system of laws that made it illegal for people to mix in South Africa. And this was obviously awkward because I grew up in a

mixed family. My mother's a black woman, South African Xhosa woman... and my father's Swiss, from Switzerland”

Trevor Noah

The advent of apartheid brought with it yet another political gaze on the sexual and racial lives of African people in particular. In 1948, the National Party (NP), representing Afrikaners, won the national election on a platform of racism and segregation under the slogan of ‘apartheid’. Apartheid, built upon earlier laws, which made segregation rigid and enforced it more aggressively than its predecessors. Apartheid is an Afrikaans word meaning, “separate development” (UN Centre against apartheid²², 1978, p. 1). Tamale (2014) argued that the universalisation and legitimisation of norms, inclusive of disciplinary measures by political forces of the day is a hegemonic performance. Placing this in the Foucauldian context, highlights the extent to which the Apartheid government, as an apparatus of control, influenced the how, with whom, what, and why of sexual behaviour, thus instilling fixed and racial sexuality discourses.

Legislation during apartheid was largely an amendment of colonial law. The enactment of these laws is in line with the British Colonial traditions, which passed the same laws in Rhodesia and Kenya (Lewin, 1963), although the term traces its origins to South Africa. The surveillance and control of African people’s sexual activities was state regulated. Apartheid laws not only universalised sexuality, they legitimised societal and sexual subjugation of women, in particular African women. While these were not the only Apartheid laws, I have limited my discussion to those that pertained to the racialisation of sexuality.

3.9 The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act 55, 1949²³

In order to eliminate every mark of black African participation in the central political system and to fulfil Afrikaner ethnic goals as well as white racial goals, the National party passed a series of legislative acts between 1948 and 1960 that had a profound impact on race relations in the country. Among the myriad of laws, which gave expression to apartheid, the policy of separating the different race groups, were the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 and the Immorality Act of 1950. These two pieces of legislation had the effect of creating legal

²² <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/united-nations-centre-against-apartheid-notes-and-documents>

²³ <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/prohibition-of-mixed-marriages-act%2C-act-no-55-of-1949>

boundaries between the races and by making marriage and sexual relations across the colour lines, illegal (Davenport & Saunders, 2000; Lewin, 1963).

This legislation prohibited marriages between Europeans and non-Europeans (whites from non-white). It worked together with the Immorality Act of 1927 (later amended in 1957). The Immorality Act prohibited extra marital sex between white people and people of other races. Between 1946 and the enactment of this law, only 75 mixed marriages had been recorded compared with some 28 000 white marriages.

3.10 The Immorality Act 23, 1957²⁴

The first Immorality Act against sexual intercourse (but not against inter-marriage) between Europeans and Africans was passed by the first Nationalist Government in 1927 (Lewin, 1963). After the new Act was passed in 1957, it was enough for the prosecution to show that one of the accused had attempted or invited or incited the commission of an indecent act. This legislation prohibited sexual intercourse outside marriage between Europeans and non-Europeans or natives. The penalty was up to 5 years of imprisonment for a man and up to 4 years imprisonment for a woman. A person's colour during trial was dictated by race (a term which described a person's appearance). The penalty was up to 6 years imprisonment for coloured women who provoked white males to have intercourse with them.

This law was sanctioned for the regulation of prostitution during the Anglo Boer War, where British prostitutes arrived to provide services to soldiers. The racial reasoning here, according to Lewin (1963, p. 10), was that "the child of a black woman by a white father would be regarded as a black; whereas the child of a white woman by a black father would pass as white and thus dilute the purity of 'white blood'." This emphasis on political regulation of race and sex reflected a systematic maintenance of normalised white supremacy (Weeks, 2006).

3.11 The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act 49, 1953²⁵

The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act 49 of 1953 legalised racial segregation of public premises, vehicles and services. This Act promoted segregation in all public amenities, public buildings, and public transport with the aim of eliminating contact between whites and other races. "Europeans only" and "non-Europeans only" signs were erected. Section 3 of the Act stipulates that the facilities for different races need not be equal. Section 3(a) made it legal not

²⁴ <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/immorality-act%2C-act-no-23-of-1957>

²⁵ <https://blogs.loc.gov/law/files/2015/11/Reservation-of-Separate-Amenities-Act-49-of-1953.pdf>

only to supply segregated facilities, but also to completely exclude people based on their race, from the public premises, vehicles or services. The best facilities, i.e. educational facilities, were reserved for whites while those for other races were inferior, for example Bantu Education. Public premises included “any land, enclosure, building, structure, hall, room, office, or convenience to which the public has access to; whether on payment of an admission fee or not, but does not include a public road or street” (Lewin, 1963, p. 11)

The passing of laws were instrumental in constructing Africans, and African sexuality as abnormal, dirty and a threat to the pureness of white sexuality, hence the need to protect the latter and control the former. Constructions of sexuality were no longer a family responsibility but, as contended by Dean (1994, p. 179), had shifted to the “macro levels of power”, in this case the apartheid government. Enactment of this power was often in the form of violence against any contraveners of the laws of morality. Paradoxically, apartheid law enforcement was synonymous with ‘white protection’.

Posel (2004) alleged that sexual violence was considered a serious offence only when perpetrated by African men on a white women, thus qualifying stringent efforts to govern African men’s movements. Quintessentially, African people’s sexual behaviour were induced to, what Foucault (1977, p. 201) termed “a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power.” A Foucauldian (1971) analysis of apartheid policies, renders power as not simply repressive – but as multifaceted and variously dispersed and manifested at micro levels, not only centralised at the level of the state. Thus, power dispersed at different levels, subject to resistance, becomes productive power, which is simultaneously repressive and productive. As corroborated by Deleuze (1988, p. 71) “it incites, induces, seduces [and] passes through the hands of the mastered no less than through the hands of the masters.”

Butler (1990, p xvii) argued that “...no single account of construction will do, and that these categories always work as background for one another, and they often find their most powerful articulation through one another.” Furthermore, Weeks (2006, p. 39) reiterated that “sexual politics ... can never be a single form of activity, they are enmeshed in the whole network of social contradictions and antagonisms that make up the modern world.” Understood in this way, sexuality is not a monolithic construct but transverses race, class and gender which are backgrounded by power.

Worth mentioning at this point is that racist sexualisation was not the only deployed truth, the knowledge that ethnic, gender and religious groups should not mix was similarly deployed. For example, gender and its regulatory powers presupposed a normalised (white) heterosexuality, which for Posel (2004) indirectly inscribed homophobic construction. Expectedly, state sovereignty prescribes norms and values to its apparatuses (i.e. government departments, media broadcasters, etc.) of control, which become absolute and universal truths, thus at an intrapsychic level, emerges as common sense (see Beres, 2013).

For Gramsci (1971), those in authority, within societies, such as the apartheid regime, impose their ideologies on those they oppress, and are often unaware of the power operations of those they oppress, and their ability over time to reconfigure meanings of their oppressions in order to challenge power. Gramsci (1971) utilises the concept of hegemony, which Foucault (1977) analysed as not fixed but shifting, and this shift was clearly demonstrated in South African politics.

3.12 The ANC government and sexuality – promises and ambiguities

The emergence of a democratic South Africa in 1994 brought about by radical political change, symbolised erasure of sexual intolerances of the past, towards a more acquiescent ‘rainbow nation’ (Gqola, 2001). Beyond such idioms, an urgent assignment for this government was to repudiate all racial segregation laws propagated by their predecessors, such as opening the doors of education that apartheid policies (The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act 49, 1953) denied.

‘Redress’ became the buzz word symbolising restorative justice that included the previously disadvantaged, specifically black Africans, women, disabled and the aged. Tamale (2014, p. 167) argued that legislative efforts to acknowledge sexual citizenship were constantly being jeopardized by those who were intent on reaffirming “the hegemonic discourse” of former regimes. Unsurprisingly, change is a hard pill to swallow, as exemplified by programmatic action that opposed ‘moral degeneration’ (ibid), forecasted as impending in a then new democracy. In fact, in *The Star Newspaper* (27 September 2006), then President Zuma is quoted, saying that non-heterosexual marriages were disgraceful to South Africa and “to God.” This example, from a president, post-apartheid demonstrates how “single-axis forms of redress were adhered to, rather than challenge the conceptual ‘building blocks’ of domination” (May, 2015, p. 82). In essence, such utterances reaffirm foundations of inequalities.

The post-apartheid government, with exceptions, has pronounced its stance on sexuality as a public-worthy discourse, a position detested by the former governors. While I acknowledge the gains accomplished by the ANC government in dethroning hegemonies of apartheid, and introducing emancipatory frameworks (or at least constructed as such), I am similarly cognisant of its position as a regime of sexual regulation. Posel (2004) clearly presented sexualities in post-apartheid South Africa, as influenced by reforms in constitution, globalised economies and the HIV pandemic.

3.13 Constitutionalised sexual citizenship

Post-apartheid South African legislation ushered in recognition of all citizens, irrespective of race, class or gender, as capable of complying with or resisting “certain aspects of legislation in terms of choosing their own sexual expression and consumption” thus promoting equality (Chappell, 2013, p. 66).

Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth (RSA Government, 1996, p. 1247).

The change in the Constitution was in line with the country’s change in the political agenda, which needed to ensure not just sexual representation, but also race, class and gender. Enshrined in the Constitution are citizens’ rights, coupled with the responsibilities of both citizens and the government at large. This signified a repudiation of the distinction between private and public sexual lives by the highest court in the country. The Constitutional Court, as a regime of power, is superior to all other moral enforcement apparatuses of control, like religion or culture. However, Bazzul (2016) argued that through these regimes of power, subjects (young African women students) attach multiple meanings. Therefore, subjection occurs “through the family, nationality, cultural background, disciplinary regimes, social organizations (clubs), sex/gender norms, etc.” (Bazzul, 2016, p. 10).

Constitutional outcomes also saw the formation and strengthening of institutions that protected the sexual rights of citizens, in particular the rights of all women and children. These, amongst many included the introduction of new government institutions such as the Department of Women, Children and People Living with Disabilities which later changed to the

Department of Women²⁶, 2017). However, while the Constitution recognises women's rights, the sexuality of youth and women, including women living with disability, beyond the discourse of procreation and epidemiology, has not received enough attention.

What I consider problematic with the lumping together of women as a homogenous category especially in government institutions (see Althusser's ideological state apparatus), is how discourses circulated within such powerful structures effortlessly became common knowledge. Bazzul (2016, p. 11) highlights, using a Foucauldian analysis of power, how "truth discourses", or objective knowledge, help circulate the effects of power in an apparatus because they outline the limits of 'the possible' through affordances and silences." Thus, women who do not conform to dominant ideologies of 'womanliness', may be afforded possibilities by some discourses, yet constrained by others.

Formation of specialized police units across all South African provinces, for example, The Family Violence Child Protection and Sexual Offences Investigation unit (FVCPSOI), which prioritize specific cases of sexual violence and protection, were welcome introductions (Jonkers, 2012). However, practical application to actual experiences of sexual violation, abusive behaviour and gender discrimination is not a simple process (Jonkers, 2012; Posel, 2004). Jonkers (2012) found that police, particularly in the Western Cape, were not familiar with the services of trained social workers in the FVCPSOI units, thus did not optimally utilize their services. As a result, women often experienced secondary victimization, at the hands of those who claim to protect them (Posel, 2004; Retief, 2013). In my experience as a social worker, I found it disturbing how survivors of violence who reported cases at police stations experienced harsh treatments by police officers, and had to enforce my advocacy role. Even with my professional qualification and experience, some police officers (men) at times found my advocacy offensive, and disrespectful, which for them was a violation of *inhlonipho-respect*, expected of *all of us* (African women).

Of course, those that felt threatened by the new regimes of power, and its insistence on deconstructing normalised sexual hegemonies resisted the actualisation of constitutional rights. Masculinities were believed to be in a 'crisis', with some men misinterpreting women's assertion of their rights as disobedient to husbands and male employers alike. 'Behaving like a man' was a rhetoric that proliferated in both bedroom and workplace domains to denounce

²⁶The mandate of the Department is therefore to champion the advancement of women's socio-economic empowerment and the promotion of gender equality <http://www.women.gov.za/>.

the emerging construct of women as equally powerful. Walker (2005) identified this gender symmetry and recognition of the rights of women as the main cause of the perceived masculinity crisis, although Posel (2004, p. 56) had earlier attributed it to “late capitalism” and to lifted sexual censorship. This uninhibited global exposure is what strengthened current sexual freedoms, especially for the African youth (*ibid.*), corroborated in studies, by Leclerc-Madlala (2003) with urban university youth; Hunter (2005) with young people in semi-rural Mandeni; and Bhana (2013) with high school learners in an urban township. Unanimously, these studies found that youth exposure to global standards of modernity, shaped their interests to consume and be trendy. This, for Posel (2004, p. 56), although not universal, has synonymised consumerism with “sex, making for the overt sexualisation of style, status and power”; this inextricable sex/money link is discussed in chapter two (see Hunter, 2002; 2005).

Hunter (2002) found that local industries, post-democracy struggled to keep up with competitive global trends, which lead to a drastic drop in employment rates, consequently disrupting the male provider role discourse (Bhana, 2013). This, they argued, has emasculated men, engendering performances of violent and sexually coerced power over women in relationships. Although, globalisation and its consequent consumerist culture are not solely responsible for male violence, it has been significant in constructing sexual scripts post-1994, more so, for young African women.

The Constitution, has legitimized ‘equal participation’ and similarly ‘freedom for all’ in post-apartheid South Africa, by opening up opportunities to global participation of citizens as both producers and consumers of capitalist ideals. Acknowledging that the latter processes may or may not have been the intentions of the new Constitution, I agree with Posel (2004) that its liberalisation of sexuality has in fact increased sexual repertoires, while also inscribing what it means to be a woman (or man), as per global standards. I disagree, however, with the simplistic ‘give and take’ assumption, women as passive and unquestioning recipients of these global ideals. Instead, as Bazzul (2016) argued, disrupting and reconfiguring subjectivities “is always possible” (p. 19).

Central to this chapter’s (and thesis) arguments, is the historical, multiple and contextual constructions of young African women’s discourses (of race, gender, sexuality, class etc.), and ‘construction’ in this sense infers continuities, with reconfigurations and disruptions (Butler, 1990). Moreover, while young African women’s discourses or sexual scripts may be historically constructed, they are not universally experienced, but fluid (Butler, 1990; Simon

& Gagnon, 1986). Therefore, I understood young African women in my study as negotiators, who at times resisted or complied with dominant discourses of African women's sexualities, espousing agency. The fluidity, in this sense, demonstrates changeability and how constructions are never complete, suggesting that one can never "finally become a woman" (Beauvoir cited in Butler, 1990, p. 45), or a man. This openness and freedom afforded by democratic South Africa, included access to global constructions of what it means to be a woman.

3.14 Globalised consumption & sexuality constructions

In the previous section, I alluded to how global participation allowed for access to previously barred products, in this instance I make reference to sexual products. Sex within pre-colonial communities, embedded in 'interconnectedness' (Asante, 2003) meant that sexual norms and surveillance were communal prescriptions and regimes of power were within reach. Global exposure saw the intercontinental production and consumption of sexual norms. As a new democracy, it can be assumed that we consume more than we produce. In contrast to pre-colonial sexuality, this global exposure reshaped sexuality as individualised, spatially inaccessible, and shifting to global standards of what is normal and accepted. Surveillance by regimes of power thus became less human focused, but rather technological.

Reference to global discourses is by no means annihilation of preceding periods mentioned thus far, but an understanding of the multiple affective, structural, and material dimensions upon which young African women construct subject positions (Bazzul, 2016). My aim is to demonstrate how historical constructions have shifted from pre-colonial times to current global constructions. Furthermore, I am not advocating for any single periodic construction of sexuality, as contemporary sexuality meanings may include constructions from across and within periods, or even exclude some of the expected constructions. Without shifting the focus, I argue that, while sexuality is a social construction, performance of it is not incontestable.

Globalization operates beyond the domains of the country, while its influences remain conspicuous within the country. This may be attributed to the technological advancements heralded in with the new political dispensation, and campaigns, such as, the Right2Know²⁷. According to Tomlinson (1990) globalisation is not to be taken lightly. He critically views it

²⁷ Launched in 2010, the Right2Know Campaign aims to raise public awareness on their constitutional right to know

as an aggressive and seductive marketization, produced out of norms set by others, but created for individual identities. For Tomlinson, if consumers consider themselves free, then there are serious concerns with what he calls “a dangerous illusion of freedom”, as according to him, “our choices have in fact been consciously constructed for us” (ibid, p. 13), which is not inconsistent with feminist post-structuralism (see chapter one).

While I agree with Tomlinson’s (1990) conceptualisation of globalisation and consumption as illusory, I find his stance too rigid. As consumers, I recognised that participants were able to strategize some power within global constraints, and understand that in order for them to do so, they must be aware of the ideological control of consciousness. I reassert Foucault’s (1977) argument of power as not possessed, but rather relational, situational and shifting. I am not claiming equal power between the individual and discourse, however, the individual meanings of the transaction/engagement between discourse and the individual are important, in particular, for this study.

Consumption refers to goods at one’s disposal and the power of a purchaser to acquire those goods (Odhiambo, 2008). The ability to buy signifies a liberated, self-serving self. Essentially, consumption in post-apartheid South Africa has metaphorically been embodied in the manner in which one walks, talks or dresses within the public domain, what Nutall (2004, p. 431) theorises as “stylizing the self.” This suggests aligning the body as a site for these stylized performances (Butler, 1990). Indeed, with the introduction of redress policies, namely Black Economic Empowerment (BEE²⁸), Affirmative Action (AA)²⁹, a rise in employed African people was foreseeable. In fact, the majority of the working- and middle-class African citizens in metropolitan areas were identified as the majority purchasers of modern goods (property, cars, clothes, electronic gadgets etc.) which epitomise urban standards. While this conspicuous consumption of modernity should not be considered a homogenous process, it is still significant as a background that captures how global consumptions shape contemporary sexuality meanings, in particular those of young African women (Honwana, 2012).

²⁸ BEE is aims to provide increased economic opportunities to previously disenfranchised populations, namely, Africans, coloured people, and Indians (Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act of 2003).

²⁹ AA policies in South Africa aim to address inequities of the past, and to manage access, especially socio-economic access, denied by apartheid policies (see Oluyinka & Uduak, 2013).

Reviewing the book, *Black Diamond*, a South African novel depicting the lives of Black African entrepreneurs in post-apartheid era, Emma Schneider (2015), points to how author Zakes Mda’s characters depict race, class, and capitalism. Schneider highlights Mda’s meticulous narration of masculine power paraded by post-apartheid entrepreneurs, and how these narratives discursively question the extent to which Black Diamonds ‘freedom’ scripts reincarnate inequality scripts paraded by predecessors (see Lewin, 1963 -apartheid laws). This freedom, elsewhere in Africa is crisply captured in the book titled, *It’s Our Turn to Eat: The Story of a Kenyan Whistle-Blower*’ (see Wrong, 2009).

Post-apartheid freedoms also ushered in a shift in conceptualization of young women’s sexual repertoires previously considered taboo by customary or theocratic law. Newspapers, magazines, and other print media carry significant power which shapes discourses (Mutongi, 2000), in this case sexual discourses of young African women’s sexuality. These media sources are not new, as depicted below.



Figure 5: Drum Magazine editions

Above is my attempt to highlight Foucauldian “disciplinary power” (Bartky, 1997, p. 103) in magazines, and for contextual relevance, I used Drum Magazine. Consistent with feminist post-structural understandings of power, Bartky (1997) and Sewpaul (2013) agree that feminine and masculine norms are inscribed through disciplined power structures such as, family, culture, schools, religion, media etc. Bartky (1997) adds that ideological power has no distinct location, it is “everywhere and [...] nowhere” (p. 103).

Local celebrity Sophie Ndaba’s cover story (2018 b) exemplifies this ‘everywhere yet nowhere’ power. Women’s bodies have long been under scrutiny, or “the gaze” (seeFoucault,

1977), even by people they barely know. The Foucauldian gaze, in this sense, acts to “enforce prevailing standards of body size” (p. 105), by shaping people’s minds even those who “might be tempted to resist it” (Bartky, 1997, p. 105). However, individuals are not simply dupes of these power enforcements. At intrapsychic level (Beres, 2013; Simon & Gagnon, 1986; Wiederman, 1999) resistance (agency) or the attempts to resist, is always possible. However, this resistance or agency, i.e. Sophie Ndaba’s weight-loss decisions, is negotiated within racial, classed, religious, ethnic ideologies of femininity.

Dominant feminine ideologies, carry expectations for young women, such as the expected norm of “restraints in matters of sexuality” (Mutongi, 2000, p. 3). Therefore, in sexual scripting sense (Simon & Gagnon, 1986), knowledge of expected feminine sexual scripts (cultural scenarios), opens up the possibility to strategize (intrapsychic level) and negotiate them at interpersonal level, such as in SD relationships. Dominant ideologies of femininities, are thus not fixed, but can be reconfigured. Exemplifying this, also in Drum magazine, are relationship advice columns, which offer safer “correspondence” (Mutongi, 2000, p. 3). A typical letter to Drum magazine’s relationship columnist, sis Dolly³⁰ would read as follows:

Dear Sis Dolly

I am a 22-year-old woman residing in Gamalakhe Township, my boyfriend is employed and does everything for me. What concerns me is that he is unable to satisfy me in bed and I love him and want advice as to how I can tell him without messing with his ego.

Anonymous– Gamalakhe Port Shepstone

Undoubtedly, such platforms have opened up various ways of negotiating gender discourse, albeit anonymously. Furthermore, Anonymous’ decision to write to Sis Dolly, in itself demonstrates discourse interest (see chapter four, Trinder, 2000), and agency negotiated within that discourse. A brief discourse analysis of Anonymous’ correspondence is critical. Her mention of ‘*does everything for me*’ suggests a satisfied recipient, yet its emphasis may reaffirm provider role masculinities; ‘*satisfy me in bed*’ also suggests that Anonymous recognises her need for sexual gratification, outside conjugal space, thus resisting religious (i.e. Christianity) sexual norms; Anonymous sees herself as not heterosexually sanctioned to discuss sexual matters with her boyfriend, and is careful of not ‘*messing his ego*’ – thus took it upon herself

³⁰ African Drum magazine’s relationship advice columnist, also known as the nation’s “other mother”

to anonymously seek *'advice'* from Sis Dolly. Advice seeking, for young African women, is however, not new, and for university students, even more common (Epstein et al., 2003).

Although not face-to-face, Sis Dolly's advice giving somehow resonates with the *iqhikiza* script mentioned earlier, and *itshitshi* with Anonymous' advice seeking. With the analysis of the above textual piece, I argue that young African women's sexuality in contemporary post-apartheid South Africa is history graded, albeit its meanings have been reconfigured and re-signified (Butler, 1990) by present day constructions. What is unique during this democratic period, are the liberated spaces (in this case media) upon which historical and contemporary discourses are contested, and the extent to which that 'liberated space' is challenged, for example in SD relationships.

In his analysis of popular South African local magazines, *Drum* and *True Love*, Odhiambo (2008, p. 72), argued that "the black female body is the subject of both manipulation and an intense gaze by producers of commodities seeking advertisement space." Marketization messaging in these magazines tends to instil a sense of what is current, and what is not, both at micro and macro levels of society, with the portrayal of African women's bodies not only as promoters of but also "object[s] of consumption" (Odhiambo, 2008, p. 72). This study's feminist post-structural understandings of young African women as negotiating multiple subject positions within multiple spaces ensue. Therefore, binary categories (promoter/consumer), may lead to essentialist notions of consumerism which would then suggest absence of agency negotiation by young African women in SD relationship. Moreover, reading discourses, such as consumerism as fixed and powerful undermines possibilities for deconstruction, which is critical in social work education, research and practice (see Fook, 2016; Healy, 2000; Sewpaul, 2016). Thus, studying young African women students' negotiation of agency in SD relationships, and their construction of 'self' is my attempt to engender these social work scholar's pragmatic agenda. As such, understanding young African women in SD relationships, beyond "conventional ways of thinking about domination, subordination, and resistance" (May, 2015, p. 4), shapes social work "teaching, practice, and research endeavours" (Sewpaul, 2016, p. 117) with young people.

3.15 Conclusion

Historical, cultural, structural, neoliberal and political influences continue to shape expressions and experiences of sexual scripts of individuals. These influences, albeit fluid, may enable some behaviour for young African women, and constrain others. While an understanding of

historical sexual scripts as enabling, constraining, yet fluid, is significant, there is a simultaneous need to acknowledge continuities of sexual script meanings. This chapter recognises the multifarious repertoires available for young African women to draw on, more so with the advent of ‘freedoms’ brought about by post-apartheid ideologies. However, deeply inscribed understandings of traditional scripts of class, sexuality, gender, ethnicity etc., cannot be understated when researching African women’s experiences in SD relationships (see Sennet & Cobb, 1972), who according to Honwana (2012) are waiting for adulthood, a process I discussed in this chapter.

Honwana’s (2012) analysis of waithood, as a non-constraining experience for young people in Africa, suggests elements of creativity within constraints, as demonstrated throughout this chapter. This non-linear stance counters what Epprecht (2008) refers to as colonial meanings, i.e., Caldwell et al.’s (1989) exaggerated depiction of African women as naturally sexually subservient to their sex hungry men. In his book titled *‘Heterosexual Africa’*, Epprecht (2008, p. 36) attributed some accounts of African sexualities to “...errors stemming from naïveté or linguistic misunderstanding” and how these ‘errors’ have contributed towards constructions and (re)constructions of a ‘true’ African way of life. In-depth interviews with young African women in SD relationships (see chapter four) enabled bringing to the fore, some of these underlying errors, which I do while remaining cognisant of the “inter-subjectivity and inter-relatedness of human dignity and human rights” (IASSW, 2018, p. 1).

Chapter Four:

Researching Young Women in SD relationships: A Methodological Approach

4.1 #FeesMustFall as context

In 2015, during the #FeesMustFall³¹ protests I had already registered for my PhD. I recall moments when I began to doubt the relevance of my study, and more so how students would perceive my research intentions during a time when even as academics, we needed to critically interrogate the “social, political, and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (Freire, 1970, p. 90). Occupying my mind was the question: how can a study that seeks to explore experiences of young African women in SD relationships compete with a struggle against financial exclusion? Images such as the ones below were constant reminders of the struggles that featured prominently on the agenda across University campuses.



Figure 6: FeesMustFall, Times live, 2015

It was during a group practice supervision session where after raising this concern with my social work students, who were all aware of my academic endeavours, that I felt convinced enough to continue with my study. One student mentioned that, *‘there was no better time to conduct such a study than during such unstable times’*, and another went on to argue how *‘the lives of students extend beyond the lecture hall’* and my study needed to unveil and feature

³¹ #FeesMustFall is a student-led protest movement that began in South Africa towards the end of 2015 in response to an increase in university fees. Protests started at the University of Witwatersrand and spread to the University of Cape Town and Rhodes University before rapidly spreading to other universities across the country (Kgatle, 2018, p. 1)

these extensions. In unveiling these extensions, my study needed to understand that young African women's discourses and practices were in constant flux and continuously intersecting.

An intersectional lens allowed me to appreciate an African university student as “ontologically plural, not only in terms of multiple identities, but also in terms of locational and relational power” (May, 2015, p. 39). Thus, African sexualities are constantly reconfigured through familial, cultural, economic and political relations “all of which are conditioned through prevailing social organizations of gender, race and class relationships at given points in time” (Mahcera, 2004, p. 167). Mahcera (2004) asserts that conducting research, particularly within postcolonial settings, requires an understanding of the complex “ways that societal factors organise sex and sexuality and how these processes shape [and are shaped by] the experiences of people” (p. 376, Brackets added).

In interviews with young African women in SD relationships, I understood their experiences as socially organised, and the #FeesMustFall experience was a significant social organizer. Acknowledging the #FeesMustFall was a demonstration of my awareness of broader socioeconomic constraints against which participants in my study made choices, including relationship choices. Therefore, my study troubles recent aspersions by Myeni (2018, p. 1) that “black academics have written themselves out of any struggle outside of white institutions where they seek validation and class.” On the contrary, in examining young African women's experiences of SD relationships, I chose to align myself with the struggles experienced by participants, as students and African women.

In this chapter, I discuss my methodological process of researching young African women who self-identified as being involved in SD relationships. Methodology is a systematic process which enables the researcher to map out and implement a plan for navigating the research field (MacKenzie and Knipe, 2006). Guided by Fairclough's (2003) discourse analysis, I explain and justify my inclination towards a qualitative paradigm, in-depth interviews as well as provide a description of the methods, instrument and sample. Self-reflexivity is infused throughout, as a “depiction of an internalised relationship between an inner reflective agent and external experiences” (Sands, cited in Fook, 2016, p. 96), which enabled critical reflections on limitations of the study, including my limitations as a researcher.

4.2 Revisiting assumptions and questions of the study

The study sought to examine how young African women in SD relationships negotiated agency and (re)constructed the self. Foregrounding the study were the following questions, which I recap as discussed in chapter one.

1. What are the sexuality scripts adopted by young female students in SD relationships?
 - Exploration of multiple sexual scripts or discourses that shape young African women's process of 'becoming' may broaden our understanding of dominant scripts or discourses that young people bring with them to university (Simon & Gagnon, 1986; Weedon, 1987)
2. How do young African female students construct and negotiate love, intimacy and desire in their sexual exchange relationships?
 - Since sexual scripts or discourses are multiple, and in this case may constitute subject positions, with discursive meanings of 'love, intimacy, and desire', the university context affords students the 'power' to test and negotiate them (Allen, 2013; Butler, 1999; Epstein et al., 2003).
3. How do they construct their control and agency in sexual exchanges with older men?
 - Power is neither absent, nor is it unshifting, and within neoliberal contexts they are not passive subjects but active, and are able to negotiate or strategize 'choice' before or during the SD relationships (Foucault, 1978).
4. To what extent is this agency limited within these relationships?
 - Agency is negotiated, but it is also negotiated against the ideological, political and power which in some way provides the 'script' for its possibilities (Althusser, 1998; Foucault, 1978), and how multiple subject positions (question 1 & 2) may limit or enable enactments of agency (question 3) and thus (re)construct the 'self' –the becoming (question 1).

These broad questions were thus translated into a more detailed interview guide (Appendix E), which was used with flexibility in conversational style interviews, to understand discursive constructions of young African women in SD relationships. Fouché and Delpont (2016) viewed the outcome of the iterative process of interviewing as emerging and unpredictable, and thus caution researchers to be flexible and “prepared to immerse themselves in the complexity of the situation[s]” (p. 64) which they may encounter in their interactions with research participants.

4.3 Study setting

The research site was the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). UKZN was formed in 2004 after the merger between the University of Natal and the University of Durban-Westville. It has five campuses: Howard College, Westville Campus, Pietermaritzburg Campus, Edgewood Campus, and the Nelson Mandela Medical School. The university hosts an estimate of 40, 000 students.

As an alumni and staff member of UKZN, I was aware that Howard College is amongst the five colleges that constitute the UKZN community. This study was conducted at the Howard College campus, because of familiarity and access. As I anticipated that engagement with participants would not be once off, and would require multiple follow-up contacts, restricting the research to the campus that I am located in allowed for continuity and coherence in researcher-participant relations. It was a pragmatic decision in relation to time and financial costs. Strydom (2016) acknowledged that the selection of the research field is not only influenced by its accessibility, but also how “cooperation with respondents can be easily achieved” (p. 332). In my sample selection, I took into consideration the latter, and I also, like Egan (2014), considered rapport as not an instant occurrence, but accruing over time. I expand on this later in the chapter.

While the focus on most sexuality studies has been on how learners in secondary schools negotiate sexuality (see Bhana, 2016; Zibane, 2017), these studies were located within township contexts and have broadly focused on sexuality experiences of both boys and girls. In her ethnographic study of informal sexual cultures in a secondary school in KwaMashu, Zibane (2017) described township life as imaginative, resilient and patronising, riddled with noticeable injustices of apartheid South Africa.

Howard College is however located within an urban setting that once prided itself with securing privileges for the white minority, with blacks requiring permits to work or study under the 1950s Group Areas Act (Davenport & Saunders, 2000; Lewin, 1963). While apartheid laws were racially premised, their impact on African women relegated them to an even lesser status not only in relation to white women but also Black African men (The United Nations Report on the Status of Women, 1978; Sewpaul, 1994; 2013). Apartheid legislations were abolished in 1991 and have since then been replaced by laws enforcing redress for historically racial and gendered inequalities (Davenport & Saunders, 2000).

This brief history of the Howard College context is not to privilege it as deterministic and fixed, but rather as acknowledgement of how this context, amongst multiple others, shape meanings for young female students in SD relationships. I recognised that participants of this study inhabited multiple contexts and that they were able to construct meanings from multiple contexts simultaneously. It was, therefore, essential to recognise young African women in SD relationships as relatively positioned, what Fook (2016, p. 186) referred to as “relative positionality...both *within* and *outside*” the context, in this case, Howard College.

In this study, I recognise that while Howard College was a location for participants, they were “at the same time not totally bound by [it]” (ibid, p. 186). In order to gain entry into the location of the study, gatekeeper permission had to be solicited from institutional authorities, which in this case was granted by the then UKZN registrar upon receipt of my proposal detailing the questions that the research study sought to address (see Appendix A). However, gaining entry through university structures was not enough.

Investing time in preparing how I was going to gain entry into the lives of participants was essential, and this is in line with feminist research tenets. This process entailed preparing to be present as co-participant, not just as researcher (Reinharz, 1992), and understanding that “meaning comes from women's experiences, their perceptions of experiences and life stories” (Rothe cited in Gabdois, 1999, p. 5). Lastly, I needed to gain trust by navigating the rocky road from “an outsider” to “an insider” status (Innes, 2009, p. 444). As such, rapport building was not an event; it meant that I become aware of my multiple and shifting subject positions throughout the research process, and that I renegotiate rapport. In addition, I shared my own experiences, which often redirected conversations, all the while investing in the research relationship. My approach is anti-essentialist which does not conform to “hygienic” and objective ways of doing research, criticized by Stanley and Wise (1993, p. 161). Instead, I recognised the importance of being present.

4.4 Research method and design

4.4.1 Qualitative approach

African women are an over-researched group, often referred to as ‘marginalised’ and needing to be heard (Fraser, 2009). The marginalised have also been suspicious of researchers claiming to give a voice to their lived experiences whilst also driving their individual agendas, by reinforcing “longstanding hierarchies and established systems of privilege” (Mullaly cited in Fraser, 2009, p. 91). My aim was not to disregard hierarchical power and privilege, but rather to utilize a research method and design that reflected what emerged from my engagement with those often conceptualized as ‘marginalised’. In fact, unlike quantitative research the qualitative approach has been “marginalised” for its focus on “process” rather than “numerical” frameworks (Edwards & Ribbens, 1998, p. 3-4). While I provide some numerical evidence, this study rendered ‘process’ significant in understanding young African women’s negotiation of agency in SD relationships.

Immersing myself in discourse(s) of feminist post-structural theorists challenged essentialist notions of young African women in SD relationships as being only ‘oppressed’. The theoretical lens deepened my understanding of discourses as situated and historical yet changeable (Fook, 2016). In this study, I approached young African women not as a homogenous group, but rather as potentially constructing multiple, and sometimes contradictory meanings within the contexts of historically unequal societal structures. The increasing recognition of multiple and often contradictory meanings constructed by individuals located ‘in the margins’ has engendered a shift from truth-seeking research and more towards discursive productions and renegotiation of ‘truth’ through qualitative research methods (hooks, 1996; Trinder, 2000). An example of multiple and contradictory meanings is depicted in hooks’ (1996) conceptualization of the margins as “a place of resistance and possibility” and simultaneously “a site of oppression, of lack of safety, and of risk” (p. 8). It is in recognition of coexisting binaries that the meanings assigned to SD experiences were researched.

Recognising that “research is a political, rather than neutral, process” (Edward & Mauthner, 2002, p. 18), I foregrounded my research in feminist politics which meant that my political motives for choosing to study young African women in SD relationships had to be made clear from the onset. This study sought to create a space for young African women to discuss their experiences of SD relationships, in a safe space. A qualitative approach was selected as appropriate for capturing the complex and multiple accounts of young African women’s

relationships with SDs, which include presentation of their scripts and sense-making processes; their multiple subject positions; and the fluidity of these subject positions in SD relationships, and within the interview.

While a large-scale quantitative study enables generalisation, and may shed light on numerical data, it would omit nuances of young African women's contradictory, shifting, and multi-layered experiences of SD relationships that are unquantifiable. Choosing a qualitative approach was also guided by my theoretical beliefs, in that reality is socially scripted, context specific (Simon & Gagnon, 1986), and women's narratives provide insight into women's negotiations and (re)constructions of those scripts to make meanings for themselves (Weedon, 1987).

4.4.2 Sampling

Young people in South Africa are defined as those between the ages of fourteen to thirty-five (National Youth Commission Act, 1996; National Youth Development Policy Framework, 2002). It is consistent with the African Youth Charter's definition of youth as within the age group of fifteen to thirty-five years. Attempts by the National Youth Policy 2015-2020, to cap this category at age 28 have failed, as within the South African context, "motivation for the age limit of 35 years has not yet changed because of historical imbalances in the country" (NYP, 2015, p. 5). The historical context is central to my study's focus, yet I am also aware not to universalize the category 'youth.'

In addition, young people between the ages of fifteen to twenty-four have consistently been categorized as the age group most at risk of HIV infection, with SD relationships identified as one of several other aetiological factors (PEPFAR, 2018, UNAIDS, 2012, 2014). This group also constitutes the general 'student' age (de Wet & Wolhuter, 2009), justifying my choice. For participation in the study, participants needed to be:

- African woman between 18 to 24 years studying at Howard College at the time of the interview
- self-identifying as involved in a SD relationship
- willing to be interviewed for research purposes

I had anticipated a sample of eighteen to twenty participants, and at 19, I decided to discontinue recruitment. According to Greef (2016, p. 350) deciding on the adequate sample size in

qualitative research depends on two factors, namely *sufficiency* and *saturation*. Firstly, sufficiency refers to the degree to which the sample reflects the diversity and context to allow those falling “outside the sample”, such as other young African women in SD relationships to possibly “connect to the experience of those [inside the sample].” The other factor relates to data saturation, which Seidman in Greef (2016) qualified as a period whereby the “researcher begins to hear the same information repeatedly” (p. 350), which I found to be true after 19 participant interviews, hence the disinclination to continue recruiting.

The non-positivist nature of the study convinced me that 19 participants were enough to build and maintain profound researcher-participant relations, irrespective of whether or not I had reached the initially proposed maximum sample. I was particularly interested in the depth of our engagement, and not so much the number of participants. As such, the numerical and demographic aspects of this study are included in my analysis, and not tabulated for any statistical comparison. The sampling process of ultimately attaining participants who self-identified as young African female students in SD relationships is discussed in detail below.

4.4.3 Participant recruitment

Purposive sampling was a preferred recruitment strategy. This strategy involved a selection of young African female students that possessed not only the knowledge, but also experience of the SD relationships (see Creswell, 1998). This differed slightly from studies that focused on perceptions of SD relationships generally (Ntsieni, 2017; Ranganathan, MacPhail, Pettifor, Kahn, Khoza, Twine, et al., 2017, Shefer, 1999), which did not require participants to self-identify as involved in a SD relationship but just their knowledge and perceptions, which thus called for a variety of samplings strategies.

Whenever I discussed my study with colleagues or other PhD scholars the reactions ranged from “*you are brave*” to “*but how will you get your sample?*” Such reactions created uncertainties about ever attaining my intended minimum sample, and with that knowledge, I approached the recruitment process extra prepared for challenges ahead. Spronk (2006) argued that researching African people’s sexuality should not be seen as something impossible or out of the ordinary. While she agreed, “talking about people’s intimate lives can be intrusive” she also does “not believe that it can be any less intrusive to ask people about their financial situations” (ibid, p. 31). This suggested that no research is less sensitive, especially when it relates to personal experience, hence the need for researcher sensitivity throughout the research process. Apart from the sensitivity, I realised that my topic was interesting. The words of

Heather Fraser (2009, p. 88) “*whenever possible choose a research topic that is likely to sustain interest*” resonated with how I approached my study. This is not to say that there were no challenges or detours, but that challenges coexisted with my sustained interest, which saw me through many obstacles that arose.

Being situated on site had its advantages and disadvantages, and I reflect on them throughout this chapter, and in my analysis chapters. Site based participant recruitment began in March 2016, which included posting of a research advert on random notice boards around campus and residences (Appendix C1). The first two participants (or rather prospective) who contacted me through this recruitment mode gave me some hope. My excitement was however short-lived when they both didn’t pitch after several scheduled appointments.

As a lecturer in Gender, Aids and Violence (SOWK402), I had developed relationships with university gender dialogue forums. After each session or dialogue, I distributed my adverts and had informal conversations with young women attendees regarding my study. While none of the women self-identified as involved in SD relationships, the campus insider information I obtained through this process was invaluable. I invited Zazi³² Women’s Empowerment Programme coordinator (Ms Thenjiwe Manana) as guest lecturer to address social work students on current gender issues. Although I intended not to recruit from my social work students, I used that opportunity to introduce my study to them in order to solicit insider ideas on how to recruit.

During class the students agreed that this was a topical issue and it was good that, as a social worker, I had identified it as a topic of study, but they also confirmed that my position as a lecturer was an issue, which I anticipated. One male student remarked: “*but Mam, you are looking too far... in this class alone you will have your entire sample...oglamour lezingane bathanda izinto – these kids are glamorous and like things.*” There was a lot of laughter from mostly the male students, with some angry retaliatory remarks from some young women, “*niyasijwayela Nina- what do you take us for.*” I had to contain the situation and asked that those who were able to refer prospective participants to me could do so discretely after the lecture.

My interaction with the class revealed that the SD phenomenon was a well-known practice on campus, and that while it carried an aberrant label, it also provided a ‘glamorous’ lifestyle.

³² Zazi (Know yourself) is an on-campus women empowerment programme that runs dialogues and uses art and poetry to bring awareness of HIV and gender-based violence.

Most of the male students' responses were quite worrying considering that these were (then) soon to be qualified social workers. Not only was I troubled, but I could not help but associate the male students' utterances with what Bhana (2002) refers to as the deviant labelling of young girls' sexual encounters, while those of boys qualify as "powerful hegemonic displays of masculinity" (p. 558). While the university may influence the gendered scripts of students, Hames (2012) argued that students (and lecturers) may bring historically learned performances of "sexism, sexuality, racism, ethnicity, nationality, violence, xenophobia, (dis)ability and homophobia *in their bodies* to the classroom and campus" (p. 71). The multiple inscriptions justified the rationale for my study, and the value of interrogating how they are performed and understood in the context of relationships known to be hierarchical.

It became evident that sexuality was constructed along a dominant script, which was also not incontestable, as reflected in some responses from female students. It was not easily decipherable whether it was the label 'sugar daddy' or the meanings that were associated with the label. The classroom setup did not allow for deeper exploration but the engagement with students led me to believe that the meanings of SD relationships were multiple and highly contested against gendered constructions of 'femaleness' and 'maleness' (Connell, 2002). In addition, as a social worker, I had not been at the centre of exploring unconventional relationships in depth, beyond the lens of structural injustices. This study aimed to examine choices-making processes that occur in the context of structural constraints, more so the accounts of that choice by young African women in SD relationships. My journey had officially begun.

While I had proposed purposive sampling as a preferred technique, the realities of research demanded some flexibility and pragmatism in my sampling approach (Trinder, 2000). Prospective participants from lecture-based recruitment started making contact with me through WhatsApp, and the interactions began. This sampling technique provided six 'participants'. It was interesting to note that the six students knew each other and insisted on coming to see me at the same time. This produced a methodological quandary for me and I questioned whether I needed to engage in data collection via a focus group discussion. But discussing this with my supervisor and a few colleagues eased my anxieties and challenged

my methodological fixedness. We decided to meet on a Saturday, and they all agreed that the campus was the most preferred venue since they were all from on-campus residence.

While I have made visible my stance on non-homogeneity of 'African' 'woman', or any other identity construction, the session with this group tested that very same position. The group itself provided rich insights into meanings of the SD relationships on campus. I was mindful of the extent to which their experiences and meanings were relatively homogenous, which I identified as a slight deviation from my search for nuances in their narratives of SD relationships. However, considering the often-pronounced negative labelling of young women in SD relationships within learning and research spaces, I identified the existing group as significant in obtaining my minimum sample. I discussed this with them and unexpectedly they unanimously agreed that I choose one of them to assist with this research task, especially since I was considered an 'outsider', bursting my bubble of excitement. This came as a surprise, but as a social worker, I allowed them to decide amongst themselves who would be better suited to assist me.

The research task was briefly explained to participants and particularly my request for diversity in the SD relationship experiences. One member was chosen, and due to the context under which this selection occurred, her name is withheld. I did not foreclose the possibility of calling certain members from this group for one-on-one interviews. Consequently, from this group, I identified three participants for individual interviews, who are included in the final sample of this study. I decided to exclude my research assistant in the final sample, but her 'insider' perspectives of student life, and most importantly our Friday 'talks', were of significance to my engagements with participants. This provided me with an instant passport to insider status.

4.4.5 Thembekile – 'The trustworthy'

Fridays at the residence or 'res' were one of the highlights of my research journey. I often sat in my research assistant's room wondering how life at 'res' would have been for me as I never got to experience it. We spoke about her name, and came up with names like 'Lethiwe - the one who is sent; Siza - to help; Thembekile - the one who is trustworthy' and after much deliberation, we agreed on Thembekile. This name was significant, for as part of the research process, I needed a trustworthy person, one who was to provide me with trusted information as an insider, and one I could trust with information. We indeed had, and continue to have, a trusting relationship, and she continues to tolerate my 'old' and 'married woman' tendencies.

In fact, it was during our relationship that I realised that ‘old’ was part of my script. Days spent with Thembekile, and her friends were indeed precious days, as well as days of reflection.

Researcher reflection, according to Fook (2016), refers to their ability to immerse themselves in the experience. The author refers to “Socrates’ notion of the ‘examined life’” to emphasize “learning from experience” (Fook, 2016, p. 57). Through this process I learned that there were a few glitches that I had not foreseen during the proposal phase. My initial navigation of the field rendered some aspect of my research plan problematic and unrealistic, hence the urgency to revise my recruitment strategy. I was also cognizant of the need not to deviate from what was approved by the institutional ethics committee.

Firstly, my use of the term ‘sugar daddy’ needed unstiffening as its meanings precluded any further explanation of what I wanted to study, and instead I used ‘age’ and ‘provider’ in order to revise my posters (Appendix C2). Secondly, although I consider myself bubbly and sociable, my position as a middle-aged lecturer acted against me gaining authentic entry into ‘girl zones’ such as those freely entered by the Thembekile’s. The latter vindicated my decision to get Thembekile to conduct proper screening and scheduling of interviews, and to also ensure follow up with participant who were absent from the interviews.

Several meetings were held in order to tighten the recruitment strategy. The relationship between Thembekile and I developed beyond expectation. Her identity had shifted from participant to research assistant, and I was her mentor. My attainment of a research grant allowed me to remunerate her for the assistance, although she made me know many times that she really didn’t need it – this was not about the money.

I recall an occasion where I needed to buy a take-away meal for our meeting; however, she sent a message informing me that she had cooked. Upon my arrival I observed the professional manner in which the meal was prepared and presented. I was pleasantly surprised. I later learnt from her friends that she was not fond of take-away food and preferred preparing home cooked meals. That evening, all we talked about was food, and how ‘*wives needed to up their game in the kitchen*’ and her friends were in disagreement, one saying ‘*please don’t mislead her, the bedroom game is more important.*’ I realised that these engagements were not just research experiences, but life experiences I would treasure forever. I am not sure about the kitchen and bedroom experiences, but from then onwards, I never bought take-away meals for our meetings, but there was always food from the ‘trusted’ Thembekile. This had been a complex task but it made me to look forward to data collection, a role I wasn’t prepared to outsource.

4.5 Data collection

Since Thembekile had brought to my attention ‘old age’, I took this into consideration during the data collection phase. Dressing the part was one of those considerations, which according to Thembekile included: ‘no heels, no matching coats, and no old peoples’ dresses’, and I needed to let lose, and not style my dreadlocks, because that is ‘old’ people’s style. These instructions left me feeling overwhelmed, realising that the gap between myself and participants was even wider than I had imagined.

The Interview phase started whilst Thembekile was recruiting, this allowed for both processes to occur in tandem. Her journey was also not so smooth, one participant (Landile) refused to speak to her because she just did not trust her ‘research experience,’ she then decided to contact me directly. This was a learning experience for her especially since she hoped to pursue postgraduate research studies. From then onwards, she clearly outlined that participants could contact me directly, and if they needed information regarding the study before meeting me, she was available. This was well received, and provided me with a list of willing participants, and I organised interviews according to their availability.

Although the informed consent form had been read out to prospective participants, and verbal consent given to Thembekile on meeting the participants, I needed to reinforce it before signing the consent form, and I negotiated the use of pseudonyms. Informed consent is defined as “the voluntary and revocable agreement of a competent individual to participate in a therapeutic or research procedure, based on an adequate understanding of its nature, purpose, and implications” (Sim, 1986, p. 584). It was also an advantage that participants had enough time to consider participating in the study.

Although I allowed participants to choose places most convenient to them, my office was the preferred location (for 16 of them) especially for the first interview. Interviews were approximately 1 hour in length with one exception that lasted for two hours. The geographical location of my office proved to be an advantage as it away from lecture venues; a neutral space, where they felt comfortable and could remain anonymous. The remaining three interviews were conducted at the University residence. The disadvantage of interviewing at residence was the many interruptions from other students, and the possibility of ‘me’ being seen by my social work students, some who were aware of my research. My visits to Thembekile’s res were in the evenings, and the security guard got to know me as her mother.

I ensured that interviews were not scheduled during lecture periods, unless requested by the participant. All participants were interviewed more than once with subsequent interviews guided by the information provided in the first interview. Subsequent interviews became real conversations, and these were held, anywhere - my office, restaurants, res, clubs, my car and online, as I discuss later in this chapter, and in chapter five.

4.5.1 In-depth interviews

Since qualitative research is concerned with meaning and not making generalised statements (Mason, 2010), data from 19 young African female students who self-identified as being involved in SD relationships participated in the study. As per the study rationale, students who identified as African and woman were selected. Although residing on campus residence was not a specific criterion, the majority of the participants were on campus while others resided in surrounding communes, with 2 participants staying at home.

The small sample allowed me to build trusting relationships with this manageable group of young women given the in-depth approach of this study. Charmaz (2017, p. 36) argued that “a very small sample can produce a study with depth and significance.” Recognizing the nature of feminist qualitative research, the sample size did not need to be representative of the entire university population of young women; however, diversity of representation was sought during recruitment. Clear instructions were given to Thembekile in order to ensure that saturation was not reached prematurely.

The interviews began with ‘small talk’, which often occurred while walking to my office. I ensured that I collected participants from wherever they were at the university in order to avoid them getting lost. I felt I needed to make that effort, and I did the same at the end of the conversations. The interview started with me clarifying what the study was about and collecting participant’s demographic information.

Anthropologist Russel Bernard asserted that interview guides are “open ended, but follow a general script and cover a list of topics” (Bernard, 2017, p. 210). The advantage of using this qualitative instrument was that while it made clear my ontological position, it also allowed participants to own the research process, which I led from behind. I used an interview guide (Appendix E) with pertinent themes and open-ended questions in order to gather rich data. Reading about how to conduct an interview could not have sufficiently prepared me for what was ahead, I needed to have gained the necessary practice in order to elicit in depth responses

from the participants in an innovative manner. Therefore, 14 years of social work practice coupled with experience of working with (and researching) HIV positive women (see Ngcobo, 2012) and marginalised women from informal settlements (Raniga & Ngcobo, 2014) enhanced my confidence in conducting research with a purpose.

There were times when I lacked confidence, and moments where I envisaged speeding up the process as the University was counting the length of time I was in the programme. Re-visiting my supervisor allowed me to identify areas that I needed to focus on during the interviews, such as not to ask questions, but have more open discussions with participants. This included discussions about their lives, their growing up narratives, relationships with siblings, parents, extended family members, communities and it was during those moments that I decided not to rely on the tape recorder, or the sequential ordering of my research guide. I needed to let loose, and be immersed, and thus I did not begin the interview if I knew that there was going to be an interruption, and I advised participants to not commit if they were going to be rushing off. Oakley (1981) considers this approach as an important milestone for feminist researchers.

The need for the researcher to understand the culture and language needs of the research participants is supported by Rosenblatt and Fischer (2009). I was born and raised in KwaZulu-Natal, studied at the same university as the study participants, and I am currently employed as a lecturer in the Social Work Department. The majority of the interviews were conducted in both English and IsiZulu, with the exception of one interview conducted in English only. One participant spoke SiSwati, which I understood because of its association with IsiZulu. I informed participants at the start of the interview that they were free to use isiZulu or English (two widely used languages at UKZN³³) due to my proficiency in both, which allowed them to freely express their individual meanings of SD relationships.

Being African, woman, and speaking the same language as the participants, was instrumental in building rapport and an “insider” status that a study of this nature required. I understood how power relations between me (as a lecturer) and the students (as participants) could impact the research process. Therefore, I chose to highlight my identity as an African woman who once was a young student at UKZN. It was important to gauge opportunities to share my own lived experiences. When Landile spoke about her parents’ divorce and how she chose UKZN to escape the reality at home, I also opened up about my own parents’ divorce which was also a trying time for me. This was not to minimize her pain, but to get us talking about life after

³³ Language policy – bilingualism

divorce which I found to be an emotional process but also therapeutic – for both of us. I was mostly addressed as Nolwazi, with a few participants even shortening it to ‘Lwazi’, which suggested familiarity and that the relationship had progressed beyond my imagination, although this was not true for all participants.

Research participants often casually used slang, as when Slindile used “*shagging*” to refer to having sex with someone, “*bae*” referring to baby (intimate) or even “*ukulahla*” as symbolising throwing away something or letting loose. During the interviews I did not pay much attention to this, it was during the transcription of the voice recordings that I realised how complex the process of clarifying meanings of slang was. Throughout our conversations, participants did not pause to decipher meaning of what could carry context specific codes, presupposing my familiarity with them. As mentioned earlier, my intimate conversations with Thembekile facilitated my understanding of most terms.

My position as an insider was unfortunately not consistent, as I at times found myself on the ‘outside’ looking in. Although I am located in the same context, the deployment of knowledge/discourse is not automatic but situationally located. This highlighted the tenets of identity as fluid and historically graded. Allen (2012) and Fook (2016) found that researchers may simultaneously assume insider/outsider positions in their interactions with participants. I found that when I was (or at least I thought I was) an insider, the interviews progressed smoothly without interruptions or reservations as evidenced in this excerpt:

Life for us as women is a struggle, I always wish to know what goes on in these men’s minds...like this other day he answers then drops my call, like what does he mean, you know how it can be when you don’t feel important. Zothile (23)

The above suggested that I had also at some point felt ‘*not important*’ and could relate to what Zothile was referring to, however, during the same interview, I experienced an outsider position:

And then he like comes to my place expecting the oven to be warm, knowing very well he is going home to his wife, I’m sorry but yes you wives are boring (laughs) but he still goes back to you.

Zothile (23)

While I did not mention being married, except for my discernible wedding ring, participants viewed me as symbolising the wife, since almost all of their partners were either married or in

a long-term relationship (see chapter five, 'turning the gaze'). In addition, the remarks made by Zothile created a sense that "*wives are boring*" is a common understanding (also mentioned by Slindile – chapter five). While the idea of embodying the wife, even in that space was unsettling for me, I strategically used such utterances to gain more insight into detailed constructions of 'wifhood' and of course '*baehood*' which unexpectedly furthered the conversation towards more meaningful constructions.

Individual interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the participants and brief notes were taken after the interview in order to capture the essence of the interview, which included my role in the interview process in addition to an analysis of participants' non-verbal communications. The audio recorder was not clearly visible to participants to facilitate the flow of conversations and to ensure that the knowledge of a recorder could be a barrier to conversation. One interview that took place at a nearby restaurant, I was tempted to use the recorder, her first words were: "*let's just talk, this won't be formal, ne*", the message was loud and clear. It was also fitting since this was our second meeting, and at that stage I had become comfortable with conducting research interviews.

The open-ended nature of in-depth interviews did not limit participants to discuss the present moment; their past experiences were also brought to the interview sessions. It was interesting to attend to participants' non-chronological sequence of storytelling; particularly how multiple and inconsistent identities were spoken about freely. The experience of being an African female student in a SD relationship, presented through multiple narratives, allowed for the acknowledgement of multiple and contending discourses on the participant's 'self'. The planning that went into this involved a great deal of fine tuning of my questioning technique, which required patience and flexibility. While this form of data collection may appear democratic, it presented the following challenges:

- It was so easy to get derailed and get caught up in the narrated experience of participants, and consequently miss pertinent points for follow up questions. My use of the recorder in some way made me aware of the gaps in my style, particularly at the beginning of research relationships that I had to correct in my subsequent interviews.
- I was also conscious of selecting issues that only served my interest or the interest of the study, especially if the participant felt it was important to bring other issues important to them to the interview. This was a relationship and anything that participants narrated broadened my understanding of their lives as multileveled and history graded.

- The first interviews were formally scheduled, and subsequent interviews were informally scheduled. The fact that I was accessible made the ‘coming back just to chat’ possible.
- Although not in the initial plan, communication with participants went beyond the interview space and entered into other modes, like WhatsApp and Facebook. I was flexible with WhatsApp as a preferred mode but considered Facebook as pushing it a bit too far, so the one participant who invited me was quite upset when I didn’t accept, which she later admitted was not such a good idea.
- WhatsApp is affordable yet it has its own limitations. While I was studying participants, I realised that they were also studying me, as evidenced in one participants’ assertion in relation to my status updates on 13 August 2017: “*You have such beautiful kids yazi*”- When I posted pictures of me and my children, then a follow up question was: “*And hubby?*” – I was taken aback by this question and it conveyed a message that the picture was incomplete. Although I brushed it off by saying that he was the photographer (a lie), that statement remained in my mind.
- The gaze was on all of us as I also could not resist viewing WhatsApp pictures and status updates, which although not the focus of my study provided insight into the daily lives of study participants, especially the pictures of them at churches, clubs, movies and with ‘boyfriends’

Plummer (1995) argued that researchers need to recognise how personal accounts of women’s lives and sexual experiences reflect the society that they exist in, which in interviews, may be presented as micro narratives. This understanding assisted in identifying the various sources that young African women in my study developed their scripts from, rather than focusing on one.

Consistent with feminist aims, the interview guide promoted an equal relationship between myself and research participants, in that the latter were free to influence the trajectory of the research process. In one instance, the participant had decided to bring me a home cooked meal, and this took me by surprise while also affirming the depths of my engagements and how the relationship was valued. Sewpaul (1995) shared how her participants often offered her home-made cakes that were made specifically for her planned home visits. Similarly, to Sewpaul, this gesture motivated me further and made me feel “appreciated, in every interview conducted” (ibid, p. 37).

The interview guide consisted of a set of themes. The first of four themes related to how participants constructed meaning around being young women at university, and how the SD relationship started. Secondly, the relationship with the SD was explored, in particular how various gender constructions have influenced their understanding of sexual exchange relationships, the third theme aimed to delve deeper into power and how power is idealized and/or actualized in the relationship, of interest here was my inclusion of pleasure and the power to manage or control risk in the pleasure state, which raised a few eyebrows.

The last theme explored aspirations of young African women in SD relationships and how the relationship affected conceptualisation of their identities and aspirations. While the guide had some relative thematic coherence, it was not abnormal for participants to disregard the structure and shift between and outside the guiding themes, which for me was a welcome interruption.

4.5.2 Talking about gender and sexuality

My previous experience as a Masters' student shaped my understanding of the researcher/participant relationship. This included the ability to retain one's role as a researcher, and being able to drive the research process. I needed to remain cognizant of power dynamics during the interview process. Reinharz (1992) suggested that researchers should avoid hierarchized researcher/participant relations and rather subscribe to shared, negotiated power that is non-exploitative. In my negotiation and sharing of power with participants, I made clear that I was conducting research 'with' them as opposed to 'on' them. Thus, the 'we' demonstrates recognition that "I am a product [and producer] of my social-political and cultural world" (Sewpaul, 2013, p. 113), and that "the 'I' is in part a consequence of the grammar that governs the availability of persons in language" (Butler, 1999, p. xxvi).

Minimizing power relations also required that while conducting research with participants, I also participated in the knowledge constructions by negotiating multiple meanings with participants. The relationship was therefore governed by feminist principles of "interconnectedness, reciprocity, mutuality, ambiguity, power and citizenship" (Dominelli, 2002, p. 37) which intersect with social work and Ubuntu principles. My position as an expert was deconstructed thus enabling rapport building and openness during the interviews. Despite my many attempts to reduce power between myself and participants, I cannot claim to have achieved total success. This admission takes into consideration the often-dominant positioning of researchers by participants as more informed and in charge of knowledge production, reminiscent of the research and community work experiences of Sewpaul, Osthus and Mhone

(2011). In striving for more egalitarian relationships, I shared my experiences strategically, without dominating the interview as evidenced in my engagement with Landile. I refrained from haphazardly sharing my own personal experiences unless prompted by participants. Disclosure did not jeopardise rapport, rather it helped to strengthen the relationship and facilitate open dialogue, as was the experience of Sewpaul (1995).

While I entered into research with a clear agenda, it emerged that participants also had their own agendas for participating in my study. Two participants informed me, during informal engagements after the interviews, that as they were postgraduate students, they were interested to see how I conducted my in-depth interviews. This made me realise that participants consent to interviews for various reasons, and they also prioritise their self-interests and not simply to fulfil those of the study (Reinharz, 1992).

Detours during the interview process were common, especially for questions relating to sexuality, which in my experience, appeared to activate a sense of apprehension for most participants during early stages of data collection. My strategic introduction of what had proven to be anxiety provoking questions of sexuality, assisted in minimizing this apprehension. McCave, Shepard and Winter (2014) argued that human sexuality in the social work field has often been discourses through the lens of “social control, panic, power, and surveillance” (p. 411), which may vindicate participants’ reactions to such questions.

Participants’ awareness of the dominant discourses of transactional sex may have been deeply ingrained in their scripts, and therefore expected me as a social worker/researcher to discuss sexual experience within the ‘risk’ paradigm. When I posed issues of sexual pleasure, the interview was interrupted with requests such as: “*can we come back to this thing – Thandazile, or “eish, do you really wanna know”?*” I responded with, “*ok, maybe tell me when you are ready*”, and as the interview relationship progressed, it was unnecessary to ask those questions as they became part of the interview. This may have also been my own uneasiness with posing such questions, especially at the beginning of my data collection journey. During my social work training, sex and sexuality were discussed in the context of rape, child abuse, and HIV, therefore sexual pleasure, as a topic was, and possibly still is, viewed as misaligned to “accepted categories of mainstream social work research” (McCave et al., 2014, p. 413). While I was comfortable with the questions, I imagined how participants would perceive me. My experience narrated above depicts the Foucauldian view of how discourses have not only been constituted in the social work profession, but are also constitutive. In *The Order of Discourse*,

Foucault (1981) argued that for one to retain professional status, even the language used, must conform to particular rules of the discipline or science (in this case the social work discipline), with any deviations met with trepidations as evidenced in the reactions from certain participants. The order of discourse had also been disrupted racially, two African women discussing sex and pleasure (as opposed to sex and procreation, sex and HIV/AIDS, and sex as dangerous) is still a taboo in African communities. In fact, speaking about sex is discouraged for both young men and women until such time that they are considered ready to wed (Gwandure, 2012), not that marriage does not equate to liberated sexual expression beyond the conjugal space.

My interaction with young African women took into consideration that sex and pleasure can be discussed, even with an African, middle-aged social worker. My inclusion of sex and pleasure was a conscious effort to avoid responses that conformed to “culturally intelligible notions of identity” (Butler, 1999, p. 23), thus challenging the dominant ‘loveless’ scripts of young African women. Recognising normative constructions of African women’s sexuality, also meant that I tread with caution and sensitivity, by not dismissing cultural intelligibility but to use the research space to open up other ways of knowing, speaking and thinking about African women’s sexuality.

4.6 Analysing the data

The conversion of collected data into findings entails reducing complex data into manageable, well-structured and meaningful “framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal” (Schurink, Fouché, & De Vos 2016, p. 397). This, according to Riessman (1993) is not a neutral process, but depends on researcher interpretations and selective truths, since “meaning is fluid and contextual, not fixed and universal” (p. 15). This propelled me to find ways to communicate my study’s findings in a manner that did not interfere or distort the original ‘talk’ voiced by participants, while also incorporating my voice into the study.

Including my voice in the study, is consistent with feminist methodologies which reject the notion of objectively discoverable truth in favour of individual experiences of situated truths that are fluid and history graded (Fook, 2016), and carry no universal meaning (Holland & Ramazanoglu, 1994). My interpretation of personal experiences as in those of the SD relationship, thus cannot be seen as inferior or invalid juxtaposed to more empirically proven studies, but need to be acknowledged as “essential and informative source[s] of validity which [are] open to reflexive interpretation[s] (ibid, p. 143). My use of content and discourse analysis

allowed me to present multiple and contradicting truths, which were not procedurally derived from discoverable and stable realities, thus drawing no distinction between what is said in the interview and absolute truth (Holland & Ramazanoglu, 1994).

Consistent with feminist post-structural theories, I reached my conclusions based on my interpretations of generated discourses of young African women in SD relationships, in addition to clarification of my navigation of the research journey. In this way, consistent articulations of my lived research experience may enable readers to also critically engage in the current study debates and to negotiate their own meanings and conclusions (Flax, 1990).

4.6.1 Content analysis

The massive data collected from research participants left me overwhelmed and hesitant to mess it all up. Creswell (1998) argued that while there are many ways of analysing qualitative research, there are consistent patterns that prevail across non-positivistic research. In my aim to make meaning and neatly present findings from my study, I utilised Creswell's recommended steps to content data analysis: a) *Immersion into data and multiple readings of interview transcripts* involved listening to audio-recorded interviews, translating, transcribing and reading the interview transcripts many times, which Riessman (1993) qualified as essential in the emergence of discourses; b) *Development of preliminary accounts* in which I attempted to incorporate information applicable to the study by reducing interview transcripts into manageable form without distorting the interview essence or authentic 'discursive'; c) *consideration of significance to study* in which I prioritized information that related to the main aims of the research.

In this process, caution was taken not to find similarities but diverse experiences of the SD relationship, thus qualifying all multiple experiences as valid, even when contradictory; d) *Making sense of discourses* which required me to step back from the narratives of participants and search for deeper meanings of the interview process; and e) *Analysis presentation* in this study was not to portray what was true knowledge, instead I subscribed to feminist post-structural views that reality is socially constructed (Burr, 1995; Gergen & Gergen, 2003), highly contested (Foucault, 1978; Giddens, 1994) and thus not homogenously understood or performed (Butler, 1990).

4.6.2 Discourse analysis

My initial attempts to avoid the disorderliness of data collected, by borrowing from Creswell's (1998) principles of data analysis, as discussed in the previous section, reaffirmed my convictions of analysing using both content and discourse analysis. The multifarious nature of transcripts, even after I had reduced them into manageable forms could not be confined to step-by-step styles of analysis. I needed to not only present what the young African female students in SD relationships said, but how they used language to narrate experiences of these relationships.

4.6.3 Discourse analysis in social work research

Discourse analysis shares similar sentiments with content analysis though it focuses "more on discursive resources or interpretive repertoires expressed in a variety of texts" (Trinder, 2000, p. 53). Language in this sense is "not as a neutral medium for conveying information but as a means by which the social worlds are constituted" and "maintained in the social context" (Henning, Van Rensburg, & Smit, 2004, p. 118).

Discourse analysis however, focuses less on the individual and more on "discursive or interpretive repertoires expressed in a variety of texts – in documents, film, magazines as well as interviews" (Trinder, 2000, p. 53). Interviews provided space for exploration of participants' discursive repertoires of SD relationships, and what also featured in my engagements.

I found Trinder's (2000) summarized version of Gill's (1996, p. 141-142) discourse analysis themes very useful in my study, and this is how, together, with Fairclough's (2004), it enabled in-depth analysis of discourses of young African women in SD relationship (Gill, 1996 cited in Trinder, 2000, p. 53-54).

Discourse and interests -For this theme, Gill is simply drawing attention to how participants' discourses were "interesting in [their] own right, rather than what lies behind it or what people 'really' think" (p. 54). Having examined dominant ideologies of African women's sexuality (chapter three), and discourses of SD relationships (chapter two), I became interested in discourses participants highlighted or emphasized and how this emphasis shifted across context. In this study, I did not look at discourses that had been performed but also those that participants aspired to, like the discourse of 'marriageability' or even the 'virginity' discourse.

Language as constitutive – This highlighted availability of vocabularies from which young African women could ‘choose’, thus demonstrating the extent to which choices made relate to possibilities available to ‘choose’ from. In the context of SD relationships, I needed to pay attention to the process of shaping or scripting possibilities and impossibilities of choice, as demonstrated in chapter five.

Discourse as action or function – Citing Gill, Tinder (2000, p. 54) argues that “people choose discourse in order to DO things, such as offer blame, make excuses or present themselves in the best possible light.” Tinder summarizes this theme as pointing to contextual interpretations of discourses, which was crucial in how I analysed participants’ scripts as coherent in some settings, yet contested in others. This contradiction was even more evident at various phases of the SD relationship.

Discourse as coexisting – This theme highlights the presence of competing discourses and how participants may employ various forms of persuasion in order to position themselves as different, and ‘other’ to the rest. Rhetoric in SD relationships may then be hierarchically organised to shape subject position.

As addendum to the above, Trinder offers some advice on how to use discourse analysis in social work research, which is discussed alongside broader tenets of discourse analysis. This process begins with transcribing interviews, including silences, emphasis and interjections, as is followed in narrative analysis (Riessman, 1993). It was crucial to pay attention to non-verbally communicated discourses when reading and transcribing the interviews, which relied on my reflexive journal notes recorded immediately after each interview.

Secondly, I needed to “read, and reread before sorting the data into relevant sections” (Trinder, 2000, p. 54), which in my case also included identifying words that I needed clarified by Thembekile, or the participant during our subsequent conversations. Critically examining language as argued by Talbot (1998) is an attempt to engender sensitivity and awareness to people’s “socio-linguistic worlds [that] they inhabit, and [to become] more critical of them” (p. 174), as per my use of discourse analysis.

In this study, language served multiple functions which were not limited to providing and receiving information. Gee (2011) puts it clearly:

“Language does of course, allow us to inform each other. But it also allows us to do things and to be things, as well. In fact, saying things in language never goes without also doing things and being things” (p. 2)

This implied that I had to triangulate my audio recordings of individual interviews with field notes relating to the spoken and unspoken aspects of the interview. In addition, translations into English predictably altered original meanings, in particular the language specific expressions. In order to retain authenticity, certain words in the vernacular have been retained and included in the findings chapters (see chapter five and six). The aim of preserving contextual meanings was to present the multiple ways in which participants of this study made meaning of their SD relationships in particular how they negotiated, challenged and reproduced these meanings within a university setting.

A third step recommended by Trinder (2000), was the search for patterns, a step I initially thought would contradict tenets of feminist post-structural research. However, Trinder (2000) adds that ‘patterns’ in this context, refers to both inconsistent and consistent patterns “rather than trying to summarise the gist of what seemed to be intended” (p. 54).

Lastly, I needed to recognise how participants strategically organised narratives, and to what extent these were “make themselves persuasive in the face of other competing accounts” (Trinder, 2000, p. 54) which meant inclusion of discourse inclinations, in particular the ordering of discourses amongst and within other discourses. This was in recognition of not just multiplicity but also, contradiction within and amongst discourses. This process provided insight into the negotiations of agency, and how through that, subjectivities of young African women in SD relationships were constructed. These steps, according to Trinder (2000), are not linear in their application and thus could not ignore discourses that operated in tandem with discourses on condom use. I analysed, in chapter six, how Jabulile mentioned how they used condoms, but stopped ‘*when he started to feel things*’.

My analysis recognised that the power of condom use, or to initiate and enjoyment of sex in heterosexual relationships, as not random ideas, but rather scripted ways of ‘being’, and SD relationship are stages for performing these scripts. This required a deeper understanding of broader and hidden forms of power, that young African female students were either complying with, or resisting, and the framing of that compliance or resistance. I read and reread transcripts

with an understanding of young African women as not “creators of statements, but themselves the creation” (Garrity, 2010, p. 205). However, this study does not view women as powerless, or even powerful for that matter, but recognises power (and powerlessness) as complex and shifting. Simon and Gagnon (1986) acknowledge how at the intrapersonal level of sexual scripting, individuals may fantasise, and rehearse behaviour, and this was evident in Slindile’s narratives (chapter five), who had fantasised how sex would be like for the first time, only to find that the actual experience left her scarred. In a feminist post-structural sense, she considered herself ‘desiring’, and not just desired, yet actual experience led her back to the discourse she had dissociated from, the *‘just black’* and *‘township’* style (see chapter six). My analysis needed to transcend the risk paradigm (see chapter two) on ‘condom use’ and ‘sexual debut’. I discuss this further in chapter six.

Fairclough (2004) highlighted that positionality did not have to discount agency, but rather to recognise the multiplicity and diversity of discourse upon which agency can be performed. Translated into my study, I needed then to attend to who is speaking, the location of the talk and the relationship between the speaker and the talk. In the example above, the coexisting and competing discourses are evident, and these were constraining in Slindile’s case. This evidence of uncomplimentary discourses was not unique to Slindile, but was consistent across participants’ discourses, and as Trinder (2002) warned, organizing this data was a messy task.

Therefore, my emphasis on ‘language’ of young African women in SD relationships suggests dialectical interconnectedness “with elements of social life” (Fairclough, 2004, p. 31), and how these dialects depict power and dominant discourses. Fook (2016) viewed power in this sense, as the ability to manipulate discourse and, how through this power “subordinate groups [may] act against their own self-interest, because they unwittingly comply with the dominant discourse” (p. 89). Consistent with feminist post-structuralism, my use of discourse analysis was not to *only* limit my analysis to power and dominance in SD relationships, but how young African women may reproduce, change and/or resist this domination in multiple ways.

4.6.4 Text and meaning

In text, discourse and language are terms often used interchangeably. Healy (2000) defined discourse as “a sets of language practices” (p. 8) suggesting that language constituted discourse and vice versa. However, Garrity (2010) challenged this melding utilising Foucauldian analysis in that “discourse may include, but is not reducible to, language” (p. 196), thus rejecting a singular definition of discourse. Furthermore, he argued that to be able to make any

assertion, as in the experience of a SD relationship, depended largely on situational positionality (ibid).

Textual components of social processes possess both immediate and gradual change elements (Fairclough, 2004). Instant changes include amongst others, changes in our value and belief systems, and in our epistemology in the sense that these experiences teach us something. The more gradual changes, often as a result of longer exposure to ‘text’ are bound to effect longer lasting changes. Fairclough argued that “...consumer or [and] gender identities” of individuals, may be shaped by their “prolonged experience(s) of advertising and other commercial texts” (ibid, p. 8). Other changes could be architectural, as evidenced in the persistence by South African political student activists to remove all buildings/statues that were seen to symbolize apartheid (Ndlovu & Vraagom, 2016). While the latter process remains a contentious issue countrywide, riddled with contradictory or complementary discourses, my interest lied in those multiple discursive meanings. Discourses therefore have influence on both micro and macro-level changes, what Fairclough (2004, p. 8) argued to be “causal effects” within a post-positivistic lens.

4.6.5 Power

Discourse analysis aided my understanding of complex operations of power in SD relationships, as expressed and experienced by young African female students. Discourse, understood in feminist post-structural thought and in relation to this study, involved a thorough reading of interview transcripts to understand how ‘talk’ frames young African female students’ understanding(s) of the SD relationship, and how this talk is also constructed (see Fook, 2016, p. 77).

Fook (ibid) views this conceptualization of discourse as a feminist post-structuralist expansion on the Marxist concept of ideology. This is by no means a replacement of the former by the latter but recognition of their understood meanings within and across paradigms. Ideology in its purest form serves to preserve the ‘status quo’. This, according to Fook (2016), includes deployment of power through “a set of ideas and processes which function to maintain individual people in their social place” (p. 78), what Foucault refers to as ‘apparatuses of control’ or Dorothy Smith’s ‘apparatuses of ruling’ (Smith, 1990, p. 142). This power does not exist without contestations, which I found to be true in the expressions of most participants in my study.

I recognise the criticism by some social work scholars who have not found scope for feminist post-structuralism as an analytical tool beyond micro-level approaches (Smith and White cited in Bozalek, 2000). However, I concur with Bozalek's insistence that there is room for feminist post-structural approaches in South Africa, as discussed in chapter one, and the need for context specificity to best study locally situated and contested discourses (ibid). For Fairclough, a focus on language in capitalist societies is premised on the recognition "...that texts have causal effects and effects on social change" and that "these effects are mediated by meaning-making" (ibid, p. 8). Thus, discourse analysis did not only allow me to explore young women's SD experiences, but also the text or scripts that shape meaning of the SD relationship.

4.7 Ethical considerations and reflexivity

Ethics are the DNA of the social work profession, and their application, whether in practice or research is never a clear-cut. In conduction research with young African women in SD relationships, I needed to demonstrate "willingness to deal with ambiguities, and to engage in ethically acceptable processes of decision-making to achieve ethical outcomes (IASSW, 2018, p. 1). Below, I reflect on how I closely observed ethical research principles (Wassenaar, 2006, p. 67-68), and reflexivity during the study (Fook, 2015).

In this study, I considered myself privileged to have engaged with nineteen young African women with whom we openly shared our experiences of various forms of 'becoming' (see chapter five). Gatekeeper issues (see Appendix A), discussed at the beginning of this chapter suggest that participants in my study needed to provide informed consent before participating in my study. Participation in this study was voluntary and no student was compelled to participate. This is consistent with maintaining the integrity of social work (IASSW, 2018), which meant not using my lecturer position, deemed powerful in this context, to force participation. In addition, I did not recruit social work students or students known prior to conducting the study.

There were a few prospective participants, who had made contact with me but failed to show up and I did not require explanations for not honouring set appointments. This was in recognition of the principle of individual autonomy (Wassenaar, 2006) and their individual "right to make their own choices and decisions" (IASSW, 2018, p. 5). I reinforced this to participants even after consenting, that they could still withdraw from the study anytime. I assured them that no names and places with obvious links to their 'real' identities, would be

mentioned, which if mentioned would violate the principle of “non-maleficence” (Wassenaar, 2006, p. 67).

To avoid doing harm, I asked participants to ‘name’ themselves using pseudonyms, and this reaffirmed my promise of anonymity, provided to UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) before attaining ethical clearance (see Appendix B). As mentioned earlier, I learned to use certain terms, like ‘sugar daddy’ or ‘sugar baby’ carefully. In fact, I learned not to use them unless participants themselves used them to refer to the sexual exchange relationship with older men. Since this research sought to understand the experiences of young African women’s negotiation of agency in their relationships with ‘older men’ who provided money in exchange for sex or companionship, I needed to move beyond the term ‘sugar daddy’, and as Thembekile advised, *loosen up*.

Like Featherstone (2000), *loosening up* at times opened up doors for “uncomfortable and painful feelings” (Featherstone, 2000, p. 127) which tested my obligation to ‘non-maleficence’ (Wassenaar, 2006). During Nompandolo’s first interview, which went on for over two hours, the social worker in me could not interrupt her. At the end, I realised that she had long wanted to tell her story. Sewpaul (1995) cautions against careless dismissal of individuals’ sensitive stories, and I confirm that “ethical concerns are certainly raised” (ibid, p. 43), when doing research with historically marginalised participants. During the interview, I asked myself, ‘*was it anything I said that triggered Nompandolo’s pouring out of emotions?*’ Later, I realised that Nompandolo came to see me, not as a researcher but as a social worker. I was put on the spot, as she often remarked, ‘*Tell me what to do, I know you are a social worker*’ which left me in a dilemma and although I was able to attend to her feelings during the session, I took a decision to refer her to university student counselling services. This action was beneficial as she began to engage in my research, and the nature of the conversations allowed her to refer to some of her experiences and not single out *one experience*. I also learned that doing no harm or promoting non-maleficence, was not just one ethical principle, thus violating any ethical principle could cause multiple ‘harms’, even way after conducting the research, as I observed during one Sunday at church.

During announcements, the church leader requested all visitors to introduce themselves (which was common practice) and one of the visitors was my former participant. Although this was months after I completed my research interviews, I still needed to uphold the ethical principles. In her greetings to church members, she mentioned that she had come with her university

friend. While I prepared myself to *loosen up*, it seemed she was a step ahead of me. After service, I greeted her, along with other visitors, and that is where we parted. I discussed this with my colleague Tumi the following Monday, and I shared with her how I found it odd that I never bumped into any of my research participants on campus except for when we had scheduled interviews. From this, we concluded that upholding research ethics was more complex than we had anticipated, and one needed to be ethically prepared at all times, for *visitors*.

As one of the research responsibilities, I followed Mama (1995) who used research encounters as a vehicle for African women “to know more about themselves and the social conditions of their existence and formation” (p. 67). For example, Zibane (2017) found that young people during discussions “on homosexuality, sexual orientation and/or gender identities” (p. 134), seemed more affirmed of their sexual diversity. Such affirmation challenges post-colonial discourses of Africans, which was challenged by Epprecht (2008), thus eliminating what Stanley and Wise (1993) call research hygiene. To maximise the benefits of research participation, it was required to disrupt hygienic binaries, where the researcher ‘questions’ and the researched ‘responds’. Most participants, although initially taken aback when I asked, *‘is there anything you would like to know from me?’* took the opportunity to ask about, *‘how it was to be a lecturer, how I had chosen to do social work, the reason I chose the SD topic, and how was the PhD?’* Some were interested in *‘marriage life, how I managed kids, work and studies’* while some wanted advice about finding out employment opportunities after graduating. These questions were overwhelming at times, some even catching me unprepared. However, they exemplified Honwana’s (2012) conceptualization of young people as “marked by great energy, enthusiasm, and creativity.”

Recognizing the genuineness in their questions, I took my time to respond even beyond the interview system. While I cannot claim to have provided answers to the young women’s questions, I appreciated being their vessel for opportunities. In fact, three participants are completing their Masters degrees, and one is doing a PhD and I had the NYDA³⁴ resource list of youth programmes and opportunities for referral, at hand. Since youth is also “a stage of moulding characters, interests, and goals; a process of constructing and reconfiguring identities” (Honwana, 2012, p. 11), I moulded and also became moulded in the process (see reflexivity in this chapter).

³⁴National Youth Development Agency

As evident in the moulding process above, interviews were conversations, and participants were free to choose to converse English or IsiZulu, yet I admit that no single interview was purely in English, nor in pure IsiZulu, as participants (including me) felt comfortable to code switch between the two at any point during the interview. It was interesting to note how and when they invoked IsiZulu words or metaphors in reference to *ikhaya*, as well as how they often shifted back to English when referring to *ivava* script, or life away from home generally. Standing (1998) argues that no interviews or transcripts of interviews should look “grammatically correct” (p. 190), for qualitative research conversations are never tidy.

Tidying research excerpts, according to Standing, takes away discursive nuances of participants, which often “reflect their backgrounds and culture[s]” (p. 191). Moreover, I was aware of historical errors (see chapter three) that resulted in English as the norm, and how ‘cleaning up’ IsiZulu words would further reaffirm those errors. However, participants themselves did the tidying up where they felt certain discourses were not contextually relevant, which I discussed earlier, as a form of ‘withdrawal’ of some discourses. However, I was careful during translation, not to distort meanings by participants, which I confirmed with them before analysis, and having Thembekile to assist was an insider advantage. Doing this, furthered a feminist post-structuralist (see chapter one) goal, by not reproducing young African women’s discourses of SD relationships, “in ways in which they are represented within dominant society – that is, the analysis cannot be complicit with dominant representations which re-establish inequality” (Bhavnani cited in Standing, 1998, p. 193). At the same time, I did not compromise findings of the study, as discussed below.

Rigour in feminist post-structuralist research is contested, as Trueit (2008, p. 36) argued “input does not equal output.” Fook (2015, p. 443) defines reflexivity as the “ability to recognise that all aspects of ourselves and our contexts influence the way we research (or create knowledge).” Conducting research in this sense shifts from essentialist notions of the researcher and the researched, towards more feminist post-structural “ways of minimizing the influence of the researcher” (Sewpaul, 1995, p. 45). To achieve this, I needed to be aware of the multiple ways in which I create and influence knowledge during my engagement with participants and this Fook (2015, p. 444) discusses under four critical aspects.

Firstly, I needed to acknowledge how my sense of knowing was influenced by my social and physical positions. I have discussed this throughout, and the struggles of negotiating knowledge within the interview context. Secondly, how my subjectivity, which in this case refers to my

position as a lecturer, wife, researcher, amongst other positions, influences the lens I use to view and understand the world. Thirdly, knowledge is determined by its constitutionality, which renders it legitimate or illegitimate. And the last aspect refers to the interactional nature of knowledge and how it is historically and structurally shaped, thus not unchanging.

In my use of reflexivity, I was able to research my personal experiences, some of which I include, in order to know myself better not only as someone who possesses knowledge but as someone who creates knowledge. Through this, I was able to connect myself to a “broader social, cultural and structural environment” (p. 444). This connection is in contrast to “spectator-knowledge where the researcher remains detached from research subjects” (Sewpaul, 1995, p. 46).

4.8 Limitations of the study

This study discusses the experiences of young African women in SD relationships, particularly how they negotiate agency and reconstruct the self. Although SDs perform and experience gender constructions in these relationships, an examination of their experiences goes beyond this study’s scope. This study also acknowledged the growing phenomenon of ‘sugar mummies’ as well as non-heteronormative sexual exchange relationships, and this study has prioritized young African women in sexual exchange relationships with older men (see chapter one).

The setting of this qualitative study may be a limitation and as such, preventing generalisability of findings to the whole population. However, as discussed earlier in this chapter, the urban location of this campus has provided important new understandings into experiences of young African women in SD relationships within an urban university. The sample size of nineteen participants also does not represent diversity in terms of experiences of young African women in South Africa who are in SD relationships.

Participants who self-identified as engaged in SD relationships were recruited for the study. This excluded participants who may have been in SD relationships but chose not to classify themselves using that category, maybe due to the negative labelling of such within the university context. In addition, this study did not seek to delve into how students generally perceive SD relationships on campus, which Shefer (1999) focused on.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has reflected on the journey travelled with nineteen young African women in SD relationships, within an urban university. The study setting provided the landscape upon which young women negotiated subject positions, which I discuss as transitional in the next chapter. Using an in-depth, open-ended interview guide, I employed qualitative approaches to explore young African women's agency negotiations in SD relationships and how the self was constructed in the process. The methodological process and challenges thereof, in terms of gaining access to the university setting and lives of young women, is discussed in detail along with the relationships that I continue to treasure to this day.

Data collection, data analysis, ethical consideration and reflexivity, demonstrate my immersion in social work and feminist research processes. As Featherstone (2000) notes, social work's attention to 'process' "is often concerned with sensitive issues" (p. 134). Therefore, this chapter deliberated what occurred during data collection; how we felt as participants and how we heard and read language used in the research encounters. The limitations of the study are discussed, and the next chapter utilises content and discourse analysis as analytical processes to capture young African women's processes of becoming.

Chapter Five:

Becoming a young African Woman

5.1 Introduction

One of the objectives of this study was to understand sexual scripts of young African women in my study (see chapter one). Hence, I have not focused on SD relationships exclusively, but rather situated this phenomenon within broader sexual scripts that were embedded in participants' 'talk' around sexuality. Sexual scripts refer to socio-historically/structurally constructed knowledge of sexuality that determine how we ought to react and feel in various sexual encounters, and also the meanings we create out of those encounters. These scripts are not universal, but rather yardsticks for what may be regarded as 'proper behaviour' within various contexts (Frith & Kitzinger, 2001; Simon & Gagnon, 1986; 2003; Wiederman, 1999; 2005; 2015).

This chapter, including chapter six, not only describes how, across various contexts, young African women in SD relationships learn, perform and contest feminine sexual scripts; it also highlights how these discursive practices may "...reproduce race, gender, and class discriminations and inequalities" (Sewpaul, 2013, p. 116). In this chapter I use the concepts 'sexual scripts' and 'discourses' to demonstrate available possibilities for young African women, and their relation to them. I argue that participants' social and structural relations both enabled and constrained racialized, gendered, and classed subjectivities in SD relationships.

While my interest was to explore the nuanced and multiple meanings that young African women constructed in SD relationships, I needed to acknowledge that these meanings were not free-floating, but historically and culturally constructed (Mupotsa, 2017). Influenced by a social constructionist lens of subjectivity, and my eagerness to understand these knowledges, I focused on formative cultural experiences, such as discourses that they had been subject to by their families, communities, friends and the media. I have used the terms discourse and sexual scripts interchangeably throughout this thesis and I continue to do so arguing that, like discourses, sexual scripts are constitutive and, as a result, may foster certain beliefs and values amongst their constituted subjects (see Beres, 2013).

Consistent with the feminist post-structural proposition of multiplicity, I recognised participants in this study as subjects whose scripts are constituted by various ideological structures, such as families, peers, religion, culture, media and education, whether through their

talk, actions or even silences (Sewpaul, 2013; Youdell, 2005). These multiple scripts “open up the possibility of the subject’s discursive agency” (Youdell, 2005, p. 253), by consistently preparing and correcting the subject for “potential sexual situations and importantly how to and how not to act effectively within them” (Jackson, 1999, p. 46). While these sexual behaviours ultimately emerge as commonsensical, Butler (1999) argued that they are in fact performatively constituted, this argument foregrounds my analysis of young African female students in SD relationships. I also draw on Althusser’s (1998) notion of ideological subjection, and that of power and subjectification put forth by Foucault (1977, 1987, 1991), in order to demonstrate how participants’ identities and meanings of SD relationships emerge through socio-historical and socio-structural intersections of race, gender, sexuality, disability, and class. I further argue that these intersecting constructions are not fixed, nor are they homogenously experienced; they are to some extent characterised by fluidity and contestations.

5.2 Becoming a young African woman: a beautiful [dis]advantage

Although my analysis is presented in two separate chapters, with the present chapter: *Becoming a young African woman* being first, I found it difficult to separate them. This inseparability is not uncommon in critical discourse analysis:

“In any text we are likely to find many different representations of aspects of the world, but we would not call each separate representation a separate discourse. Discourses transcend such concrete and local representations [...] a particular discourse can, so to speak, generate many specific representations” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 124).

Guided by Fairclough’s assertions, I render my analysis chapters ‘constituted’ and ‘constituting’ of multiple, intersecting discourses, and that one is generated by the other. Below is a synopsis of the themes and subthemes for chapters five and six.

Themes	Sub-Themes
Ekhaya sexual scripts: Hidden curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families as private cultural havens from a private cultural world • Respect: ‘hlala ngentombi –sit like a girl’ • Disappointing parents, becoming single parents, silencing sexual fantasies, and pain
Ivava sexual scripts: old and new scripts at intersection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple, ambiguous and intersecting identities • Freshers, ‘farm girls’ and not so good girls • Slay queens, slay queen wannabes • IDC’S, fuck girls, underdogs, and stoners
Stage surveillance: turning the gaze	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When demand meets ‘sweet’ supply • Responsible and committed fathers • Familiar bhutis, babas and respectable men of God • Mentors, role models, pimps and hyenas

Table 1: Synopsis of the themes and subthemes for chapter five: *Becoming a Young African Woman*

Themes	Sub-Themes
Negotiating courtship: ‘Ukushela/Ukuqoma’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘If he drinks Hunters Dry, then sorry...’</i> • <i>‘Sometimes you just need to act needy’</i> • <i>‘Don’t complicate things, love is sweet but money makes it sweeter’</i>
Negotiating love, intimacy, desire and money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘Pure love without money is poor love’</i> • <i>‘Nika nika – you give, I give: Just play your part’</i> • <i>‘At least give some thought to my feelings’</i>
Negotiating safety, managing threats to self (Un)managing threats and negotiating the self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘He is so scared of HIV’</i> • <i>‘He would use condoms but when he feels things, he removes it’</i> • <i>‘Not when I’m ovulating, we also can’t trust the wife’</i> • <i>‘We use condoms when contraceptives don’t agree with me’</i>

Table 2: Synopsis of the themes and subthemes for chapter six: *(Un)Sweetening the Pot: Negotiations of Pleasure and Danger in SD Relationships*

Influenced by Simone de Beauvoir’s famous quote: “one is not born, but rather becomes a woman” (1949, p. 293), I explore this process of ‘becoming’ within the sexual narratives of participants, specifically how sexual scripts have enabled or restrained these ‘becomings.’ In

essence, *becoming* can never be considered complete, but always under reconstruction, a process I discuss in detail in chapter five. These reconstructions, according to Butler (1999), are essential for continuous identity politicization and critique, thus ensuring that no identity, including sexual identities, remains fixed knowledge but emerges both relationally and contextually. This reflects a congruence with Preece's (2016, p. 35) assertion that:

“Knowledge is socially constructed, not discovered; contextual, not foundational; singular, localised and perspectival rather than totalising or universal; and egalitarian rather than hierarchical.”

By delving into the sexual scripts of participants, I render their knowledge of being African and woman “as emergent in relationships and situations rather than as a universal essence” (Gagnon & Simon, 1973, p. 27). Using discourse analysis, I highlight the manner in which racial, class, ethnic, gender and sexual scripts were interwoven and the extent to which these were naturalised in talk and behaviour of participants. Through casual talks participants alluded to their perceptions of race in relation to their families and peers. For example, Nompendulo (21) mentioned in hindsight that her *‘dad paints white peoples’ houses and refuses to work for blacks because they don’t pay’* and continued to talk about how her dad managed to earn a significant amount of money, even though he was uneducated. This could easily have become engrained for Nompendulo growing up, in particular how ‘white’ and ‘black’ identities are conceptualised dichotomously, with white representing all that is good.

Sewpaul (2013) cautioned against essentialising the experiences of all African women, and the perception that “*all blacks are disadvantaged and all other racial groups are advantaged*” (Emphasis by author - p. 118), which I was similarly a strongly held perception by Nonkonzo (21):

I am really fortunate that I managed to get a place at this university, ya it was tough especially in first year because in my programme there are many whites and Indians and they seemed to know what was going on. So, my friends told me that I must not try to do what they do, like cos it is common to see “them” holding hands or kissing here on campus, cos I will do that also trying to be like them, and my academics will suffer.

The above excerpt suggests that interactions, whether with family, as was the case with Nompendulo, or peers in the case of Nonkonzo, influenced what it means to be a young African woman. Her assertion that *‘they seemed to know what was going on’* suggests a presumed superiority of whites and Indians, which is not unusual given the dominant racialized

discourses entrenched and reproduced by colonialism and apartheid (see chapter three). While an institutionalised national discourse under apartheid, Sewpaul (2013) points to the universal nature of dominant race and gender discourses. The above quotations represent whiteness as “the norm, the ordinary, [and] the standard ... [such that] whites are not of certain race, [but] are just the human race” (Dyer, cited in Sewpaul, 2013, p. 118, [brackets added]). However, time and context do mediate race and gender identities for example in post-apartheid South Africa, being an African student has often been perceived as a social advantage on account of transformation policies (Fihlani, 2012; Sewpaul, 2013) even though some political analysts cautioned that such redress policies could lower the standards of (white) university education (Fihlani, 2012).

The high enrolment index of African students at UKZN over the years, does not correlate with the poor graduation indexes, particularly in Medicine (van der Merwe et al., 2016) and in Engineering (Murray, 2014), when compared with other race groups. This thus justifies Nonkonzo’s perception of herself as *‘fortunate’* but also advice from peers to *‘not try to do what they do.’* The “us” and “them” dichotomy narrated by Nonkonzo suggests that there is a unique African culture that is ontologically stable yet Said (cited in Sewpaul, 2016) argued that the stable West and the stable Rest are in fact “constructed by people, partly as a result of identification by each with the other” (p. 34). In her narrative, Nonkonzo and to some extent her peers, assumed that “respect, restraint, responsibility and reciprocity are distinguishing features of African society” (Sewpaul, 2016, p. 34), and thus antithetical to Western society (see chapter three). In chapter six, I discuss in depth the notion of reciprocity, and how in the context of SD relationships, reciprocity was enabled or constrained, but never unchanging.

Given these dominant constructions of race, and the amount of influence this has on the individual’s sense of self, a student who self identifies as black or African may begin to internalise these ideologies, which according to Mullaly (2002) become everyday routines that are considered rational and inevitable. This internalised oppression then reproduces the hierarchized relations of superior-inferior relationships (ibid), which resonates closely with Foucauldian concept of “subjectification” (Foucault, 1978, p. 93).

As per other identity categories, I argue that race is not a stable category, and I agree with Sewpaul (2013) that being black does not always invoke inferiority. This I discovered in participants’ celebration of ‘blackness’, for example when Khumbuzile mentioned that she was *‘gifted with a nice black body’*, which upon my probing she elaborated as meaning *‘nicely*

shaped, with a bum and figure' with pride. This beauty was, however, challenging for Sibusisiwe:

Sibusisiwe: For me being black and beautiful comes with challenges

Researcher: In what way is it challenging?

Sibusisiwe: Cos all the time I have to prove that I am more than this ... and you know it's hard like I don't think people make the effort to listen to me, as a result I am so loud ...loud in an irritating manner.

Researcher: So, you want to be heard...and does it work?

Sibusisiwe: Well, it does and plus I am a smart student [LAUGHS] or at least I want to believe so and I feel that deserves more praises than my looks.

Sibusisiwe's ability to resist and challenge 'blackness' beyond the mainstream binaries is empowering and, thus opens up possibilities for lived experiences of blackness (Collins, 2009). Locating Sibusisiwe's and other similar assertions in the context of Foucault's subjectification, which I discussed in chapter one and three, I recognise the coexistence of truths in that against mainstream socio-cultural constructions of what it means to be black, also present are counter-hegemonic discourses (Foucault, 1987). Moreover, Chimamanda Adichie (2016) would applaud Sibusisiwe's attempts at 'denouncing a single story' of blackness, in that African women have a crucial role to play in presenting their lived realities, which do not always need to correlate with the dominant scripts. In chapter five, I discuss how Sibusisiwe's 'black beauty' was both enabling and constraining in her engagement with SDs.

I argue that narratives from participants in this study should be located in socio-cultural history that carries both continuity and discontinuity. In his biography of Biko, Mangcu (2012) argued, "Africans were never entirely free from other cultures, nor even from the ones against which they fought" (p. 35). He uses Frantz Fanon's, *The Wretched of the Earth* to demonstrate what he called "the existential confusion wrought by colonialism on the educated elite" who in their attempts to escape "civilised decorum of the Western culture [...] were [still] obliged to make use of the weapons which that culture had itself furnished" (Mangcu, 2012, p. 35-37). Therefore, while Sibusisiwe and Khumbuzile were proudly black beauties, narration of this black beauty was not without Western influence.

Continuing with the notion of ‘black beauty’, I expand in the next chapter how most participants viewed it as a valuable and ‘*expensive*’ asset and thus needing to be ‘*maintained*’. I argue that becoming an African woman and performing an African student identity were not straightforward processes but often occurred “within overlapping systems of subordination”, which included patriarchy, racism and classism (Crenshaw, 1994, p. 149). It is thus not race per se, but rather the “various ways in which race [class] and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of African women’s [lived] experiences” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1244), such as that of SD relationships.

Sibusisiwe’s narrative supports much of the literature, which contests the stereotype that women are generally the epitome of beauty, whereas men epitomize intelligence, since intelligence is considered a masculine skill that (white) men are naturally predestined for. Quoting Blake’s concept of “gendered racism” Sewpaul (2013) argued that African women find it even more difficult to distinguish the effects of gender and race identities (p. 121). The concern with this notion is not being listened to “as a black woman”, and more particularly as a beautiful black woman, who like the popular blue-eyed blonde is only good for her looks. Sibusisiwe here is challenging a notion of beauty as indicative of women’s success, and in many cases, beauty as defined by the Western world. As such, skin bleaching for African women in Britain, according to Mama (quoted in Pattman & Bhana, 2009, p. 23) was “less about African women wanting to be white than about African women wanting to be attractive especially to men in a patriarchal world that assumes beauty to be blonde and blue eyed, and makes it an imperative for women to be attractive enough to succeed with men.” This effect of gendered racism is discussed (and contested) further in chapter six, particularly how through ‘talk’ it becomes constitutively constructed (Butler, 1999).

Constructing an individual self “against the ‘other’ signifies recognition of difference, which brings into sharp relief the material and discursive contexts of race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation and ability” (Harris cited in Brown, 2011, p. 109). For example, “concerned that in situations of poverty women have the least access to food, health, education, training and opportunities for employment and other needs” (UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979, p. 1) proposed the abolishment of all laws and practices that serve to discriminate against women. In his feminist post-structural argument, Brown asserted that there is a need to recognise not only the rights accorded to women, but the “boundaries and possibilities of race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation and ability” (Brown, 2011, p. 109) - all which foreground contexts upon which those rights are deployed.

5.3 Ekhaya sexual scripts: the hidden curriculum

Sexual scripts are influenced by various intersecting sociocultural and structural formations that shape our understanding of sexual behaviour (Fook, 2016). Fook argued that these scripts need to “be interpreted in the light of changing and specific situations in which they are located” (p. 99) and recognised as presenting “possibilities of both coherence and change” (p. 100) in sexual behaviour. Evident in my study with young African women in SD relationships was the “coherence being remade constantly in relation to experience and context” (ibid), although I found talk around this emerging coherence as not deviating from the gender, race, or class status quo they claimed to challenge. Nonetheless, ekhaya sexual scripts were significant in how participants were informed of what it means to be a good girl or bad girl.

Reference to home (*ekhaya*) by participants extended beyond the boundaries of blood ties, as most used *ekhaya* to refer to even their local schools ‘*ngisafunda emakhaya- studying at home*’, and the various interactions that constituted *ekhaya*. *Ekhaya*, for most participants resonated with the philosophical principles of ‘*Ubuntu*’ and ‘interconnectedness’ as discussed in chapter three (Asante, 2003; Mbiti, 1970; Tamale, 2014) which affirmed that participants’ scripts from *ekhaya* were not constructed in isolation but collectively. Sexual scripts are often referred to by educationalists (Allen, 2003; Kehily, 2002) as the ‘hidden curriculum’, and by sociologists as informal learning networks (Parker, 1998). This is illustrated in relation to how most participants made available their sexual scripts from home, often with uncertainty, as if they needed validation from me during interviews. This led me to question this dichotomous depiction of ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ sexual education for it presents the former as aberrant, therefore easily overlooked or invalidated when encountered (Allen, 2003). Within post-structural thought, I recognise the ‘talk’ in relation to *ekhaya* sexual scripts of participants as constituted informally, but also made intelligible, with the possibility of tapping into these sexual scripts as and when needed by participants (Butler, 1999; Foucault, 1987). This is not to say that this intelligible subject is a free subject, instead Althusser (1973), Giddens (1994) and Sewpaul (2013) add that this freedom is embedded in broader structures with rules that simultaneously constrain or enable one to behave in a particular way. For Althusser (1973, 1998), the subject is constituted during its interactions with ideological apparatuses (for example family, school, church, media) and through which they master a certain worldview. This view is endorsed by Sewpaul (2013, p. 119) who argued that:

The ideologies that we hold are reflected in, and reinforced by, activities in the home and

school, cultural norms and practices, religion, politics, and the media. Our thinking, in turn, shapes social policies and social structures, reflecting a circular and dialectical relationship between structure and agency.

In addition, this worldview is sustained through practices, which must be repeated, to continually (re)produce the subject (Butler, 1997). In an ideological apparatus such as the family, it is what children, parents and other extended family members do, that becomes their values and beliefs. The family is, in this sense, among several others, a *theatre of consent* (Hall, 1985) within which, taken-for-granted assumptions are reproduced. Below, I discuss sexual scripts that are deployed by *ekhaya*, and I present them as not isolated from the broader public scripts.

5.3.1 Families as private cultural havens from a public cultural world

The family possesses powerful ideological influences, mainly because of its closeness and its power to subject its members to its values and belief systems. However, Collins (1998) argued that family values are constructed against “an imagined traditional family ideal [...] which consists of heterosexual couples that produce their own biological children” (p. 62) within marriage. This traditional view also assumes a universal sexual division of labour, which confines women’s roles to those of domesticity while the public work arena remains a privilege for men. Anderson (cited in Collins, 1998b) argued that this “state sanctioned heterosexual marriage confers legitimacy not only on the family structure itself but on children born into it” (p. 63). Dominelli (2002, p. 19) argued that feminist researchers should challenge “monolithic descriptions of ‘the family’” by extending its definition beyond the traditional, nuclear family. I needed to ensure that my analysis of participants’ sexual scripts recognised families as “private cultural havens” yet still “from a public cultural world” (Collins, 1998b, p. 63). Although only five participants came from what might be considered traditional families, all interviewed participants’ families were influential in constructing their formative sexual scripts.

In its attempt to decolonise social work practice, the recently revised document, the Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles (IASSW, 2018) defines families as ethnically and culturally diverse, thus “taking into account [their] differences” (p. 4-5). My appreciation of this all-encompassing definition was that it also highlights government’s role “in the defence, promotion, and fulfilment of [*family*] rights” (ibid. 4), which means that all families must be

protected by the state. But the rights of families are often violated, as reflected in the case with Siyathokoza (21):

I have never met my mom. Apparently, she fell pregnant at 17 and was staying at a boarding house since her home was in the Eastern Cape. After giving birth, she left me with my father and granny when I was 4 days old and never returned. My father passed on in 1997, I don't even remember what he looked like. I had no problem all along as my granny took good care of me. The problem started when I came to university and I started applying for state funding and they wanted me to trace my mother which was a huge struggle. Eventually, we gave up and only during second year, my granny told someone from local municipality and they decided to intervene, but first year was a struggle, I had to fend for myself - I am still owing fees.

The above excerpt demonstrates how, in South Africa, an absent mother is not something deemed possible by the state, hence the need 'to trace' Siyathokoza's mother. This, she later mentioned, had devastating impact on her as she had to 'fend for herself' and relied mostly on friends, which I discuss later on in this chapter. Ntini and Sewpaul (2017), Seepamore (2016), and Sewpaul (1995) maintained that the dominant script of motherhood was still pervasive in South Africa, in particular the endorsed script of mothers as 'born carers,' which was not the case in Siyathokoza's situation.

Raised by her father and grandmother, Slindile's experience challenges dominant constructions of motherhood and fatherhood. Slindile mentioned how her dad "would not touch the bread if his children had not come home from school." Slindile smiled when she narrated this, and added how her father managed to care for her and her fifteen-year-old brother, even when their mother (who passed away in 2010) was still around. Similar to Siyathokoza's narrative, Slindile was her grandmother's daughter, whom she called 'mom without reservation', which Seepamore (2016) asserted, has long been the norm in precolonial Africa where mothers mothered together with grandmothers, aunties and other older women figures of the extended family. The only difference is that Slindile and Siyathokoza's mothers were not available. In analysing the data, I was mindful not to construct Siyathokoza and Slindile's family's "survival and struggle strategies" as cultural issues (Sewpaul, 2016, p. 34).

When Slindile reported that the way her mother was a "stranger", even at her funeral she "just couldn't understand why people were crying, I mean yes...she was my mother but was I

supposed to just cry for that?” Siyathokoza and Slindile’s experiences of motherhood and fatherhood demonstrated the need to explore the family institutions, in particular the sexual scripts that were normalised within its structures.

Family structures of participants were heterogeneous: *Thandazile (19)*, *Khumbuzile (20)*, *Nikiwe (21)*, *Gugulethu (23)*, and *Skhululiwe (24)* all came from ‘traditional’ homes (N=5), meaning that they stayed with both parents who were married. *Nompendulo (21)* (N=1) on the other hand reported that her parents had been together for twenty-two years, “*yet they are still not married.*” The majority (N=9) of the participants came from single parent homes headed by mothers who were either divorced, never married or abandoned by fathers of children: *Sibusisiwe (22)*, *Hlengimpilo (22)*, *Nosipho (22)*, *Landile (24)*, *Ziningi (23)*, *Siziwe (21)*, *Phiwokuhle (20)*, *Nonkonzo (21)*, and *Jabulile (22)* with the exception of *Slindile (22)* whose home was headed by her father. Two participants reported to be parented by grandmothers *Zothile (23)*, *Siyathokoza (21)* (N=2) while *Yandisa (20)* (N=1) was parented by her older sister.

Yandisa, in relation to being parented by her sister and never having met her father, said:

When my mother died in 2016, I suffered. She was my best friend and my sister arranged for me to see a psychologist at her workplace. I got to talk about a lot of things and the fact that I had not spoken about my dad, and him not being in my life, but you know I am fine without him, what I hate is that when I am successful, he will want to come to my life.

It is undoubtable that fathers have a role to play in caring and providing for their children. However, absent fathers as evident in the above compositions, was a reality. I found myself affirming participants on how well they had done for themselves, despite absent fatherhood and where possible I briefly shared my experience as a child whose parents had also divorced. Sharing my own experiences facilitated “reciprocity and rapport in the interview process, thus breaking down the notions of power and authority” often ubiquitous in research relationships (Heser-Biber, 2006, p. 128; Stanley & Wise, 1993; see chapter four). Although criticized as ‘unhygienic’ (Stanley & Wise, 1993, p. 161), this reciprocity allowed for sharing not only our struggles but also how well we had done for ourselves in the presence of various constraints. In their case study of two young African female students from UKZN, Zulu and Munroe (2017) also found that where “sociocultural ecologies (and specifically mothers and siblings within those ecologies) are supportive; young African women could indeed rise above non-favourable circumstances” (p. 178) –as was the case with Yandisa. However, they still maintained,

“fathers should be encouraged to play constructive roles in their children’s lives when possible” (ibid).

Parental responsibility rested predominantly with mothers for the majority of the participants who reported that sexual scripting, was mostly communicated implicitly or explicitly mainly by their mothers (and gogos). The dominant message was the need to behave in a ‘proper’ manner and not to disappoint *ekhaya*, which was justified by the responsibility placed on mothers and women elders in the African culture to preserve their daughters’ sexual purity until marriage (Delius & Glaser, 2002).

5.3.2 Respect: ‘hlala ngentombi - sit like a girl’

The process of becoming an African woman rendered participants’ experiences of femininity - as not purely biologically derived but instead socially constructed through “permanent stances, gaits and postures” that become naturalized as ‘truth’ (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 27). In other words, gender performances are socially arranged rules and regulations pertaining to acceptable and unacceptable gender ‘performances’ (Butler, 1999). Daughters, particularly in Africa, are prioritized as needing to be taught early in life the ‘good girl’ script, which in its curriculum, incorporates how “to be an obedient, submissive, meek, and a humble housekeeper” (Izugbara, 2004, p. 8). Predictably, most participants accepted this as truth.

Thandazile described her parents as very strict, especially her father, yet she mostly referred to her mother’s teachings about how she should behave, especially since she was studying away from home. She had an older sister, whom she claimed had *not disappointed* her parents, and she narrated how she needed to be a good example to her 16-year-old brother, and ten-year-old sister back at home as follows:

Thandazile: When I left home, I told myself that ‘umphako wami nje wanele- my food for the road is enough.’ On the day that I left, my mother sat me down and told me: “this is it, you are on your own now please don’t pull the family name down” ... cos my dad is one-person nje (like) I can’t disappoint

Researcher: Umphako – food for the road..., meaning?

Thandazile: yah I mean that what my parents had given me was enough and all that was left for me was to just return with a degree and of cos ‘ngihloniphe ngihlale ngentombi’ – ‘be respectful and sit like a girl’

Thandazile was one of the two participants who reported that they were virgins. While I did not pose questions that directly related to virginity, I found participants' accounts of sexuality from *'ekhaya'* to be rooted in the cultural prescriptions of African women's chastity. Prescriptions, such as *'sitting like a girl'*, according to Bhana (2016) premise on *'inhlonipho'*-*respectability*, but simultaneously serve to reproduce "gendered asymmetries of power" (p. 467). Just like the participants in Bhana's (2016) study, being a virgin for Thandazile did not imply that she "did not imagine romance and love, or think about and enjoy heterosexual friendships" (p. 476). Thandazile restricted her sexual activities to having fun together, fondling and kissing, which left her *'untouched'* and I realised the distress when she stated that: *'it's hard like I feel like I'm not playing my part yet this man could've taken anyone and its very rare for them to come back.'* 'Sitting like a girl' in Thandazile's case was experienced as enabling sometimes, whilst also constraining as she failed to *'play her part'*, thus resulting in what Wiederman (2005) referred to as uncomplimentary sexual scripts. This is "when the members of a couple each hold intrapsychic scripts that are not complementary, predictability wanes, anxiety increases, and conflict is likely" (Wiederman, 2005, p. 497). I explore this conflict further in chapter six, where participants unanimously agreed that *'playing your part'* dominated the script of SD relationships, and I explore how some participants reconciled this with the sexual script of *'hlala ngentombi'*.

The 'choice' to retain virginity carried meanings that left me questioning to what extent participants were aware of their choices as socio-culturally inscribed. Participants drew from cultural scripts of 'oneness' including being one with your ancestors, a concept that has deeper meaning and is challenging to categorize into patterns (see Trinder, 2000). In Thandazile's explanation of how having sex before marriage is just wrong, she mentioned.

You sleep with a guy, you don't know how many girls he has slept with. What if the women he slept with have had abortions, and these abortions you know are negative spirits, and you go and sleep with him and you inherit these negative energies and you start to ask yourself, why all this bad luck ... go back, can you even count how many men you have slept with.

At the beginning of Thandazile's narrative, I deduced that she was referring to HIV risk discourse discussed in chapter two, which continues to construct meanings of sex for young women in Sub-Saharan Africa (Nduna, 2014; PEPFAR, 2018). Thandazile's fear of negative spirits, justifies why Gilbert's (2013, p. 194-195) participants, who had terminated pregnancies,

insisted on performing “rituals to appease ancestors and allow the spirit of the unborn to rest in peace.” I am also aware that invoking ancestral meanings, for anything and everything, within African cultures is not uncommon (Asante, 2003; Mbiti, 1970; Tamale, 2014), yet Thandazile’s question, ‘*what if the women he has slept with have had abortions?*’ caught me off-guard. Therefore, Thandazile’s intrapersonal choice to retain her virginity was constructed against the cultural scripts of abortion as *negative* and *bad luck*.

Drawing on a feminist post-structural understanding of choice, Tamale (2014) problematizes the voluntary submission to virginity testing by maidens (see chapter three), consistent with current study findings, which often occurs in search of public or cultural (ancestral) acceptance. While parental, alongside ancestral approval featured strongly in Thandazile’s narrative, she did not mention the any physical testing for virginity, discussed in chapter three. Skhululiwe (24), on the other hand, stated that:

Virginity testing is never announced but randomly takes place in my church. Like we have this uniform for girls ‘asaphelele – who are still complete’ and if they check you on this particular day and they find that ‘inkomo kamama dololo – mom’s cow is gone’ then it’s over for you ... with me since I am here, I know that when they see me at church then the testing will take place, guaranteed ... I wear that uniform with pride. Shame (laughing) I have survived so much (sigh)

Sewpaul (1995, p. 226) argued that “depending on one’s conception of God and one’s perception of one’s self, religion can be a source of strength and/or a source of immense pain and guilt.” Skhululiwe, the young woman who was so adamant on keeping and proving her virginity as a sign of being ‘*complete*’ related a story that I was familiar with, at least to a certain extent. As a Christian, under the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, I recalled my falling pregnant at 19, and how I needed to hand over my uniform tie. I admit that a great deal has changed since then, and my position and support system guided me through many challenges. Comparing notes with Skhululiwe, I realised that, unlike our church, in theirs there are no second chances, as she put it that ‘*once it’s gone, it’s gone*’ –meaning that you cannot wear your uniform again, although ‘*you can still be part of the general congregation*’ just without the church regalia. I therefore understood her expression of wearing her ‘*uniform with pride.*’ Interestingly, she mentioned shame immediately after pride and I sensed that she was talking about not being who her church perceived her to be, but nonetheless she was okay with that. Similarly, Nduna’s (2014) participants prided themselves for remaining pure, and walked

“with confidence” (p. 21). Skhululiwe’s coexistence of pride and shame was not a unique discourse amongst participants.

My grandmother would freak out if she heard any of the things that I do on campus, she knows me as this good girl and even my community look up to me. Just last week I was at my former high school to motivate Grade 12 learners and to just tell them about university, like they don’t know this side of me.

Nosipho

Kaufman (2011, p. 557) wrote about the “longstanding misconception that honour is an essentially ‘external’ moral ideal, one that is entirely constituted by external recognition by others in one’s society and motivated by the desire to avoid shame before one’s equals.” Kaufman (2011, p. 558) used the concept of “honour as external thesis” indicating that honour for many is externally motivated, thus resulting in the enactment of multiple and contradictory selves across contexts, which I found in all participants’ narratives. Participants were generally aware of the constant gaze on them as young women, and thus felt the need to present themselves in accordance with religious and cultural “ideal[s] of moral virtue that supplanted honour” (Kaufman, 2011, p. 559). This type of pride and integrity is counterfeit, for integrity includes “sacredness of one’s world and the refusal to lie even for personal advantage” (p. 559-560), sacredness that Skhululiwe and Nosipho missed in their experiences. This demonstrates the strategic negotiation of honour, as constructed, contested and reconfigured within the grand narratives of honour and integrity. I discuss in chapter six how Skhululiwe is justified in saying *‘I have survived so much’* pointing to the various ‘virginity saving’ strategies she implemented in SD relationships.

With the exception of Nikiwe, Thandazile, Sibusisiwe and Siyathokoza, fifteen participants (79%) spoke about culture and religion as equal partners in communicating sexual norms. Being a virgin was a predictor of a ‘good girl’ discourse, a script normalised by religion and (African) culture, as exemplified in the above narrative. For example, within a Christian context, the *Virgin Mary script*, renders sex before marriage an immoral and ungodly practice and in marriage is limited to procreation (Stephens & Phillips, 2003, p. 28). Similarly, within the African cultural context, the *tshitshi* script (see chapter three) renders sexual penetration before marriage as jeopardizing cultural practices such as *ilobolo* (Buthelezi, 2006). For both religious and cultural scripts, ‘virginity’ relates to young women’s virginity as a sign of *respect* by women. The ideological premise for *inhlonipho* is that women internalize that being good

is being respectful and preserving your virginity for marriage, thus gaining public acceptance (Bhana, 2016; Buthelezi, 2006, Hunter, 2010). Men also have scripts, like *'isoka'* which although refers to sex before marriage, is often celebrated (Hunter, 2010). Such discourses are not unique to Africans.

To gain public acceptance, Albanian young women became 'sworn virgins' and took "an oath of celibacy and [as part of the identity] had to dress and engage in activities that were considered part of men's domains" (Bilefsky cited in Xhaho, 2013, p. 112). Moreover, Young cited in Xhaho (2013) argued that joining sworn virgins became a place of solace for lesbians who were afraid of homophobic attacks. Using Butler, Xhaho (2013) argued that lesbians' enactment of masculine gender performances, under the guise of sworn virgins, "reinforced patriarchy" (p. 113) instead of, challenging it. While I agree with the argument Xhaho (2013) proffered, I am also cognisant of context and historical specificity of discourses. Bilefsky found in a sworn virgin's statement: *'Back then, it was better to be a man because before a woman and an animal were considered the same thing'* (Ms. Keqi interviewed by Bilefsky, cited in Xhaho, 2013, p. 113). While this can easily be read to mean women 'deciding on their own' to become virgins, Ms Keqi's, Skhululiwe's and Thandazile's 'talk' can be seen through the lens of an Althusserian interpretation, as cogently elucidated by Bazzul (2016).

Texts and speech are like captures of discourse circulating in a particular social, cultural space. This view of discourse does not totally oppose the idea that different authors produce unique texts, but merely diminishes how unique the thoughts of one individual can be when most of what is thinkable or utterable circulates in a community (Bazzul, 2016, p. 11).

The sexual script of virginity by participants constituted narratives that circulate within communities, and are reinforced by ideological hegemony that prescribe what one thinks or utters, thus challenging the autonomy of the author of the text. In his Gramscian analysis of power, Daldal (2014, p. 155) argued that awareness of the "complex social network hegemonic forces within which an individual realises himself already generates power", a thesis fully subscribed to by Sewpaul (2003; 2006; 2013) who asserts the power of personal awakening in disrupting dominant discourses, and the importance of the self as a site of politicisation. According to Daldal (2014, p. 155) "once a social group is able to modify the ensemble of these relations and make it 'common sense', it is creating a hegemonic order." Participants'

awareness of hegemonic order circulating within schools, churches, and homes influenced how they enacted their sexuality in a morally commonsensical manner.

Through my analysis of participants' interpretations of women's sexual morality, it became clear that young African women often view religion and culture as carrying complementary meanings. These findings do not differ from South African studies, which traced colonial influences on culture. For example, Delius and Glaser (2002) found this confluence in some Zulu communities, where Christian sexuality indoctrinations coexisted with customary practices. Krige (1950) also found that Christians rarely practiced it in its purest form. What enabled this 'partial' merger, according Hunter (2010), was the pervasive patriarchal discourse that supported hegemonic practices between the two discourses (see chapter three).

The moral script of African female chastity, deployed by the participants, inscribes the foundational cultural and religious discourses of heterosexual femininity. Within these two ideologies, African women's virginity is 'scripted' as sacred and preserved for future husbands as expressed by Gugulethu (23):

Ya I understand why my mom wanted me to attend the reed dance cos when you have started having sex, it's hard to say now I will stop, so like if I say right now that I will be celibate, it doesn't matter cos its already gone and even with my future husband I may need to start explaining myself and ya that kind of thing...at the same time he must accept me for who I am.

Gugulethu's narrative above, premised on her understanding of what constitutes moral (and immoral) female sexuality, demonstrates ambiguity and confusion about her lost virginity identity in that *'it's already gone'*, the need to *'explain'* to her future husband, and a simultaneous desire that he *'accept me for who I am'* – a non-virgin. I asked her why she would have to explain, she said that her parents still think she is a virgin and she knows that when the *ilobolo* negotiations happen, *'they will ask for 11 cows'* and if the price is too high, the guy might say that *'it was a freeway'*. Freeway, according to Gugu, meant that *'there was no traffic'*, meaning no hymen and the prospective husband would not have found her complete, which most participants express as shameful, for themselves, and to the family's cultural values. Nduna (2014) found this to be a strongly held view in her Eastern Cape study where young women "seemed to believe that 'good girls' represent 'good family values' and the opposite is also true – that a family of a non-virgin may appear to have failed to maintain the

standard” (p. 21). Some participants’ narratives are consistent with some of Nduna’s participants’, i.e. one participant mentioned how not being a virgin, was to “*embarrass her entire family*” (Zizile (17) -participant in Nduna, 2014, p. 21). Interestingly, Zizile mentioned this embarrassment in the context of young women who actually went for *Inkciyo –virginity testing* pronouncing, ‘*I don’t know why a girl would go there if she knows she is not a virgin*’ (ibid) –noting the many repercussion.

Virginity testing in Sub-Saharan Africa has been appraised for reducing early sexual debut and curbing HIV infections known to thrive in women between 18 to 35 years (see PEPFAR, 2018), and I agree with Leclerc-Madlala (2013) and Tamale (2014) that it mostly functions to circulate and maintain gender inequalities. Despite Section 12 of the South African Children’s Act No. 38 of 2005, endorsing testing for both girls and boys over the age of 16 years, Leclerc-Madlala (2003) argued that, it is in fact girls, who are targeted by the practice. Responding, as a Zulu cultural expert, as to how boys were tested for virginity, the late Dr Reggie Khumalo explained that “young boys also have hymen - white lacy skin on the foreskin. If the foreskin on the penis slips away easily, it means the hymen is gone. If the foreskin is sore and hard to move, then it means he is still a virgin” (IOL, 31 January 2002)³⁵. In the same article, gynaecologist Dr Jacobson, and then UKZN lecturer Dr Leclerc Madlala disagreed with Khumalo, arguing that virginity testing was impossible for boys, and Leclerc Madlala added that even with young African women, instead of halting the spread of HIV, it in fact instilled fear of sex (ibid). I argue that inclusion of both girls and boys in virginity testing is, in itself, an act of malicious compliance. Skhululiwe’s response below reflects the double standards adopted by the church in its responses to female and male sexuality:

Ya they do even though it’s for maybe 6 months. Cos, they say umfana akalahlekelwa ilutho (boys don’t lose anything), so they take away the boy’s sash but they can still come back after 6 months or so and girls too but they don’t get to wear their uniform, once it’s gone it’s gone. Another thing is boys often impregnate girls that are not from our church and no one gets to know and sometimes even if the girl from church falls pregnant, they are scared to come back and we just never know who the father is.

I am not familiar with any programme that tests boys for virginity. I am a product of both rural and urban township life in South Africa, and extensively engaged in my socio-cultural world,

³⁵ <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/dark-knees-tell-all-says-virginity-tester-79957>

including counselling of newly-wed couples. I can safely assume that if such a practice exists, I would know. Although not emphasized by Skhululiwe, the danger here is that women respecting themselves and preserving their virginity, secures marriageability with respectful men. Maluleke (2012) mentioned that girls often end up with “honourable men who might have deflowered and/or impregnated a string of girl victims, and might possibly even be HIV positive” (p. 11). I argue that, in its current form, virginity testing perpetuates the script that “sex is a boost to masculine status, but for women ... is damaging and an assault on their presumed virtue” (Bhana, 2016, p. 474), a ‘damage’ feared by some, but a reality for many.

5.3.3 Disappointing parents, becoming single parents and silencing sexual fantasies and pain

African families have normalized sexual silences as a sign of respect for parents, and an acknowledgement of African women’s sexuality as ‘absent’ (Delius & Glaser, 2002; Mkhwanazi, 2010; 2014; Posel, 2004) even though this was not the case in precolonial Africa. Sexual scripting occurs through various power structures, as discussed in chapter three, in relation to *amaqhikiza* (see Delius & Glaser, 2002). The dominant sexual script is that young girls must retain their virginity for marriage in spite of the knowledge that this is seldom the case. This is to prevent any undue ‘harm’ on young girls. Like Sewpaul, what I find problematic with “doing no harm in the abstract, is that all too often, with the normalizing functions of socialization, and dominant socio-cultural discourses, harm does become normalized, with androcentric thinking and practices permeating many societies” (Sewpaul, 2016, p. 35). It is against such societal thoughts and practices that young women negotiate their identities as young mothers.

Out of my nineteen participants, seven (37%) had children, seventy five percent of those children were born while participants were still at high school, and the rest (Ziningi’s second born, and Landile’s first-born) at tertiary level. The table below shows participants who had children, their age during pregnancy, the level of schooling (then) and the child’s current caregivers.

Participant	Age at pregnancy	Level of schooling then	Caregiver
Zothile	18	Grade 11	Child's paternal grandmother
Slindile	17	Grade 12	Slindile's paternal grandmother
Nompendulo	16	Grade 11	Child's father
Jabulile	18	Grade 12	Jabulile's mother
Ziningi	17 & 20	Grade 11 & 1 st year at UKZN	Ziningi's mother
Nonkonzo	17	Grade 11	Nonkonzo's mother
Landile	22	2 nd year	Landile's Mother

Table 3: Participants, ages during pregnancy, the level of schooling; the child's current caregivers

While participants reported the challenges that they experienced because of unplanned pregnancies, their experiences were far from homogenous – including the events leading to the pregnancy, as reflected in the findings of Ntini and Sewpaul (2017). Discussions on contraceptives or its non-use only occurred when Jabulile (22) fell pregnant. Her mother asked her why she had not gone to the clinic for injection *'like other girls who do adult stuff since these things are even taught in LO'*. Life Orientation (LO) is a formal subject that aims to impart life-skills and health education deemed developmentally relevant for learners. Bhana (2013) criticised how the LO syllabus places much attention on sex as dangerous, while ignoring the social realities of young people. The general tendency is to see LO as a replacement for sexuality education by parents, which is unfortunate.

Schools, as ideological power apparatuses often deploy inconsistent messages, as argued by Macleod, Seutlwadi and Steele (2014), who found in their study in Buffalo city, South Africa, that learners from previously disadvantaged schools did not have sufficient knowledge on Termination of Pregnancy Act. While this may be true, it is important to recognise how legal acts are interpreted differently across contexts, and their coexistence among many competing discourses. Therefore, although the option to terminate pregnancies in South Africa was legally endorsed in 1997, I agree with Gilbert (2013) it need not infer that “all women will choose to

terminate an unplanned pregnancy” (p. 74), although Nonkonzo did indicate that she thought hard about it.

I don't want to lie, I did think about it cos I stay with my mom, sister and stepfather and I knew that my father will use this as his weapon for not supporting me. Then my mother started dreaming of fruits and stuff like that and I kept lying and as days went by she noticed that I was not eating meat. I had no choice but to keep the child otherwise I would've just decided, and I would be regretting right now, trust me.

Discourses of abortion as an immoral choice are not unique to Sub-Saharan Africa, and these discursive constructions occur within pro-life and pro-choice frameworks. In New Zealand, Leask (2015, p. 195) found that pro-life and pro-choice participants both invoked “a discursive hierarchy of worthiness for different abortion scenarios.” In this case, pro-choice participants debated the exceptional situations where abortion may be warranted, and Leask worryingly questions reference to abortion in this context as an ‘exceptional choice’ and argues instead that “abortion should be understood as an ordinary and legitimate part of women’s lives” (ibid, p. 195). What I learned from this is that young women were in fact knowledgeable on sexual and reproductive rights, sometimes even more than I had imagined. However, application of those rights was constrained for the majority of participants.

Zothile (23), on the subject of contraceptives, mentioned that her then ‘*boyfriend did not approve because he said these things are not good for him...like I will be too wet and my body will be wobbly*’, thus reinforcing the dominant sexual script – that irrespective of consequences and what women need and want, sex exists for the gratification of men. In order for her boyfriend to enjoy sex and to avoid bodily changes, she mentioned that they ‘*sometimes used a condom*’ even though I could gather, through her facial expression and silences in between our conversation, that this was not a topic Zothile was most comfortable with.

Silenced female sexuality, according to Mkhwanazi (2010; 2014) and Nkani (2012), has prevented young girls from openly seeking information about their sexuality, thus rendering them vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies (see chapter two). Most participants, like Nompendulo (21), experienced the latter:

In my life, I never wanted to disappoint my parents. My mother was so happy when I became committed in church activities, until I fell pregnant...yazi (you know) so many people were disappointed, even me and that time, wangiduba ubaba (my dad disowned me) then I went to stay with the father of my child. Lapho sengiwu (I became) baby

mama, I decided to stop going to church, I mean I was in the choir so nje going back was out.

While Nompendulo didn't enter into much detail on the church's reaction to her pregnancy, the 'even me' suggested self-blame for having contravened family and church rules by becoming a 'baby mama', hence her decision to stop going to church. Althusser would consider Nompendulo as reinforcing ideological discourses of female sexuality endorsed by the church and culture (Althusser, 1973; 1998). Foucault (1977, 1985), in the same vein, attributes self-blame to an extension of self-surveillance which in this case was premised on Nompendulo's belief that having sex before marriage goes against rules set by "social institutions whose meanings are historically and culturally located" (Allen, 2007, p. 249). In a feminist post-structuralist sense, I view Nompendulo's performance as demonstrating interpellation, whereby "subjection to the ruling social order, ideologies, or 'law' is confirmed" (Bazzul, 2016, p. 9), and resistance occurs within that ideological framework.

While regulatory discourses must be repeated for them to gain legitimacy, resistance and change can still occur even though "there is a limited number of iterative moves available" to choose from (Bazzul, 2016, p. 9-10), as exemplified below:

Researcher: This sounds like it was a challenging period for you

Nompendulo: Yes, kodwa (but) I never imagined myself 'ngikhangeza' (dependent) and for me nje (like) my daughter renewed my need to go back to school so I did and uguy (the guy) had saved enough money for 'inhlawulo - damages'. I went back to school and I passed 'ngadlula ama virgin eskole - I even performed better than the school virgins.'

Researcher: So, the father of the baby came through for you, I really admire your courage to go back to school hey

Nompendulo: I know, yazi I was one of the lucky few, actually it's not him - weee akanamali lowo (that one has no money -referring to father of baby) his dad was the one who paid but ke either way I am grateful.

Nompendulo appeared to have turned her life around by going back to school and doing even 'better than the school virgins', thus suggesting that her progress was somewhat unusual for 'non-virgins'. Moreover, Nompendulo's assertions and my remarks on her going back to school suggested that we were aware of situations where teenage mothers have not been able

to bounce back like her. Our assertions are supported by Nkani (2012, p. 6) who argued that becoming a mother is “very demanding, challenging and very disruptive for the young mothers.” In her study, Nkani found that teenage mothers struggled to balance the demands of motherhood and those of school, which often led school dropout, often without follow up by schools (Nkani, 2012). Participants in Ntini and Sewpaul’s (2013) study also experienced disrupted schooling, with some of their mothers asserting that as young mothers, they (participants) needed to “feel what being a mother is like” (p. 252).

It is evident that Nompandolo was aware of dominant teenage motherhood scripts, such as those of Ntini and Sewpaul (2013) and Nkani’s (2012) participants, yet I was troubled by the framing of her experience. How she framed her experience, according to Trinder (2000) demonstrates that individuals often select from “a range of pre-existing linguistic resources or discourses” (p. 54). Language in this sense is constitutive (Butler, 2004; Trinder, 2000), and I argue that Nompandolo’s except did not in any way, attempt to alter normative discourses of female sexuality, which make it abnormal for young mothers to continue pursuing their educational goals. In fact, how she expressed this during the session appeared to profile her as one of the ‘*lucky*’ few, which I found to inadvertently normalise dropping out of school by young mothers. This could carry devastating effects, for young women who become mothers.

Unplanned motherhood was narrated by seven participants, six of whom had one child each, and one participant who had two children. Ziningi (23), during her first interview, reported to have shared a healthy relationship with the father of her children. Although both pregnancies were unplanned, she felt that they “*were conceived with love.*” However, most participants’ versions of unplanned motherhood were not as pleasant, as stated by Slindile (22):

I remember it like it was yesterday, so I had read and watched tv, social media, you name it and you know I was looking forward to our first time together, that time I had been fooled to think sex meant love...but no this guy was just black, you know lokshin³⁶ (township) style ...and he knew so well that it was my first time yet ‘wangiravaza’ (did it roughly, tore me apart - without care for my feelings)...worse of all, I had to fall

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“The term ‘township’ in South Africa refers to (often underdeveloped) urban living areas created for black migrant labour, usually beyond the town/city limits, where principally Africans reside. As part of the architecture of the apartheid government, black people in various towns were relocated to the outskirts where many continue to live in different forms of dwelling – from shacks, one to four-roomed brick houses, hostels, or slightly bigger homes which are usually occupied by professionals” (Nduna and Jewkes, 2013, p. 46).

pregnant, this was rape stru (for real) but ke at least I got to learn early what men are like...I will also teach my daughter.

Female sexuality is depicted above as simultaneously gendered and racialized. Slindile (22) fell pregnant in grade 12 and although she ashamedly admitted that damages (*inhlawulo, inkomo kamama*, see chapter three) were not paid by the father of her baby, she valued the support she received from her family. Also referred to as ‘*umqhoyiso*’ I discuss *inkomo kamama* in chapter three, and due to absence of Slindile’s biological mother her grandmother who had mothered her would have received the payment of damages. This demonstrates how constructions of ‘motherhood’ are complex and multiple, particularly within the African context where parenting is not biologically restricted, but because of various circumstances can be anybody’s responsibility. Thus, like, Sewpaul (2016) I reject the romanticization of collective motherhood under the virtue of *Ubuntu* as this may make the everyday realities of circumstantial mothering invisible.

Also, Slindile mentioning that “*this guy was just black*” caught me off-guard. The fact that she associated male sexual aggression with being black suggested that she had been “poisoned by the stereotypes that others have of [black men]” (Fanon, 1986, p. 87, Brackets added), thus confirming that “colonial subjects [are] always overdetermined from without” (p. xxvii). As such this is not only how colonialists and white supremacists construct blackness, the greater danger is that black or African people themselves, in this case Slindile, have internalized the discourse. Slindile’s bracketing of *all* black men as sexually aggressive, and the negative representation of townships, reinforce the taken-for-granted assumption of African as ‘wrong’ and white as ‘good’. I discuss this further in chapter six in relation to how colonialist discourses of blackness simultaneously included both fear and desire in the context of SD relationships. Moreover, I demonstrate how talk by participants often reinforced blackness as an unwholesome and unrefined identity, which provoked uncertainties in young African women’s experiences of intimate relationships, in the context of SD relationships.

Morojele (2013) referred to how young African boys in the township often prioritized being ‘macho’ over being romantic, which Morojele attributed to the pressures to conform to dominant ideologies of African township masculinities, commonly not complemented by condom use (Motsemme, 2007; Zibane, 2017). How young African women in my study negotiated condom use in SD relationships is discussed further in chapter six, where I explore it in relation to their conceptualization of risks in SD relationships. Here, I continue to

deliberate on the socio-structurally constructed representations of young African female students, and through that I argue that these may in fact normalize scripts of love, intimacy and violence in relationships.

Even beyond township contexts, feminists have long documented representations of young African women as victims to bestiality and uncontrollable sexual urges of African men (Collins, 1990; Wilson, 1986, Wyatt, 1997). In Slindile's case, her exposure to sexual repertoires or scenarios available through media outlets (see chapter three) did not translate to actual enactment within her relationship. Instead, her fantasies negotiated at intrapsychic level remained at just that, *fantasies*. From an Althusserian perspective, dominant cultural scripts dictate how young African women view themselves as passive sexual beings, and through sexual exposure(s), are reminded of the need to realign their sexual scripts to conform to available discourses of African women's sexuality, even if it's to their detriment (e.g. rape) (see Althusser, 1973; 1998). Also, how Sibusisiwe came to conclude that '*maybe that is why I don't want any emotional involvement*' because of her negative experiences of relationships.

I mean in relationships there is so much abuse and our society has not fully caught up with the impact of emotional abuse. I mean this has been a consistent trend for me in my relationships, a person sees that you care and they take advantage and start taking you for granted, they become comfortable. I hate it when people become too comfortable, and they come back to say 'I'm sorry.' I always feel emotionally abused, maybe that is why I don't want any emotional involvement.

Also, during her follow up interview, Slindile stated:

'Sex means nothing for me, so he must not be fooled into thinking that sex is a trap for me.'

The above was in reference to Slindile's 27-year-old boyfriend, while the former related to Sibusisiwe's general experience of '*emotional abuse [which] has been a consistent trend*'. Slindile had been bold about not caring about sex and I discuss this further in chapter six where she used this to justify her concurrent relationships. In light of this, I argue that so long as young women, like Slindile and Sibusisiwe see themselves as dissociated 'sexual subjects', the system that constituted this belief will also retain its power (Foucault, 1991).

My intention thus far has been to explicate the process of 'becoming young African women' and how through a process of 'social engineering' (Mupotsa, 2017) participants in my study

learned and contested prevailing scripts of African womanhood. Albeit participants' narratives were not neatly presented in the 'then' and the 'now', below is my attempt to discuss how young African women in my study negotiated life at university. In chapter four, I defended my use of in-depth interviewing, and I also discussed how being a lecturer at the same university both enabled and constrained my fieldwork experiences. As a source of enablement, I managed to infuse elements of ethnography by becoming 'one' with participants, a process I repeatedly recount as not experienced without restraint throughout my analysis and also allude to in chapter four. What follows in the next section of this chapter is a discussion on the various sexual scripts that participants negotiated and contested within the university context.

5.4 Ivava sexual scripts: old and new scripts at intersection

The South African higher education landscape is one that could either assimilate or alienate students, and research that makes a "contribution to social justice [needs] to recognise [multiple and intersecting] norms" that circulate within such contexts (Knowles, 2014, p. 90, Brackets added). Collins (1990) maintains that intersectionality is a constant reminder that "oppression cannot be reduced to one fundamental type, and [that] the oppressions work together in producing injustice[s]" (p. 18; also see May, 2015). For example, it can be argued that being a young African female student, and maybe coming from a previously disadvantaged home, represents more than one type of oppression and therefore warrants an intersectional approach. In the second part of chapter five, I use intersectional approaches to analyse multiple constructions of becoming 'young African female students' for participants, and through this I acknowledge that "no single account of construction is sufficient, and that categories [race, gender, class, sexuality] work as background for one another, and they often find their most powerful articulation through one another" (Butler, 1999, p. xvii, Brackets added).

Methodological deliberations are made explicit in chapter four, particularly how my position, in the context of my study, rendered me powerful and at times powerless. This meant that I needed to recognise the power I had and how I used it within the interviews with participants. Mann (2001, p. 17) agrees, arguing that as researchers (and lecturers) "we need to be alert to our own positional power, and the complex relations of power that exist within the educational/learning processes." Butler (2004) invites us to engage as vulnerable to our participants as possible, even though this may come at a risk of blurring boundaries, discussed in chapter four. As a former (and current) student of UKZN, I shared my experiences as a student and lecturer, demonstrating that "we all have stories, and that this knowledge can and

should affect the respectful and empathetic way in which we relate to each other” (Knowles, 2014, p. 99). Referring to curriculum feedback from students, Knowles, explained that “modelling vulnerability and demonstrating to [participants] that openness is one way to keep learning new things can encourage [participants] to take similar risks” (p. 95 – *the original word student is replaced here by participant*).

Utilizing sexual script and feminist post-structural theory with an intersectional lens is the manner in which I analyse participants’ interpretations of university sexual discourses, and in particular how these discourses served to inform their sexual choices. I found that race, gender and class intersected to enable participants’ sexual and social decision making beyond the university setting. What emerged was that participants were mostly not keen to invest in relationships with young men at university. In a US study, Spell (cited in Anakaraonye, Mann, Ingram, & Henderson, 2018) argued that one of the reasons for young African women to explore relationships outside university is that they “often find that their intimate choices are under a microscope; this hypervisibility can lead them to avoid certain sexual practices with men on campus” (p. 8). Of course, there are many reasons for this (see Bhana & Pillay, 2018), apart from the hypervisibility, and I discuss these further in chapter six. Here I discuss the university context and its sexual cultures within which decisions, such as to engage in various relationships, are made.

Anakaraonye et al. (2018) found that young African women in college were less likely to pursue intimate relationships with other racial groups on campus; in fact, other racial groups were also least likely to identify young African women as potential girlfriends. This was, however, not the case for African men, who according to these authors had relatively more to offer to white women, in status and power. Ferguson (1996) pointed out that the “dominant symbolic gender, that is, the gender norms, characteristic of dominant social groups that are hegemonic in the society” may serve to endorse “structural racism, class hierarchies, and ethnic discrimination” (p. 120). One participant confirmed to have a relatively long-term relationship with a SD, not of African descent and two other participants mentioned unusual encounters with SDs of other races. These encounters, albeit brief, were in clubs, and one of these SDs was also a pimp that was known across campuses (see chapter six), but was never really seen hanging around African girls on campus. Race remains a contentious issue not only on the campus where I conducted my research and unlike Mohale (2013), whose study delved into the University of Pretoria’s campus interactions, amongst diverse racial groups, this was not my primary focus. I refer to Mohale’s (2013) study in order to critique her findings that African

students happily *chose* to remain with their racial group, and given our racial history I question the extent to which this ‘happy choice’ was constrained, even in 2013.

A year later, two white students from the University of Pretoria (UP) made headlines after posting a picture of themselves smeared with black paint and dressed in domestic worker outfits, little did they know the ramifications of their actions. Trending with the hashtag #Blackface, many people found their actions distasteful and racist.



Figure 7: 'Blackface' students expelled from residence – News24

Representing the South African Students Congress (SASCO), Ntuthuko Makhombothi commented as follows:

“African women in our country continue to suffer from triple oppression as black, female, and working class. This incident ridicules the situation of African women in our country and reinforces racist stereotypes about our mothers. Black students will not fold their arms as their suffering and that of their parents is made fun of. The dignity of Africans cannot be trampled on without consequences to the perpetrators”

News24³⁷, 07 August 2014.

Not long after Makhombothi’s warning, students across South Africa prepared to radically challenge the status quo of universities, thus giving rise to hashtags #Rhodes must fall followed

³⁷ <https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/Blackface-students-expelled-from-residence-20140807>

by #FeesMustFall (see chapter Three). The former hashtag was premised on “principles of Black Consciousness and intersectionality that attempted to disrupt multiple systems of oppression” that through symbols and statues confronted black people daily (Ndlovu & Vraagom, 2016, p. 3). Exposing the socio-economic disparities of SA students, the #Feesmust fall hashtag made headlines nationally and internationally where students staged protests that raised consciousness of educational struggles of students, particularly those from low social classes.

Unlike, Bozalek and Boughey (2012) my study did not specifically intend to explore the experiences of students and staff at universities, but instead to highlight the context within which young African women constructed and negotiated their sexual decisions, as students within a particular period. This section continues to discuss how class, race, religion and disability interact with sexuality in the creation of power hierarchies, and also how certain discourses within the University of KwaZulu-Natal context serve to produce, legitimize and reinforce these hierarchies. Consistent with a Foucauldian (1977) analysis of power, I use ‘discourse’ here to analyse not just multiple forms of power, but also the cultural and structural milieu upon which these meanings are constructed. Meanings as deeply entrenched in culture and structures in this sense infers that “those who benefit from the system [cannot be held] morally responsible” (Ferguson, 1996, p. 108, Brackets added). However, “if we want to understand how moral responsibility and moral agency are possible within systems of social domination [...] feminist post-structural theories of subjectivity, in which power always generates resistance, might give us a promising route” (Ferguson, 1996, p. 111).

To a certain extent, how young African women in my study made sense of their sexuality within a university context came at the expense of reinforcing the very same gendered discourses of African sexuality that weakened the agency they attempted to bolster. Whilst prioritizing their sexual agency, they simultaneously reinforced the good girl/bad girl dichotomy. Comaroff and Comaroff (2005) refer to “the tensions embodied in this pre-adult population” as immanent during “periods of economic slump” (p. 24). Young people enact and construct identities against socio-economic and political milieus, which often constrain some behaviours while enabling others. Recognising that no identity is stable, I dedicate this section to an exploration of sexual scripts and how these influenced identity development, social network dynamics, and sexual risk amongst young African women enrolled at an urban university.

Identities and perspectives need to be “interpreted in the light of changing and specific situations in which they are located” (Fook, 2016, p. 99). This is not to say that students’ scripts are not historically influenced as discussed under ‘ekhaya’ sexual scripts, but that I understand identities as not static but transitional and fluid. Similar to ekhaya scripts, ivava scripts were influenced by multiple discourses which had either a positive or negative influence on how participants experienced life at university as African female students. I refer to Fook’s (2016) concept of “narrative identity...which carries with it the possibilities of both coherence and change” (p. 100). I argue that these scripts are not dichotomous (ekhaya and ivava) entities, but that they were deployed as and when deemed appropriate by participants. Utilizing discourse analysis, ivava scripts are analysed as narrated by participants, in particular the identities that were at participants’ disposal.

Disrupting the notion that sexual decision making is a male role, feminist researchers report that women who proactively prioritize their sexuality are often labelled as less virtuous, and acting outside of the heterosexual matrix governing what is deemed intelligible and unintelligible within society (Butler, 1999). This reinforces the gender dichotomies of African women as ‘*izifebe*’ – loose women and men as the sexually powerful ‘*amasoka*’ often blamed for violent masculinities (see Hunter, 2010; Msibi-Weeks, 2017 - chapter three).

Sexual exploitation occurring in South African universities has been widely discussed, with streamlined efforts to create safer spaces for young women on campuses. Taking into consideration the reported incidences of violence, coupled with a rise in HIV infections for women between the ages 18 to 24 years, it is not surprising that this particular cohort has been identified and theorized as vulnerable and victimized. I also recognise that both women and men are affected by violence on campus. The most recent horrific example of this occurred at the University of Zululand, north of KwaZulu-Natal, when two first year students (men) quarrelled over ‘cold water’ and one grabbed a table knife and slit the others throat –resulting in death (Zululand Observer (ZO), 2018). Zo (2018) mentions how soon thereafter “the culprit was stoned by an angry mob of students and was transported to [...] Hospital [...] under police guard. During the commotion, furious students also stoned a police car and damaged its windscreen.”³⁸ A nostalgic comment by one reader read, ‘*what happened to our beautiful country.*’ This study focused on young African women in SD relationships, and ‘violence at university’ (see Wild, 2016) far extends beyond the parameters of this study, yet violence does

³⁸ <https://zululandobserver.co.za/179073/murdered-unizulu-student-named/>

construct young women's experiences. Comaroff and Comaroff (2005) argued, referring to young people as "surplus citizens" shaped by socio-historical constructions, thus "not born" (p. 25). It is thus against these constructions that students construct multiple, ambiguous and intersecting identities.

5.4.1 Multiple, ambiguous and intersecting student identities

Nikiwe narrated her experience of being Muslim on campus, but '*not like other Muslim girls*' as follows:

Nikiwe: There is not much except that I am an only child, and my parents are strict... strict I mean I don't have to tell you how Muslim families are, [brief pause] like even thinking about a boy would make my dad go crazy and it doesn't help that I am the only child, yes, I am spoiled but I am also being watched...

Researcher: You mentioned that they are strict, in what way are they strict?

Nikiwe: I know I don't cover with the veil like other Muslim girls, but trust me I am 'covered', it is only here that I can become me.

Researcher: Ok, so you are telling that at home you are a different person?

Nikiwe: Yaaa totally different. They don't know I have a boyfriend cos I can't have one, let alone a...

Researcher: Sugar daddy?

Nikiwe: Ya, that.

Nikiwe's mention of the veil as worn '*by other Muslim girls*' seemed to demonstrate her acknowledgement of the veil as normalised for '*Muslim girls*' and particularly the significance of 'covering' and strictness that the veil connoted. Nikiwe alluded to how she had to let people know (as she did for me as well) that she is actually Muslim, and the varied reactions that followed. Meshal (2003), in his study of Muslim students in a Canadian university, found that reactions to the veil were for some positive and displayed tolerance, support and respect, while it was "...rude, disdainful and even insulting" (p. 75) for some. While I did not engage further on the 'veil' as this was not the focus of my study, Nikiwe's sexual scripts were to some extent

both religiously and ethnically scripted, although I found the latter most dominant in her narratives. How she strategically deployed these identities is discussed further in chapter six, along with how other participants negotiated identities in SD relationships.

Skhululiwe's experience of living with a disability was another example of intersecting identities, in particular sexuality intersecting with disability. This finds support in Chappell (2013, p. 130) who found that "youth with disabilities experience a different sexual identity development process than their non-disabled peers in which the knowledge that they are different is always present." This participant disclosed that she was physically disabled, and thus had to reside at a residence that is reserved for female students with various physical challenges, even though hers, she proclaimed, was *'not as extreme as that of other disabled students'*. As a result, she often assisted peers to adapt to residence and university life, which was evident even during our one interview held in her room, when we were interrupted at least three times, until she put a 'Do Not Disturb' sign on the door. Within a particular discussion, she highlighted the following:

Because they (able bodied individuals) see me as 'normal' (using her two index fingers to emphasize 'normal'), they often forget that I am also at this residence for my disability which although you can't just see until you sort of get to know me. So, I talk with everyone and it is wrong that they consider disabled people as different. You see even the security guards are so mean. This one time they saw [name withheld] being dropped by her boyfriend, and because she is in a wheelchair, they started remarking that she was risking and how this guy was taking advantage of her, and if she fell pregnant, who would help look after her child since she is also 'umthwalo' (a burden). The message behind this was that I had to warn her, just like I have had to warn visually impaired students against consuming alcohol, and albinos from roaming around the campus at night alone. So, it's such things that just make me angry, and you just don't know what to do or say.

I found Skhululiwe's 'talk' above resonating with Sedgwick's (1990) feminist assertion regarding multiple, intersecting and often contradictory identities (see Dominelli, 2002; Fook, 2016). This coexistence of enabling and constraining oppressions in Skhululiwe's excerpt above, epitomizes Sedgwick's (1990, p. 918) claims of "how a variety of forms of oppression intertwine systemically with each other; and especially how the person who is disabled through one set of oppressions may *by the same positioning* [italics by author] be enabled through

others.” *Disabled* in Skhululiwe’s case carries both figurative and literal meanings, in that while she self-identified as disabled, and thus categorized as such by the university, the same identity was viewed as relatively ‘normal’ by others (i.e. disabled students, security guards) and to some extent by herself. In his book titled: *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1977, p. 554) considered this “constant division between the normal and the abnormal” as an essentialist agenda that perpetuates singular identities. As maintained by Dwyer (cited in Khosrojerdi, 2015) plurality in reading identities, such as those of Skhululiwe’s and Nikiwe’s, is contingent on the recognition of possible “multiple subjectivities” (p. 65) and also how these can be enabling or constraining for individuals (Althusser, 1998; Rhodes, Nocon, Small & Wright, 2008).

Taking this point further, Rhodes et al. (2008) argued that because individuals are multiple beings, they “may incorporate, reject, stress, defend, deny, downplay or conceal different aspects of their identities at different times and in different contexts” (p. 387). This is evidenced in how Skhululiwe concealed her disability, Christian and ‘virgin’ identities, whilst at the same time stressing and defending her feminine identity in relationships with SDs; and similarly, how Nikiwe spoke about ‘*keeping things private*’, things relating to certain identities. This is discussed further in chapter six.

While not specified by Skhululiwe, participants in a study by Opini cited in Subrayen (2018, p. 52) experienced “sexual exploitation and rape, which lead to fear and isolation from the teaching and learning environment, hence inhibiting access and participation of women with disabilities in Higher Education.” Implicit in Skhululiwe’s excerpt is also that she was unique to other students with disabilities, and thus felt empowered whilst also entrenching binaries of disability. In her study, Popplestone (2009, p. 142) found that “young people with disabilities in particular often define themselves strongly as not being ‘like other disabled people’, forming groupings within a disability.” During my interaction with Skhululiwe, she was open about how she was always happy to help the ‘others’ who are really in need of assistance. In chapter six, I discuss the various strategies Skhululiwe enacted in SD relationships, ironically-strategies not related to her disability, but in relation to her virginity. Various strategies by those constructed as “non-prototypical in multiple social groups” (Warner cited in Sewpaul, 2013, p. 119) echo arguments of this study, which assumes discourses within and across contexts as malleable, thus not static and the ability of individuals to exercise agency within intersecting discourses.

Notably, some of the intersecting discourses that emerged in the participants' narratives were in relation to class, particularly socio-economic background, which did not infer just financial status but also moral status as I found with freshers, farm girls and not so good girls.

5.4.2 Freshers, 'farm girls' and 'not so good girls'

Identifying with neoliberal ideals of normative femininity, young women often differentiated themselves from those deemed freshers, farm girls and the not so good girls. What was interesting is that eleven participants (58%) hailed from rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal with two participants from outside KZN (Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga Province), two had experienced both township and rural life, and the rest were from urban areas of KZN. Siyathokoza came from a small township in Pietermaritzburg. Although I quote Siyathokoza below, the script of farm girls was narrated by most participants, even those that had lived experiences of being urban girls. Like 'farm girls', 'fresh girls' was a fluid term that resonated with innocence and 'being a virgin.'

Researcher: Fresh girls, meaning?

Siyathokoza: Like, new students who don't know much about varsity life. These girls usually pose a threat for us, they come in here and 'bayinyama' – they are the meat

Researcher: Meat as in?

Siyathokoza: Like they are the 'ish' of the university, guys will distribute them amongst themselves even before lectures start.

Researcher: Really? It sounds like this annoys you

Siyathokoza: Not really, sometimes you have to start somewhere ... I am over small boys. Freshers and farmgirls will appreciate a meal from Honchos³⁹ [...] but me, never

Being a 'fresher' carries multiple and contradictory meanings at university, and although first year students constituted both male and female students, Zothile informed me that '*when you hear the word 'fresher' it is definitely relating to a first-year student, who is female*' and '*lighties*' refer to first year male students and if they originate from rural areas – '*farm boys*'. Farm boys or '*ofamzana*' were not good to court because they were seen as immature and least experienced. On the contrary, farm girls and freshers were a source of attraction for male

³⁹Local takeaway that sells affordable meals to students ranging between R25 to R50 [3.61 US\$]

students. In this respect virtue is framed as a female domain that is deemed attractive for boys, yet unattractive in boys – as reflected in ‘*ofamzana*’ above.

Boys, in Bhana and Pattman’s (2011) study, capitalized on the unfamiliarity of new surroundings by farm girls and freshers (both which were synonymous with virgins), and used this to show them new things, and in some way alleviated the demands on young boys to enact hegemonic masculinities prioritized by *slay queens*, and ‘*omathandizinto*’- ‘material girls’ (see next section, and chapter six). However, Bhana and Pattman (2011) also found that boys’ shifting of their energies and gaze towards farmgirls, did not deter them from also pursuing the provider masculinity scripts in tandem with ‘*isoka lamanyala*’ – ‘*the womaniser*’ as was unfortunately experienced by Siziwe (21). She reported that when she came to university, she fell in love with this guy, and this for her was love and since they were both ‘*freshers*’, this was just perfect up until she ‘*found out that he was going around saying that he was just passing time with [...] until he found the ideal girl.*’ She mentioned that even her academic progress was affected as she invested so much into this guy. This finding is not inconsistent with that conducted by Bhana and Pillay (2018) in a South African university campus where young women’s enactment of sexual freedoms intersects with class, and neoliberal ideals of heterosexual intimacies.

Interestingly, while Siyathokoza expressed disinterest in ‘small boys’, she had earlier narrated fresh girls as a threat, as boys see them as meat. Hence, while she bashes small boys who can only afford cheap meals for their inexperienced girlfriends, she seemed envious of the good girl status. Criticizing the so called ‘good girls’, Phiwokuhle exposed their ‘not so good deeds’:

Phiwokuhle: Like sometimes we go to the clinic on Mondays and trust me dude, we all know what we are all there for.

Researcher: You mean the university clinic?

Phiwokuhle: Yep

Researcher: Ok, tell me what you are there for

Phiwokuhle: The morning after pill of course. So, I see this girl, like I know her; she is Miss good girl, you know one of those who will say Jesus and Amen to everything and then when our eyes met, she started coughing as if she was there for the cough. I mean ‘girl, get a life we are here for the same thing, let’s just do what we are here for.’

Miss good girl's strategy to manage and protect her reputation was significant and even more significant for young African women in SD relationships who were seemingly aware of the deviant labelling of these relationships (see 'Participant recruitment' - chapter four). A discourse analysis of this argument is discussed further in chapter six, but of relevance here is Steyn and van Zyl's (2009) emphasis of how certain contexts enable and constrain certain performances. In their conceptualization of "politics of location", we are invited to critically examine "the way power lines operate within a particular location to create conditions for identities to emerge" (p. 9), or to submerge, demonstrated in Phiwokuhle's scenario above. The fact that going to a clinic for a morning after pill needs to be hidden highlights a feminist post-structural argument that for societal discourses to reproduce, societies themselves must create or facilitate spaces for that reproduction (Steyn & van Zyl, 2009).

Below, I discuss slay queens (and wannabes), Amaqola, and cool rich kids, and how these identities are given meaning within a university context by participants, also to what extent these identities were reconstructed and renegotiated within a particular time and place. Below is a table of the most common words within this section, some used already. I refer to these words not as simply spoken, but as discursive power (Fook, 2016). How participants used words is, according to Fook (2016, p. 89), "an indication of which value systems or which groups are dominant." In this sense, words spoken and the context upon which they are spoken demonstrate power exercised by the nineteen young African women in SD relationships.

Important Terms	Meaning
Ivava	Colloquial for ‘university’
Amaqola	Liars, conniver
Slay Queens	Gold diggers
Fuck boys / Fuck girls	Sexually permissive
Skay/smash	Dagga, drug users
Freshers	Innocent, new to university
Yellow bones	Girls with distinctly lighter skin

Table 4: Meaning of terms

5.4.3 Slay queens, slay queen wannabes, amaqola and cool rich kids

The constructions of modern, African women in post-apartheid South Africa have been associated with “sexual liberation, the conspicuous consumption of middle-class global cultures and lurking spectre of HIV/AIDS” (Steyn & van Zyl, 2009, p. 391). I discussed in chapter three, quoting these authors’ take on “newly achieved democracy” and how with it comes negotiation of “new possibilities for [individual] desires, some attempt[ing] to have old desires newly recognised, [...] to perpetuate prized positionalities, while others continue to pay the cost of being undesired” (p. 3, Brackets added). Further, I argue that it is against this background that participants appreciated not just the freedom ‘to speak’ but also the freedom ‘to become’. The university, in particular, provided discursive space for participants to be, and also how not to be.

Although not emphasized by Steyn and van Zyl (2009) I found in my study that positionalities mentioned above were always narrated in relation to the ‘other’, they were rarely articulated as unchanging, but often overlapping with many ambiguities.

Ya, looking good is important and it’s not like a once off thing, I need to maintain my standards. And you must know that once you acquire that title, the pressure is on girlfriend, you will be assessed, even during lectures they know when I walk in, I make a statement. Like I need to look pretty, and smell good all the time, not for anyone but myself.

While pointing to the importance of looking good, Slindile also stressed that she is doing it for ‘myself’, but I argue that ‘to make a statement’ contradicts the idea of the ‘self’ project. The consistent pressure to look good and be seen on campus was also found by Stephens and Phillips (2003) who argued that, without being aware, various historical images ghostly linger

and inadvertently influence how, even in contemporary societies, young African women feel the need to publicly display their bodies and self-worth. Such displays perceived as *'making a statement'* by showcasing the glitz and glamour on campus (Masvawure, 2010b). For Stephen and Phillips (2003), this resonates with foundational understandings of 'matriarchs' and 'jezebels' stereotypical images in African American women, who in the former were viewed as sexually powerful and dominating anywhere they went, and in the latter, labelled as young, wild, exotic and sexually permissible.

Applying Stephen and Phillip's resonance above to Slindile's narrative furthered my understanding of young African women's available sexual scripts, and how they remain negatively stereotypical. Recognizing that looking good is valued on campus, provided Slindile with the discursive space to perform her sexuality. Quoting Jackson, Stephen and Phillip (2003, p. 5) qualified "sexuality as socially scripted in that it is a part that is learned and acted out within social context and different social contexts have different social scripts." In this case, while these are performances, albeit socially constructed, they frame African women's sexuality through the gaze of the broader public, ultimately, they become re-inscribed as the norm, which gives rise to subjects who through power are disciplinable and self-surveilling (Foucault, 1977). This is evident in Jabulile's judgments of slay queen wannabes.

This thing you cannot fake. If you are still a China mall kinda girl, stay in your lane my sister, your time will come.

The script of slay queens similarly resonates with that of girls in Bhana and Pattman's (2011, 965) study, who upheld "masculinity performed around good looks, hairstyles, gold teeth and brand name clothing – all of which are linked to economic power" as articulated by Jabulile. The pervasive class binaries in her mention of *'this thing'* as something that cannot be faked and as something yet to be attainable by *'China mall kinda girls'* depicts her as distinctly superior, hence the need for the other to *'stay in your lane'* and not cross boundaries. Showing off on campus is a big thing (Bhana & Pillay, 2018; Masvawure, 2010b). Although not found by this study, Bhana and Pillay (2018) found that women often prioritized being seen with attractive partners in order to show off to their peers. However, what is similar is the "significance of peers and peer regulation" (ibid, p. 6) at interpersonal level of sexual scripting (Beres, 2013; Jackson, 1999; Simon & Gagnon, 1986).

'*Amaqola*' refers to individuals (in this case, women) who are crooks and would do anything to have money (also see fuck girls below). These students are clear in asking for what they feel they deserve. While they are not slay queens or slay queen wannabes, their love for money is not to buy clothes or anything like that, they usually ask for money to spend on alcohol and drugs. They capitalize on male students' social gatherings and drink excessively, but they are called '*amaqola*' because of their ability to escape reciprocating with sex. Although she doesn't self-identify as such, Nosipho's '*slizering –strategic escape*' from SDs (see chapter six) resonates closely with the *iqola* discourse.

The cool, rich kids are also targeted by Amaqola, according to Landile:

Those wear expensive clothing, even though it's not fancy, but it's branded and we see them being fetched by ubers. You look at them and say, ya life is so unfair sometimes cos these kids have had it easy all their lives and you can tell by the way they speak English that they are from well off families.

To address the injustices of the past, the South African government endorsed policies on access and inclusion of the previously disadvantaged groups in Higher education, which gave rise to not only racial diversity, but also fostered a convergence of various classed, gendered and differently abled individuals, upon which subject formation occurs. According to Garrity (2010, p. 202) "the statement and the subject is not one of authorship; instead the statement determines what position the subject must occupy to be its enunciator (or audience)." Thus, Landile's position behind this statement suggests one which is oppositional to that which is enjoyed by 'rich kids'. Intrigued by the words in Landile's narrative above, I chose a few words to unpack their implied albeit classed and racial meanings. To do this I present my understanding of Landile's distress, using the pyramid of the 'us' and 'them'.

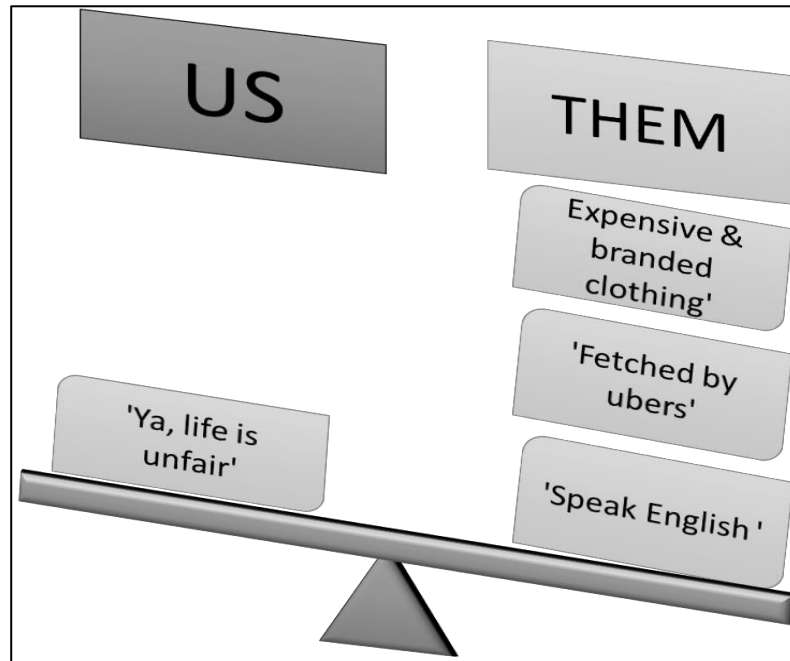


Figure 8: The 'us' and 'them' pyramid

Landile’s narrative demonstrates “how social behaviours and practices construct and create individuals and groups” (Garrity, 2010, p. 202) even within a group. Highlighting one of the benefits of applying discourse analysis to Social Work research and practice, Garrity points to how individuals, like Landile, internalise certain behaviours and practices as belonging to “specific subjects or individuals”, and the extent to which this leads to self-defined marginalization (see Majied & Moss-Knight, 2012). This ‘us’ and ‘them’ comparison influenced not only participants’ decisions to enter into SD relationships, but also to prioritize their needs within the relationship. This ‘us’ and ‘them’ distinction was also prevalent within the SD relationship, e.g. with Ziningi (23) mentioning how the thirty-nine-year-old father of her children (whom she could not refer to as a sugar daddy) was well off and *‘had made it in life’* and I discuss her reconfiguration of the ‘us’ and ‘them’ binary towards the end of this chapter. Therefore, the ‘us’ and ‘them’ narrative was not always perceived negatively, as some participants used it as motivation for reaching their various neoliberal aspirations.

5.4.4 IDC’s, fuck girls, and stoners

Like that of slay queens, IDC’s (I Don’t Care), fuck girls, womanizers and underdogs identities were narrated as freely chosen by participants, thus isolating them from the broader socio-cultural influences. According to Brown (2011, p. 114) Social Work interventions that do not account for macro-level social constructions of individual behaviour may “pathologize what

are social experiences of social constructions.” In the analysis and discussion of these discourses, I remain cognizant of participants’ “racialised, ethicised and classed experiences and the social and political contexts underlying individual expressions” (Brown, 2011, p. 114). Both the discursive and material constructions of sexual promiscuity are normatively constructed as masculine performances, therefore IDC’s and fuck girls challenge the stereotypical construction of gender. In the excerpt below, Hlengimpilo expresses how IDC’s and fuck girls often played around, and were ‘*judged harshly*’ and she also admitted that she *tried* but stopped after realizing that she had ‘*become the boys’ soccer ball*’.

Sometimes you must just let loose. Like, an IDC can be identifiable from far, she has an IDC attitude, and I guess it’s a phase. I once tried but I realised sengiyibhola labafana ‘I had become the boys’ soccer ball’ with each one passing to the other, and for them its ok, but for us nje (like) it’s not nice, you may deceive yourself, but girls are judged harshly and this playing around at varsity is nasty cos you start developing feelings then you see him with another girl – who is also another fuck girl and you get depressed. This one time I got so angry that I stormed into this guy’s room and the way he ridiculed me saying that he could never go out with me like I was not his type...like is there even a type, these boys it’s like they have a point to prove.

Hlengimpilo

Although participants often emphasized their ability to resist heteronormative sexuality, and to a certain extent, their narratives provided evidence of this happening, hegemonic masculinities still remained pervasive. Like Hlengimpilo, participants attributed this to the dominant view that men are men, and are powerful and ‘*they have a point to prove*’. Siziwe (farm girl), on the other hand had learned that ‘*you need to just act like you don’t see anything, be cool about it but also learn how the game is played*’, and how she played it using underdog tactics is discussed further in chapter six.

Stoners is a name mentioned by Khumbuzile to refer to drug users on campus. The casual manner in which she mentioned this gave the impression that this was the norm. Slindile as well mentioned how they were using dagga (cannabis), and certain cough mixtures that were combined with fizzy drinks to create ‘*a high*’. She further advised me to ‘*go and just observe near the student union building and you will notice the bottles that students are carrying, trust me there is sprite and cough mixture there*’. Khumbuzile confessed to attending classes while high. The ‘*we*’ in her excerpt was suggestive of collective behaviour, alluded to by Slindile.

Weed is serious here, you get stoners and sometimes we are high in class but since sibaningi (classes are huge), it's not easy to notice.

On the day that cultivation and private use of dagga was legalized in South Africa⁴⁰, I visited Thembekile, and as I was walking down the corridors, the overwhelming smell of dagga caught me. When I asked, she just said, *'this was victory for some, but not for us, dagga has always been legal.'* The use of drugs and alcohol among South African youth is a huge concern, and without parental supervision, universities provide the platform for exploring their use. Bezuidenhout (2018) argued that drugs and alcohol are not only “impacting on our youth [...] in their psychological and emotional development ... [but] also impacting on their general health and behaviour” (p. 331). These health and behaviour challenges were evident in participants' struggles to negotiate safer sex, and resist sexual and physical pain endemic in hierarchized relationships. However, pain coexisted with pleasure for participants, and agency was negotiated albeit with constraints. In chapter six, I discuss agency in relation to how alcohol was used by some participants as a strategy to lure potential SDs, and how some even identified it as measure of net worth.

5.4.5 Heteronormative markers of love and intimate relationships

Similar to Robinson and Davies (2017), in my research, I found that the participants' “understandings of love and intimate relationships were constructed through heteronormative markers” (p. 231), of which one was marriage (also see Blaise, 2005; Renold, 2005; Sewpaul, 2013). Sexual behaviour for women is rendered appropriate if done for procreation and within a morally approved conjugal union between a man and a woman, thus heterosexually scripted. This sexual script is gendered and creates definitions along binary categories, which privilege male sexuality over that of women thus creating the label of *isoka (player)* vs *isifebe (slut)* (see Hunter, 2010). While some women may resist the normative discourse of African women's sexuality by engaging in concurrent sexual relationships, which I discuss further in chapter six, the persistent deviant labelling is intentionally retained in order to prevent other women from engaging in sex with multiple partners, as was the case with Nonkonzo (21):

⁴⁰ 18 September 2018 saw the removal of ban against use of dagga, also known as marijuana in South Africa. This ruling still needs to be ratified by RSA parliament, and cannot be considered law. However, it calls for the review of two bills, namely the act on RSA Medicine Control, and RSA act on Drug Trafficking

Nonkonzo: My parents broke up when I was in Grade 6, and I kept asking why he (dad) wasn't supporting us until I found out that my mom cheated on him with my stepfather – who is also my younger sister's father. So, it's like he is punishing me for my mother's sins yet naye wayezijolela (he had moved on with his life)

Researcher: So, they were married?

Nonkonzo: No, but he had already consulted with my mom's family for preparations for lolobo

Researcher: Ok, but that didn't mean he shouldn't support you as his daughter

Nonkonzo: I tried, but my mother said I shouldn't force him to do what he wasn't happy to do in the first place. So, I just stopped...and he also moved on I suppose. I think he was angry cos I kept referring to us (Nonkonzo and her sister) and that time I didn't know that [name withheld] wasn't his daughter...this whole thing is just complicated.

The session triggered a lot of emotions for Nonkonzo and I could sense that she had not made peace with her father's abandonment, yet she also blamed her mother for how '*this whole thing is just complicated*'. Also blaming her mother was Nompendulo:

I don't know what is wrong with my mother, they [her mother and father] are not married yet she is doing all the duties of the wife, and my dad is abusive...I always remind her that that is her house and she can throw him out since there is nothing tying them together. Me, once I have a ring on my finger, then we can talk, but in her case, I just don't know, she is forgiving... even if she catches him red-handed in bed with a girl, she acts normal...wuu I can't... for what... these people are not married, I would understand if like she was in your (pointing at researcher) situation, but lutho (nothing)

I referred to Nompendulo's first interview in chapter four, and how challenging it was for me to influence the direction of the interview. This challenge was minimised by reflecting on Waldrop (as cited in Gilbert, 2013) who identified interviews such as Nompendulo's as: "the

opportunity to discuss a difficult experience with an interested and non-judgmental researcher [and how these] can generate positive feelings and hope for change among those who feel disenfranchised” (p. 124). Her parents not being married, was clearly a concern for this participant, and she queried her mother’s wifehood performances even though she wasn’t married. It was interesting to note that while she made mention of her father’s abusive behaviour towards her mother, she also considered such behaviour as excusable within conjugal unions when she said: *‘once I have a ring on my finger, then we can talk’*. I discussed this dominant script of female submission in Zulu marriages in chapter three and I shared my mother in law’s narrative, and how she was *‘prepared by [her] family for the harsh realities of marriage’*, and how she was judged by her family when she returned from her marital home.

Influenced by Mayeza (2015), I seized the opportunity to contest Nompandolo’s monolithic understanding of marriage, evidenced in her statement: *‘I would understand if like she was in your situation.’* Even her selection of the word *‘situation’* demonstrated her version of marriage, as a *‘situation’* (see Creswell, 1998; Fairclough, 2003; Fook, 2016; Gee, 2011; Trinder, 2000). Following Creswell’s (1998) guide to content analysis (see chapter four) and to make sense of Nompandolo’s, and other participants’ discourses, I needed to step back from words, and rather search for discursive meanings within words. This search for discursive meanings occurred during the interviews, and deeper discourse and content analysis occurred after reading and re-reading interview transcripts.

A difficulty noted by Fairclough (2003) is how researchers often miss the opportunity to challenge “taken for granted assumptions” (p. 82) during interviews, which is consistent with feminist post-structuralism. I don’t think Nompandolo expected me to tell her that I was never going to tolerate abuse and maltreatment by my spouse or any man for that matter, married or not. She was taken aback and a few seconds later retorted: *‘ya you are right...but you agree that they should be married?’* This was Nompandolo’s ideological script of marriage, and although I could not impose, I realised that telling my own understanding of marriage brought into light the possibility of multiple and counter-hegemonic discourses of marriage which were mentioned shared by Sibusisiwe:

Like for me I never imagined that life for myself. I always saw myself as yes someone’s prospective wife, but I knew that I would be an educated wife and not be dependent on someone for handouts, you know like the ‘makotis’ - wives that people take advantage

of, I want to contribute to my marriage and not be ridiculed. Not that I am judging, but that is what I want for myself.

Raised by a single mother, who worked as a teacher north of KwaZulu-Natal, Sibusisiwe once shared how she had learned very early to take care of herself and her sister. In her statement above, she recognises the dominant makoti (wife) scripts, of wives as normatively subjected to exploitation, submission, and this may also be shaped by their level of education. A critical reading of her narrative suggests that this is not the life she envisions for herself. Even if not actioned, such intrapsychic thoughts are a demonstration of aspirations and fantasies at individual level (Beres, 2013; Jackson, 1999; Weeks, 2006), which is not exclusive of agency (Renold & Ringrose, 2011). Earlier, Sibusisiwe mentioned how it annoys her when people take advantage of her, and *'when they get too comfortable'* and, in the next chapter, I discuss the anxiety she experiences when she struggles to reconcile her aspirations for independence at interpersonal sexual scripting level, with her SD relationship (see Nika-Nika theme). Love, intimacy and desire aspirations or idealizations by participants, were evidence of agency, yet often reaffirmed enactments of norms around gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and religion.

Also, during a discussion on how she idealized her love life, since she had made clear that her *'flings'* were only *'just for fun'* (see chapter six), Nikiwe (21) stressed the importance of getting herself a Muslim husband, *'to avoid confusion'* yet simultaneously describes herself as an atypical Muslim.

*I want someone stable, someone who has the same mind-set as me, like someone from **my own religion**...also like **someone from my own religion** it really makes things much easier like... I mean it's very hard getting someone from the outside and you have to adapt to their religion or they have to change and adapt to yours...they don't want to change, you don't want to change, so I hope to find **someone within my religion** so as to avoid confusion.*

Nikiwe's narrative as well as assertions she makes in chapter six, on *flings*, demonstrate the complexity of negotiating religious scripts of sexuality *'to avoid confusion,'* a phrase she constantly invoked during our sessions. Seemingly, Nikiwe is aware of Islamic norms of engaging in intimate relationships, and I argue that religion in her narrative above suggests Muslims as a homogenous group, as she mentions *'same mind-set...my own religion'*

[twice]...not forgetting the *'someone within my religion.'* I refer to this homogeneity noticeable in her narratives, and how she self-identified as of African descent, yet she did not mention 'African' as preference or maybe *'my own religion'* discourse did not take into account 'my own race.' This was not clear; however, I did pick up in narratives that her boyfriends and flings or SDs, were all of African descent, with whom she experienced sex as pleasurable and taking away life's pressures. Life pressures, within her discursive framework refer, although not exclusively, to her religion. Her narratives reveal that religion, may provide the sexuality manuscript for young women, which often normalizes sexual restraint (see Skhululiwe's scrips under Respect: *'hlala ngentombi'*), yet young women, like Nikiwe and to some extent Skhululiwe, who consider themselves entitled to sexual pleasures may reconfigure it to suit their own desires. This reconfiguration occurring not outside the set manuscript, which for both participants, occurs within religious manuscripts of heterosexual relationships, which Hunter (2002) argues, cannot be isolated from other discourses that shape neoliberal heterosexual relations, like 'money'.

5.4.6 No romance without finance

In chapter two, (see Sex and Material expressions of love paradigm) I discussed the inextricable link between love, money and relationships in Sub-Saharan Africa (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Maganja et al., 2007; Selikow & Mbulaheni, 2013). All participants, at different points of their narratives, naturalized this inextricable link in relationships generally, and more specifically in SD relationships. Below, Jabulile invokes its naturalness to ridicule her daughter's father, who is unemployed.

Jabulile: Father of daughter is alive and breathing somewhere but no relationship with child. He is unemployed, yet has 4 other children at 28 njalo (by the way) with 2 different mothers

Researcher: Ok, I see, have you attempted to create a relationship between him and his daughter?

Jabulile: Why should I, 'uzoyibuka mese eyayidweba yini ingane yami' – will he look at my daughter and then maybe draw a picture of her?

Researcher: Is he an artist?

Jabulile: LAUGHING...No he just has nothing to offer my child except to just look at her. His family too are just ashes (dysfunctional) and I don't want my daughter to be part of that.

The above narrative conforms to the normative constructs of fatherhood, as centred on the father's ability to provide, a father is then confined to societal constructions of what it means to be a father. Interestingly Zothile, whose seven-year-old child stayed with her child's paternal grandmother, appreciated that although the baby's father didn't seem to have much contact with the child (as he also worked out of the province) he was '*financially responsible.*' It was almost as if, physical contact with the child was not associated with men, instead their ability to provide financial support was valorised. Constructions of fathers beyond the financial provider role was not a dominant script for participants, as was found elsewhere by Maclin et al. (2015) whose married participants also publicly humiliated their unemployed husbands who did not provide for their families, even though they were physically present.

Ziningi's children lived with her biological mother and their father ensured that they were provided for and he also visited them on weekends, and she was embarrassed to say that: "*actually, my kids see their father more than me since I am here, and it's not like I beg him to do it, he loves them to bits.*" The emerging African fatherhood construct exemplified by the father of Ziningi's children is rarely emphasized, and Ziningi was also aware of it being rare as she narrated that she doesn't need to '*beg him.*' Interestingly, during our second interview Ziningi mentioned how, just because they have two children together, whom he supports financially and otherwise, he then expected her to '*act like his wife.*'

I appreciate all that he does for me, yes, he is responsible but we are not married... someone needs to tell him that. What I hate the most is that he thinks he owns me and I have no other options since there are children involved, and he is so demanding and possessive. If he could call right now, and I don't pick up that is an issue. Even during lectures, and you know I also tutor so he just wants me to answer... like it's worse because even my mom, I can't tell her this cos she will say I don't appreciate. Yet, I do and she already calls him 'mkhwenyana' (son-in-law), I am like what the heck is that? Does it matter what I think? I also want what he has already and being at university can offer me that.

Ziningi grew up in the rural north of KwaZulu-Natal, and she once mentioned how the father of her children insisted that she wears a doek (head covering) when visiting his home with the children, as a sign of respect to the elders. Although she was uncomfortable with that, since, apart from payment of damages, *'he had not paid ilobolo'*. She wore it once, but thereafter insisted that he travel alone with the children to his home, which was approximately twenty minutes from her home. Ziningi's frustrations were clearly delineated and she seemed determined to get *'what he has already'*, a degree and economic independence. Participants defined money in various ways, and often employed creative strategies to get it from SDs, often performed against the backdrop of multiple risks.

One of the meanings suggests reciprocity, which this theme 'no romance without finance' refers to generally. What was confusing in Ziningi's case was how she often presented her relationship with the father of her children as active, and at times inactive. I also found no suggestion in her narrative that her partner used money to demand her to wear a doek, I found this very simplistic. However, I soon realised that Ziningi wanted to be married to the father of her children, and for her, *wearing a doek* when she wasn't married would not fast-track cultural expectations for marriage, but would instead demonstrate her complacency with the status quo. While waiting, she did however engage in SD relationships, which she admitted had additional challenges (see chapter six). At the time of the interview, Ziningi was registered for her Masters' degree, resided on campus and also provided tutoring to undergraduate students within her discipline. She was grateful for her job as a tutor, since life at university can be tough without money.

5.4.7 Students will *always* need money

On the morning after my two daughters' matric dance, I posted a picture of them in their outfits as my WhatsApp status (16 February 2018)⁴¹. Surprisingly, one of the participants, Zothile, initiated a chat, which left me deep in thought.

⁴¹ Permission was obtained from Zothile, to include this chat



Figure 9: WhatsApp correspondence, 16 February 2018

During our subsequent session, Zothile stressed once again the importance of having money as a student, and as someone who has a lived experience of university life (three and a half years) she felt knowledgeable enough and kept saying *'take it from me'* in relation to the above. Many participants confirmed this to be true, as money was indeed required by students at university and awareness of *ekhaya* circumstances made it difficult for some to communicate this requirement to their family members.

University has been a challenge for me. Even running out of cash and not knowing what to eat, usabe ukufonela ekhaya (fearing to phone home) cos you know how much they sacrificed for your tuition

Slindile

Slindile's narrative points to the everyday realities of young African women, and suggests that gender, particularly on university campuses, cannot be understood outside other power relations. As such, gender, race, sexuality and class are in fact "contingent upon the social context and material realities through which asymmetrical relations of power are produced" (Bhana, 2016, p. 19). In the next chapter I discuss how prevailing discourses on race continue to frame young African women's sexuality as "repressed and fearful" (Bhana & Pattman, 2011, p. 693). However, I also argue that young African women cannot be viewed as a homogenous group that conforms to power, instead I continue to position them as agentic individuals who, while challenging hegemonic power, may also reproduce it.

Peers also played a significant role in the reproduction of sexual scripts amongst participants.

You come to a point when you don't have food in the house and your friends tell you to go out. Some guy is buying that kinda thing then the following week, same thing...like remember those guys that took us out last week, they said we must come back this week, then we go, that is how it all starts

Siyathokoza

Beyond biomedicine, living away from home carries with it many challenges, where neoliberal demands place pressure on individuals to conform to certain standards of living within a new environment. This was commonly felt by young women in my study. Similar to Bhana (2008), my findings highlight the importance of social networks, particularly peers to circumvent some of these challenges. In her study of school children in the township of KwaDabeka, peers - to a certain extent - played a crucial role in resource provision in order to navigate "the hardships of poverty, food insecurity, lack of parental care and support both within and outside school" (ibid, p. 409). It is against this backdrop that SD relationships become possibilities for further navigation and securing the material demands of everyday life. I also recognise that the everyday needs of students in my study cannot be compared to those of Bhana's learners from a township setting. It is important to note the manner in which participants negotiated them within a university setting, and how peers (at interpersonal scripting level) shaped these negotiations.

Ya, and I mean I have friends who are saying 'gal, lets pay them bills' and some are like, 'let's find love', and I mean you know finding both in one package is practically impossible in this day and age. So, I'm just going to play along for now

Sibusisiwe

Resonating with neoliberal understandings of choice and agency, young women, as Siyathokoza exemplifies, often ascribe personal responsibility for their behaviour. Earlier, I mentioned how Siyathokoza's grandmother could not afford to pay for her tuition fees, and food during her first year of study. As a financially needy, yet responsible individual, Siyathokoza needed to *'fend for [herself]'*. Bay-Cheng and Eliseo-Arras' (2008) study on the influences of gendered and neoliberal discourses in a private college also found that young women identified themselves as "ideal neoliberal actors, who [were] under the control of no one and in utter control of themselves; even when things go awry" (p. 395). Many participants echoed Siyathokoza's perspective on the importance of self-determination even in the midst of external constraints, thus presenting themselves as in control, like participants who were sexually exploited yet upheld their "Together Woman" identities. Bay-Cheng and Eliseo-Arras argued that "neoliberal constructs such as the Together Woman ultimately shield from view exploitative individual partners and a larger system of sexist oppression" (p. 395).

During our first of the three sessions held with Sibusisiwe, she mentioned that *'everybody loves nice things'* and how she often debated with her friends about whether the priority was paying bills or finding love – and the former often prevailed. While it is clear that she was not debating alone about this issue, her mention of *"I'm just going to play along"* suggests an individual decision, and undermines the broader institutional and social contexts against which this decision is made. Butler (1999, p. 191) adds that "although there are single bodies that enact these significations" as evident in Sibusisiwe's use of "I", these remain "public action[s]." I argue that the neoliberal university context fosters self-surveillance practices embedded in Siyathokoza and Sibusisiwe's narratives, and these practices serve to shape and reinforce gender identities. Thus, it is not gender per se that determines these university practices, but the young women themselves who, through linguistic practices ensure continuity of heterosexual norms.

Although there are a few similarities in participants in my study with those of Bay-Cheng and Eliseo-Arras' (2008), in that both studies included young women who were students between the ages of 18 and 24, participants in both studies identified as heterosexuals, there were

however two significant differences. Firstly, their sample was multi-racial comprising 72% white and 28% Black whilst participants in my sample identified as Black Africans; and secondly insofar as this was a private college in a first world country, participants hailed from well off families, thus “all possessed social and human capital” (ibid, p. 395). The latter cannot be said for the young women in my study, yet as students, they were still bound by neoliberal norms and policies under which participants in the contrasted study had flourished. As a result, young girls from less affluent households, when compared with their well-off peers, were found more likely to narrate sex as dangerous and seldom referred to it as pleasurable (Tolman & Szalacha cited in Bay-Cheng & Eliseo-Arras, 2008). This pleasure/danger binary construction is refuted in chapter six, where I refer to how even with less social capital (see Allard, 2005; Bourdieu, 1977; Mathe, 2013) participants in my study were capable of experiencing pleasure, albeit with constraints.

According to the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) (Wittenburg, 2017) at least half of South Africa’s population (57, 5 million) remains in dire poverty (predominantly Africans, and coloured – although the former remains the worst affected than the latter). The report depicts South Africa as an unequal society, such that only 4% comprise the wealthy, whilst 20% remain stably middle classed, with 26% comprising those categorized as momentarily poor and the vulnerable middle class, while 50% remain chronically poor. I was challenged when it came to ascertaining exactly where each of my participants fit, as very few were sure how much their parents were earning. However, participants were able to confirm their source of tuition funding.

According to the National Student Financial Assistance (NSFAS⁴²) Act of 1999, students need to prove financial need in order to be considered for funding. Accordingly, in 2015, students with a combined household income of R160 000 (just below 12 000 US\$ equivalent) or less were eligible to apply for support. In 2018, the income bracket increased to R350 000 (approximately 26 000 US\$) as a result of outcries from students (see chapter four). However, since participants were interviewed prior to the implementation of the current changes, they qualified for NSFAS in accordance with the 2015 criterion. As such, the majority of participants were in receipt of NSFAS (N=8), some in receipt of private or other government funding (N=6), and the rest were funded by parents (N=5). Below I discuss how funding was experienced within these categories.

⁴² <http://www.nsfas.org.za/content/downloads/NSFAS%20Act.%20No%2056%20of%201999.pdf>

Although my mother is married, she is like a single parent because my dad is unemployed. She has had to pay for my education, and it's just too much, cos she works for government and apparently they don't look at what she takes home but focus on the gross, it is unfair cos she now has these loans... [pause] and it's only my second year...and as I told you, she has other children, like next year my brother will come here as well, and it will be worse.

Khumbuzile –self funded

I am grateful that I got the funding. I think it is because I was also on child support grant but it is sometimes very hard since you will be told to come sign for it today, and you wait and wait and nothing, so it is bad in that way cos we don't know when it will come.

Siziwe –NSFAS

What's nice is that the company that is funding me will also give me internship and even full time employment. You never know, at least I know that as soon as I finish I will be sorted. Just that since first year I have to pay for my own registration fees because they want proof of registration before releasing the funds, and here the university will never allow you to register without the registration fees.

Nonkonzo –Private company

Echoing sentiments shared by most participants, Nonkonzo, Siziwe and Khumbuzile's narratives indicate the financial hardships of students, reflective of the broader socio-economics of South Africa, and with an unemployment rate of 27,2% (Trading Economics, 2018), such is not surprising. I found that even those not self-funded, frustrations relating to the delay in the disbursement of funds were expressed, with some participants venting that *'the waiting can be too much'*, such that Yandisa's older sister needed to take a loan to ensure that *'learning is not disturbed.'* Yandisa mentioned that *'I don't like to bother her for minor things cos she does a lot.'*

Working as a receptionist in one of the legal firms and being a sister cum mother to Yandisa could not have been easy for Yandisa's sister, more so after the loss of their mother in 2015. Moreover, along with 11 other participants, Yandisa was the first in her generation to enter university. Pather, Norodien-Fataar, Cupido and Mkonto (2017) found this significant in their study of first year, University of Technology (UoT) students' access and engagement

experiences in South Africa. This they found provided insight into the possible “support students received at home and their awareness of support offered at university” (p. 169). During our interview, Nompendulo alluded to the fact that her parents were both illiterate, ‘*all they know is that I am here, and at the end there is a black gown*’ and she jokingly mentioned that her father, although stingy but when it comes to education, ‘*he will jump, even if I say tomorrow this and this is needed and NSFAS has not paid, he will do anything to make sure I have it.*’ A critical reading of Nompendulo’s excerpt is that she has identified education as important and powerful in manipulating her parents, particularly her father, who is less likely to question her due to “lack of awareness” about university generally, as also found by Pather et al. (2017, p. 169).

Across all participants, a university was reportedly considered by their families as *just* a learning space, although this learning has been found to include “sexual and gendered learning” (Pattman & Bhana, 2017, p. 191), and extending beyond the boundaries of the classroom –thus ongoing. This chapter focuses on how young African female students come to learn about themselves, and thus far I have elucidated on the role of *ekhaya* in the first section, and in this section, I discussed *ivava*, both of which cannot be viewed as mutually exclusive contexts.

Although I learnt to understand why Zothile had emphasized the need for my two children to always have money, I simultaneously developed a deeper understanding of many other needs expressed by participants, such as the need to be listened to, and be affirmed. These I discuss in detail in the next chapter, particularly how these needs were constrained or enabled in SD relationships, which are generally premised on financial exchange. Before then, I wish to turn the gaze on the SDs and I use the sub-theme ‘*Stage surveillance - Turning the gaze*’ in order to understand the dialectical nature of SD relationships.

While this study did not interview the SDs, my engagement with participants offered me some insight into the various attributes of the men, and this is my attempt to bring to light the diverse nature of SDs as portrayed by participants. As a disclaimer, I acknowledge shortcomings of this theme as it uses information solicited not from the SDs themselves, but from the young African women who, at a particular time and within a particular context, were engaged in relationships with them.

5.4.8 Stage surveillance: 'Turning the gaze'

Participants made mention of a number of SD relationships, whether once off or long term. This proved a challenge, as some participants had been involved with several SDs, on and off with some resurfacing even during my fieldwork. Below is my attempt to shed light on the SDs. None belonged to a single category, thus should not be viewed as singularly defined, but multiple, as per my findings.

5.4.8.1 Responsible and committed family men

The committed husband discourse was a dominant one, as the majority of the SDs were married. Participants admired the fact that SDs cared for their families, and put them first in everything. In fact, this factor made them respect them more.

Sibusisiwe: Definitely, that's what makes me respect him more cos he never hid his stand when it comes to his family. His family means the world to him, his wife is his queen and I accepted that like we would be having supper and they would call him for something minor like fixing a tap and he would drop everything and like: "Babe I need to go home now, take the money for the cab" and he is gone just like that.

Researcher: So, he is a responsible family man?

Sibusisiwe: Definitely

Researcher: He didn't see the need to hide his marriage?

Sibusisiwe: He wears his ring all the time and he said that he wanted me to know what I was entering into. That is when I asked him why he wasn't taking it off.

Conscious of her partner's commitment to his family, Sibusisiwe made mention of one incident where they came across her SD's wife's friend, and how this brought back the reality of how momentary their relationship was.

And this one time we were in the car and his wife's friend saw us and started hooting and shouting [name withheld] from the other side. I mean I was in the passenger seat and the lady was hooting from my side, the way he ignored her. So, these are the type of things that remind me that it's momentary.

Meeting the wife was also the most feared amongst participants. Zothile explained how her SD reduced this fear by claiming that “*at least his wives now know each other*”, which judging by the pride in her voice gave Zothile a sense of sameness with the wife.

Meeting uMemu (the wife) was the worst, this one time I couldn't get hold of him and then cos I know where he works, I went there and the lady at reception told me he was still busy, I should wait. They had seen me before, but something was just not adding up on this day. Just then I saw this woman coming straight to me to ask if she could help me. I could not utter a word, I just said [so and so] had asked me to come inquire if they were going to offer internships in 2017, and she just said “No we won't” and no one showed me the door. Later that day, he called me and said that was his wife, apparently some ladies had called her, and she had suspected something anyway. Yazi (you know) I felt so bad cos I know how much he loves his family and to think that I am the one who is messing things up. We are still together, on and off but, never again will I go to his office. We laugh about it now and he jokes that at least his ‘wives’ now know each other.

Landile also mentioned that “*I don't know how he does it, but he manages to say goodnight and then I will only wait for him to call when he is available again*”, and she added that she had to always be available when he called, as not finding her made him angry and suspicious. Landile did confirm that she had other relationships, but she dared not inform the SD, who assumed he had her all to himself. She loved this about him and even remarked jokingly during our interview that “*the wife must keep the ring and I will keep the man*” but also added that “*it's good that he's married and is a family man, what would I do ngo-chappies (with chewing gum)*”? Chewing gum in this case refers to an ever-present irritation.

Some participants (Slindile, Siyathokoza, Sibusisiwe, Zothile) remarked that their SDs often carried two mobile telephones, one for home and one for them, and they as ‘*omakhwapheni – side chicks*’, according to Siyathokoza, needed to not question this.

Like he would ask how that was even relevant because when he is with me, no one bothers us. Then I kinda started liking him and he was always there, he provides from airtime to data and I love food and he asks what I like to eat and gives it, even buys me other things. Like he bought me a fridge when my fridge broke down and I told him and he didn't react fast but after a week he told me about a special at game and then bought it. It was at least R2100, like it was not so expensive.

Synonymous with commitment was the financial power that these men possessed within their conjugal households. Slindile, on her 48-year-old SD, reported how she had accidentally met his wife after their five-year-old daughter fell ill at crèche, during a time the SD was with Slindile, and he saw no problem with her accompanying him to the hospital. They met and no introduction was made, and a friend of the SD took her back to residence. This is how she responded when I asked her how she felt about the incident:

Well, because he is a provider, I know that he won't be asked too many questions. The wife is a teacher and the life they are living is way beyond a teacher's salary, so the man is the one who calls the shots in that house, without a doubt.

Slindile was convinced that her SD would not get into trouble because of his masculine provider role, which most participants also alluded to. Siyathokoza emphasized her preference for married men as she found them more generous than the unmarried older men.

Married men are the ones that are willing to send more money. It's like they worry that if they don't give it, you might just expose them yet that is not always the case, I can't be that stupid, I mean exposing him would be exposing myself.

According to Siyathokoza, both she and the married SD were on an equal footing since they both had reputations to protect. I asked her if the SD was aware of this, and she said no, and he didn't need to know, and for her she felt like she had the upper hand in the relationship. Siziwe also expressed shock, denial as well as nonchalance, after hearing from a church member, how her SD was treating his wife. In the following interview, Siziwe justifies her nonchalance by reminding herself 'that this was not a 'relationship relationship [participant's emphasis]''

Siziwe: So, this one time I was at church and this girl approached me to ask me a very awkward question, like I had taken a picture and his [SD's] car was in the background and she asked whose car that was, me not even thinking, I told her that its some guy I'm dating. And this girl started telling me that this is her aunt's husband.

Researcher: Mhhh, nodding

*Siziwe: And that the guy has been causing trouble, the 'aunt' has had 2 miscarriages in 1 year. And I was like sh** how did I get here? Then when I called him and he insisted that I got the wrong information and that girl yes, she knows him but she is just psycho. I believed him as well but I had to also remind myself that this was not a 'relationship relationship'*

Researcher: So, you let it go?

Siziwe: Yes, but I don't trust him, but again I know I don't have to trust him...he is providing and that works for me. And me knowing about his other side makes me convinced that this cannot be a relationship.

Researcher: Like provide in what way?

Siziwe: This guy would give me R2000 just nje –out of the blue

Researcher: Ok, so how did the girl from church treat you afterwards?

Siziwe: Yuuu, the way I apologized, I told her that I would end the relationship and you know my mother would have been so disappointed and I asked her not to say this to anyone, especially from church. But you know, even though I told her that, I am certain she knows that this guy will move on and there will always be someone like me in his life. Anyway, she never asked me about it again.

The above demonstrates that even when SDs were labelled as irresponsible and less committed to their families, participants could use that to justify why the 'relationship', as not really a relationship. Siziwe had mentioned how this SD secured government tenders around KZN and like the Black Diamonds in Zakes Mda's book (see chapter three), he was not shy to parade his power masculinities, especially among young women. During our conversations, she also mentioned how it was pointless to leave someone just because they are married, or have some marital issues, since what mattered for her was that he was able to provide and it was 'working.' However, Siziwe's statement: 'I believed him as well' left me doubtful, especially because of her inclusion of 'but' immediately thereafter to add that she did not consider this a real relationship. Gee (2011, p. 106) refers to "situated meanings and figured worlds" and in Siziwe's case, I argue that her repeated use of the word 'relationship' or denial thereof demonstrates Gee's reference. Here, Siziwe clarifies her discursive position or field within

which her SD relationship's meaning is situated, and in chapter six, she retains this non-relationship position, to justify her disinterest in sex since for her, it is *'just a bridge.'*

Of significance under this theme is that SDs did not fit perfectly into one single discourse, and coexistence of multiple and competing discourses, according to Trinder (2000), allows individuals to position themselves as different, and 'other' the rest, such as those who might consider sex as not *just a bridge*. In addition, participants often related how it really did not matter where SDs *'got the money, as long as it got to [them]'* as Slindile mentioned in reference to her 'man of God's' financial source (see chapter six).

5.4.8.2 Familiar bhutis, babas and the respectable men of God

Three participants made mention of familiar big brothers and daddies from back home- *ekhaya*. These older men were known and respected in communities, and had gained the trust of the young women's families. Participants mentioned that their families viewed these men as influential in ushering young women into the unfamiliar city, as one could expect from 'big brothers' and 'daddies'.

I think with ubhuti (big brother), although he is 13 years older than me, it's ok because I know him from back home and it's been someone like a friend. He has always been there for me, in terms of finding anything and my mom even now still sees him as someone who is a good example for me to look up to. Even before the relationship started, he was so generous with money and information, like he knew more. So, when we got into the relationship it was much easier for me to ask him for stuff cos now, we are together and I don't need to explain myself all the time.

Phiwokuhle

Phiwokuhle had known her *bhuti* for at least ten years, and this was someone she felt comfortable with, to a point where she felt at ease not to use a condom with him (see chapter six). Ubhuti was still in a relationship with the mother of his three children, and Phiwokuhle also knew her, although not as well as ubhuti. By age thirty-three, bhuti had obtained a Bachelor of Science degree but could not find employment, thus branched off to pursue a teaching qualification, which landed him a teaching job in a township away from home. Phiwokuhle provided a picture of a typical 'role model' who made a name for himself, and was forever encouraging her, and other young people from their area, to aim high. This was

appreciated by many, especially by Phiwokuhle's mother who was raising her alone as a single parent.

Because of the respect Skhululiwe's father had as a pastor within his church, he could rely on his congregants to provide assistance as and when was required. During our interview at residence, Skhululiwe made mention of this.

My dad doesn't want me to come to campus using public transport. He asks people he trusts to bring me this side, and it is usually people who work in Durban but come from ekhaya. So, this one time on the way lobaba (this 'familiar father figure') kept saying I must not be shy to ask for anything, my dad has been good to them and they owe him so much as the church. Initially I didn't think much into that, but as he continued to praise my father, he was also brushing my thighs, only then did I know for sure what he meant. We have never been intimate and I guess he knows my situation, but we chat and send each other pictures, and he sends money every now and again, although it's not much but it's something. I told him that men are not allowed to enter here at res, so he always drops me off at the bottom gate and I walk up. My dad would kill him [voice raised] if he knew this, but it is not such a huge issue for now.

For Skhululiwe, the relationship with 'lobaba' was less significant, in fact she did not make mention of it beyond our first interview. She felt that it was just to 'pass time' and he sent money that she considered 'pocket money'. Skhululiwe also claimed that she was in control of this engagement as this was an 'elder of the church who had so much to lose if this was ever known', which in a way granted her agency. There were other participants who echoed Skhululiwe's sentiments when it came to relationships with familiar older men, and some, for example Nosipho, found it 'awkward to even hold hands or be seen together in public'. This was not a concern for the young women only, older men themselves were highly protective of their public image (see chapter six), and this was demonstrated at length by the 'older, man of God' that Slindile looked up to from childhood.

He was our [man of God] and then we were quite close because he used to remark that I look like a smart kid with a bright future, so nje (like) we were close. Ok, he used to come to my home, well then it was to see ugogo (granny) and he would ask about me ok, as you know now, he is a [man of God] (laughs), not just any [man of God], but [the one with many restrictions] and you know they are not allowed to date. So, at the beginning of that year, I was studying for my confirmation so he started throwing hints

of you know, 'I'm interested', even though he was not direct or it's me who was just naïve or feared that he was a respectable man, worse uMfundisi (man of God). Ok and then in August I fell pregnant and vele he had to back off, so things were better, then 2011 I had a baby. 2012 when I came here, he moved to [another church station] and he has just told me recently that he moved because of the problems he had experienced somehow in [our home station]. He got hold of me and, we sort of dated briefly, scary as it is. He used to come check up on me, we would go out but not much would happen, that's 2012, end of 2012 he had to go and work overseas in [country's name withheld] for like 18 months, so that's how it ended. It became a pattern, we would separate – mostly because of his church commitments and when he returns continue where we ended. Then he came back this year in February again, he sent me this stupid video on WhatsApp and then we started talking and then yah, that's how we ended together. Manje (now), the sick part is he is from my church, even though he is no longer in my local church, my family know him very well.

I first met Slindile in July 2016, and during that time she was involved with a 48-year-old SD, who was married and had three children (see above subtheme 'responsible and committed family men') and in August 2017, she returned with a narrative on the 'man of God'. At this time, she had broken up with the 48-year-old married man, and she remarked jokingly that '*anything that is forbidden, I am attracted to*' since the former SD was married and the 'man of God' was religiously forbidden from pursuing intimate relationships. Nonetheless, her relationship with the latter, "man of God" afforded her some agency since in a way she supposedly controlled the relationship. I discuss this further in chapter six.

5.4.8.3 Mentors, role models, pimps and hyenas

Mentorship by SDs was expressed at length by Gugulethu, Khumbuzile and Thandazile. Since Gugulethu was a post-graduate student and her SD was a learned person within the legal fraternity, he had been instrumental in her academic success, even motivated her to pursue her Masters.

Two days before submitting my honours dissertation I just could not cope and after hearing from my research supervisor that I needed to reduce my word count I got so angry and he took it and edited it for me. The way I trusted him I never even read it

after he had looked at it. He really believes in my development, and that's nice, I like that he motivates me but we have no future, I just want to complete this Masters and take care of my family.

Khumbuzile was relieved to be helped by one of her lecturers during a time when she suffered a black-out.

During the exam I don't know what happened, I just blacked out and I just couldn't finish the paper. I left after thirty minutes. He saw me leaving the exam room and rushed to ask what was wrong and then insisted that I come to him later that afternoon, which I did. He then gave me everything and forced me to write. But he then said I will owe him, that time I was not worried about anything, I got what I wanted but I insisted that I see my mark first before thanking him. Only when the results came out did I meet with him, and it was a nice 70% then we did the deed!

To learn about a fellow colleague, trading grades for sex was disconcerting, and Khumbuzile insisted that lecturers 'are also humans', and not immune to being SDs. Even though Khumbuzile did not discuss any money exchanged, but on the day of the "deed" he brought lunch for them to eat while they chatted. These chats were also quite motivational. Although I mention this here, Khumbuzile was not quite sure of the lecturer's age, but estimated it to be in the early 30's, and at the time of the interview she was twenty years old.

Thandazile also made mention of a motivational businessman who was a part time Masters student. He inspired her to perform at her best in her studies, and this she valued since her family were outside the province. Although he offered her money to buy what she needed, he also provided mentorship, which was appreciated. She later realised that this money and mentorship were not 'free', and needed to be reciprocated, and I discuss this further in the next chapter. Another businessman mentioned by Nompendulo, was also a university employee at another campus.

Well, he works here and most of us know him and you probably also know him cos he also runs entertainment businesses around Durban. He is supported by these top politicians and other businessmen, and it's like they trust him to bring them girls and as a result his business is doing well. We all know what to do when we get there, just sit and listen to the language of tenders, passports and you also soon realise that "today I am meat" [lowered voice...and a brief pause] but with him (pimp), first you are his meal then he throws you to the hyenas.

A critical analysis of the words used by Nompendulo left me worried, especially the part where she described herself as “meat”, somehow preparing to be devoured and her lowered voice gave a sense that she also found this position worrying, although not quite unexpected. Nompendulo’s meat analogue resonates with assertions of Zibane’s (2017, p. 32) participants that *“kudliwa umuntu kudliwa imali”* which directly translates to “you eat my money, I eat you.” She somehow rendered her situation inevitable, and this was not the first time she found herself in such a situation, as she had confided in me about a rape incident that continued to haunt her (see reflection notes in chapter four).

“Kudliwa umuntu kudliwa imali- you eat a person, you eat money” features prominently in Nompendulo’s narratives where, in her relationships with other SDs, she insists that *‘nothing in this life is for free, the sooner you know that the less stressed you will be.’* Even so, knowledge of this did not imply smooth sailing with the businessman/university employee. In the case of the businessman she mentioned that initially she couldn’t understand him, as he seemed like a respectful man, but when she told her friends about one incident where he insisted that *‘he needed to taste before his customers’*, her friends were not surprised.

When I told my other friends, one of them told me “that is [name withheld] for you, he does what he wants with you then he disposes you to his customers.” Then I remembered this one time when we got there and he gave me an impression that he wants my friend. Nothing made sense that day, and that is why I went with [friend’s name] and I just couldn’t read him properly. Then I had to lie and say [friend’s name] is not actually my friend, she is my sister, and he said “it’s fine I can do you both” then I realised, so this is it.

Nompendulo admitted that she had sex with the businessman several times. She mentioned that *‘he is clever, he never does transfers, he deals with hard cash’* and that was the reason why Nompendulo had to travel to another campus in order to collect the cash. I discuss this businessman and the ‘hyenas’ in chapter six.

5.5 Conclusion

In brief, this chapter deliberated the question of how young women at an urban university campus come to become young African women, and the extent to which this process of

'becoming' is not fixed but changes over time and context. As young women are socio-historically and culturally constructed, I traced the process of becoming a young African woman from 'ikhaya' to 'ivava', viewing their behaviour as continuous, though not unchanging. Throughout the chapter, I unpacked sexual scripts of the young women and the socio-historical and cultural context within which they were understood, contested and given various meanings. How young women in my study made meaning of their identities is not a once off process, but involves repeated and stylized performances, which over time gain intelligibility (Butler, 1999). In the following chapter, I discuss how young women's performances of love, intimacy, and desire in SD relationships are negotiated within a heterosexual matrix that dictates acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in heterosexual relations.

Chapter Six:

(un)Sweetening the pot: Negotiations of pleasure and danger in SD relationships

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the process of ‘becoming an African female student’ and how embedded in this becoming are truths about what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable. Following Mupotsa’s (2014) argument that in order to “understand why people would adopt a particular set of discourses concerning sexuality” (p. 11). I examined historical and contextual processes that have influenced, to use her words, this “social engineering” (p. 17). I demonstrated, using narratives from participants, how race, gender, sex and class contributed towards the (re)construction and maintenance of various heterosexual norms. It is against this backdrop that I move to discuss how young African female students construct and negotiate love, intimacy and desire in SD relationships. Utilizing feminist post-structural theory, I explore the coexistence of multiple and contradictory performances in SD relationships.

My exploration of love, intimacy and desire in SD relationships may be considered hypocritical by advocates of the ‘risk’ paradigm that in the past decades, prevailed in the conceptualization of transactional sex within Sub-Saharan Africa (see Chapter two). Within the risk paradigm, SD relationships have been found to render young African women between the ages of 18-24 three times more likely to be infected with HIV than young men of the same age group (PEPFAR, 2018; UNAIDS, 1998). Such paradigms have influenced numerous interventions aimed at curbing HIV among young women, and reducing their vulnerability to gender-based violence that is known to thrive in hierarchically structured relationships. While the tenets of this paradigm are entirely legitimate, I recognise how the risk paradigm coexists with other often contradictory and opposing paradigms.

This coexistence finds support in Vance’s (1984, p. 6) claims that “the rich brew of our experience contains elements of pleasure and oppression, happiness and humiliation”, which are featured in my discussion. African women’s sexuality should, therefore, be viewed as “not just a domain of danger but also of exploration, agency, sensations and connections” (Vance cited in Bhana & Pattman, 2011, p. 962). Similarly, Weeks (2006) challenges us to “move away from a situation where we judge the nature of the act, to one where we consider the context and the meaning of the act for the participants” (p. 123).

The previous chapter outlined the various ways in which young African female students' sexual scripts in my study were constituted. To action this, I demonstrated how societally dominant discourses on race, sexuality, gender, sex, disability and class contribute towards the (re)construction of these scripts across context, for example ikhaya and ivava. Moreover, like Davies (2006), I interrogated how neoliberal discourses of 'ideal African female student' work to convince them "...that there is no choice at a systemic level instead, [and that] their power lies in their individual choices to *become* appropriate and successful within that inevitable system" (p, 436 – italics, mine). Thus, I reveal how the process of becoming is continuous and calls for consistent viability checks, inclusive of strategies and power deployed (as supposedly free agents) to alleviate discomfort during this process.

Utilizing a feminist post-structural conceptualization of power, I discuss how power was deployed and exercised by young African women in SD relationships. My understanding of power as 'exercised by', according to Cannon et al. (2015) challenges essentialist notions of "patriarchal top-down forms of power" (p. 670). In this chapter, I problematize the centrality of these taken-for-granted assumptions of power in regulating performances in SD relationships. Using participants' 'talk' collected during field work, I draw on Butler's (1990, 1999) conceptualization of gender performativity and Foucault's (1977) notions of power, and how these intersect to challenge or re-idealize gender norms - described by Butler as heterosexual matrix.

Cannon et al.'s (2015) Foucauldian analysis of power posits that "people, based on their social location, use tactics and strategies available to them to negotiate dynamics of power" (p. 670). This chapter considers how participants present themselves, through the potentialities of discursive agency within SD relationships, and in relation to the contextual constraints within which they find themselves. By applying this analysis, I sought to highlight the complex power relations of the SD relationship, particularly how power performances challenged and reinforced truths and knowledges "inscribed in [participants'] blood[s]" (see Sewpaul 2013).

In South Africa, women's sexual exchange relationships cannot be dissociated from class and race relations, as these relationships often mirror women's aspirations to belong to a society that has in the past grossly disadvantaged them both as 'women' and more specifically as 'African women.' Criticizing the euphemisms of a rainbow nation, Pumla Gqola (2001, p. 100), argued that:

“belonging to the rainbow implies that the members of the rainbow have equal access to the mythic pot of gold, wealth. It elucidates the significance of the rainbow motif as a commentary on access to resources and wealth. But even here the process of definition is slippery for even in a democratic South Africa social stratification makes nonsense of the argument that we all have access to (economic) resources”

I have highlighted how participants in this study often referred to how SD relationships were self-chosen, thus denoting agency. Under the guise of ‘democratic rainbowism’, Gqola disagrees that an African woman has unrestrained power to choose, although she doesn’t downplay possible resistance and subversion. As such she points out that “resistance and subversion are not altogether free of the anxieties of the system of dominance which they reject” (p. 95). Thus, while participants’ performances in SD relationships were to resist or subvert power, I needed to also recognise the constraints against which power is resisted or subverted.

Foucault (1980) rendered knowledge and truth inseparable, arguing that “we cannot exercise power except through the [re]production of truth” (p. 93). While the problematic consequences of asymmetrical power in SD relationships is known (PEPFAR, 2018; UNAIDS 2011), within Foucault’s anti-essentialist framework of power, we are invited to a nuanced understanding of power as multidirectional and deployed “through a given field of knowledge/power” (Foucault, 1980, p. 30).

As a “grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies, genders and desires are naturalized” (Butler, 1990, p. 151) I use the heterosexual matrix to explicate how this heteronormative grid continues to regulate the construction, depiction and lived experiences of young African women in neoliberal times. I found that hegemonic masculinities and emphasized femininities (Connell, 1987) were central in regulating behaviours in SD relationship. As such, participants narrated how they often needed to accept certain subordinate positions in order to accommodate SD’s needs and desires.

The neoliberal discourse of choice and responsibility was visible in the manner in which participants managed intimacy issues. Participants highlighted how these were mutually beneficial relationships, and knowing the *‘rules of the game and that you cannot always have things your way’* (Nikiwe) was important. Accounting for such complicities, Fook (2016)

explained that “sometimes traditionally disadvantaged people and groups appear willingly to comply with beliefs which work systematically to disadvantage them.”

A feminist post-structural explanation of ‘complicity with oppression’ would then suggest that young African women “choose apparently self-defeating routes because the choices that are offered are not presented in terms that are meaningful to them” (Fook, 2016, p. 68). So, we may ask, in the context of KwaZulu-Natal, why SD relationships remain pervasive in spite of the interventions to curb them, and if the claim that ‘Sugar Daddies destroy lives’ is true, then to what extent do young women themselves enable or disable this process?

Conceptualization of power as a binary, that women are naturally oppressed and men are natural oppressors overlooks what motivates women to engage in SD relationships, and how these shift over time. As such, “framing women as an already constituted coherent group regardless of race, class, or sexuality, buttresses binary structures of men and women in that men [always] dominate women” (Cannon et al., 2015, p. 672). This thesis argues that, while male power in SD relationship is pervasive, it is not incontestable, but instead negotiated, giving space for agency. However, like Bhana (2017) I found agency in participants’ narrative as constitutive, in that it simultaneously reproduced “familiar conceptualization of gender and power” (p. 250). In doing so, I accepted concepts used by them as reflected in the table below.

Names used	Meaning
Sugar Daddy	A man 10 years and older who bestows gifts in exchange for sex
Blessor	Euphemism for sugar daddy
Istraight / uqondile	Main boyfriend or girlfriend
Qoma	Accept love proposal
Shela	Propose love
Sugar baby	Young woman in a relationship with a sugar daddy
Umakhwapheni	Side chick/dish
Umemu Mamkhulu	The wife or the long term <i>straight</i> – Mamkhulu is usually used in polygamous marriages to refer to the first wife
Umnaks	The one whom you (woman) share a man with – also used to refer to the man’s other wives or his brothers’ wives

Table 5: Table: Common terms

The above names have been used mostly by participants and I acknowledge the shortcomings of translations, as they do not capture the essence of the meaning. These, in context, will provide for deeper meanings. Even though IsiZulu is my mother tongue, some of the words

used were not within my frame of reference, even the very name ‘sugar daddy’ was initially rejected, albeit subtly. The google definition of a sugar daddy is “a rich older man who lavishes gifts on a young woman in return for her company or sexual favours”, and thus just by definition, such relationships are seen to deviate from relationship norms. With that in mind, I needed to allow participants to appropriate a preferred name for their relationship.

Researcher: So, it’s a relationship that has developed over time. Let’s move to the 48-year-old...

Slindile: (Interjects) partner ... [laughing]

Researcher: Ok, ‘partner’

For all interviews, I waited for participants to provide a name that they found suitable to describe their SD. In chapter four, I mentioned how even the recruitment poster had to be altered to reflect ‘rich older man’ instead of ‘sugar daddy’ since the latter has negative connotations. During the interviews, I refrained from assuming that participants had one single definition of a SD, and as it turned out, there were indeed multiple and contradicting terms used. Participants were able to use words that made sense to them as and when deemed necessary (see chapter four). Thus, their ability to use preferred frames of reference to “interpret the social world as a kind of language, i.e. as a system of meanings and practices that construct [their] reality” (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, cited in Sewpaul, 2007, p. 19) that allowed for unconstrained conversations.

Slindile: Partner came into my life in 2013, ok I was 2nd year at university but 1st year for this degree since I started in the Access programme. How I met him, we went out with my friend for lunch and then he offered to pay for our bill and then on our way out, he asked this other girl to ask for my number and offered us a lift. I gave it to him

Researcher: So, your relationship started at that restaurant...

Slindile: Ya yaqala laphe (that’s where it started) and then you know when the driver is more interested in you nje [like] its proper when you arrive at the destination for the friend to step out and give you a few minutes so vele [it made sense that] my friend left us alone so that this guy could speak to me. So, it all started, he asked me where I was studying and

what I was studying, where was home so like what do I do during my spare time.... bese ke ya (bla bla bla).

‘Partner’ was, at the time of the interview, married to a teacher who worked at a primary school in the rural north of KwaZulu-Natal, who returned home during weekends and school holidays. I will return to Slindile and Partner’s relationship, and lest we forget, this is the Slindile who I quoted in chapter five, in relation to her 27-year-old boyfriend: ‘*sex means nothing for me, so he must not be fooled into thinking that sex is a trap for me.*’ In relation to the relationship with the 48-year-old SD, Slindile denied its ‘actual’ existence.

Well, I know he thinks we are in a relationship, and maybe we are together in this, sorry he must just forget me, never

I discussed in the previous chapter how Sibusisiwe (22) presented herself as an intelligent and independent girl, for whom ‘*being black and beautiful comes with challenges*’ as it did not allow her to perform her intelligence and independence the way she hoped she would. Vance (1984) termed this ‘radical pluralism’ (p. 1), for its appreciation of not only multiple truths and realities but also of pleasure and pain within those truths and realities. Therefore,

“...to focus on pleasure and gratification ignores the patriarchal structure in which women act, yet to speak only of sexual violence and oppression ignores women’s experiences with sexual agency and choice and unwittingly increases the sexual terror and despair in which women live” (Vance, 1984, p. 1).

The above suggests the need for acknowledgement of competing discourses of female sexualities, and how they are enabled or constrained by broader intersections of race, gender, and class. Identities in this case are not fixed but fluid and socio-historically constructed. It is language that shapes and filters these socio-historical constructions, and like Magnusson and Marecek (2012), I reject simplistic conceptualization of young African women in my study as “solitary, bounded individual[s] who stand apart from the social and cultural surround” (p. 28). Thus, not only the young African woman, but the idea of what intimacy, love and desire means in SD relationships is not authentic but socio-historically and culturally constructed. From a Foucauldian and Althusian perspective, how young African women “conceive of themselves as sexual beings” and cultural representations of African women’s sexuality cannot be viewed separately (Lamb, 2014, p. 14). What a young African woman believes to be acceptable depends on discourses at her disposal, and the power that circulates around those discourses.

Young African women may endorse particular views, as self-chosen “even if such a view makes her feel bad or that her behaviour is wrong” (Lamb, 2014 p. 14).

Tamale (2014) uses Gramsci to illustrate how “hegemonic power convinces people to subscribe to the social values and norms of an inherently exploitative society” (p. 151). This was not uncommon in participants’ narratives, since in the Foucauldian sense, this “exploitative society” structures their truths. As such, “disciplinary power...fashions African people to conform to the mainstream notions of sexuality, thus voluntarily colluding with patriarchal-capitalist sexual moral standards” (ibid, p. 151). In the previous chapter I referred to how power represses, but is also contested by those it represses, and in this chapter, I extend the argument to include how power intersects with love, intimacy, and desire in SD relationships.

In this chapter, I discuss various ways in which participants contested and negotiated love, intimacy and desire in SD relationships, and how these negotiations revealed identities that were multiple and often contradictory. This allowed me to identify attempts by participants to negotiate their identities, in the presence of constraints and position them as agents within those constraints. Therefore the “victim/agent binary” proved inadequate in explaining participants’ experiences of SD relationships. This is not to ignore hegemonic power that subjects African women to racialized, classed and gendered oppressions. Similar to Mupotsa (2008) I argue that young African women do not engage in SD relationships because they are less economically empowered than men but because “men’s economic advantage itself is premised upon a preceding set of gender relations that places women’s sexuality in the control of men” (p. 7).

For Althusser (1998) and Butler (1990), the subject can never be viewed separately from the ideological state apparatus i.e. patriarchy, since “the subject must be performatively constituted in order to make sense *as* a subject” (Youdell, 2006, p. 10). However, I also concur with Youdell’s (2006) Foucauldian stance that “no discourse is guaranteed” (p. 10). She explained that “while particular discourses prevail in some contexts and endure over time, the potential for the meanings of these to shift and/or for subordinate discourse to unsettle these remains” (p. 10). Thus, inclusion of young African women’s narratives of love, intimacy and desire is my strategy to destabilize and possibly shift meanings of SD relationships, to reconsider simultaneous presence of ‘pleasure’ and ‘danger.’ Foregrounding this strategy, I followed Youdell by drawing on Butler’s performativity theory to render participants performatively constituted, and further draw on “Althusser’s notion of subjection and Foucault’s notion of

subjectification” to further engender “a nuanced understanding of production [doing] and constraint” (p. 10) during the negotiations of pleasure in danger (and danger in pleasure).

6.2 (Un)Doing pleasure and danger: Agency, power, heterosexual matrix

Freedom in feminist post-structuralism has been fiercely contested. In her critique, Nussbaum (1999) argued, from a liberal perspective, that individual autonomy is ignored in discourse theories promulgated by Butler and Foucault. To their defence, MacKenzie (cited in Lamb, 2014) countered that Nussbaum’s critique is disingenuous and reiterated that “Foucault’s insight was that power relations are *both* constraining and enabling, that they provide ‘both the limits to and conditions of possibility for action’” (p. 15, *emphasis original*), insight also supported by this study.

Participant accounts of SD relationships depicted them as temporary parts of their student life, although some fantasised on the many possibilities that these relationships held. Similar to transactional sex paradigms, I discussed in chapter two, SD relationships were what participants claimed they engaged in to get easy cash, look good on campus, and cater for their (immediate) needs. Some (Zothile and Nonkonzo) talked about how these relationships were to take away *‘istress sabafana’ (boys’ stress)*, to use the freedoms of university to *‘experiment’* and *‘have fun’* (Nikiwe, Skhululiwe, Siziwe) while waiting for the *‘ideal husband’*, with Yandisa and Nosipho stressing that *‘it’s not such a big deal, I mean you have sex anyway and if you can be given money as well, why not’* and like Slindile, *‘sex [was] not such a big deal.’* Unlike studies I discussed in chapter two, I did not focus mainly on the reasons ‘why’ participants engaged in SD relationships. Instead, I looked at ‘how’ they negotiated their identities within these relationships, and in this chapter, specifically how they made meaning of love, intimacies and desires within SD relationships.

Findings from my study have revealed that “doing [and undoing] ‘gender’ and ‘sexuality’ in non-normative ways is not simply a matter of choice, but involves grappling with both subjective constraints and the constraints of accepted discursive practices” (Davies cited in Renold, 2006, p. 494). However, my findings confirm that African women are not a homogenous gender as per my critique of Caldwin et al. (1989) in chapter two and three and this chapter furthers this critique by discussing how (African) gender heterogeneity featured in the way participants performed desire, intimacy and love in SD relationships.

Against essentialist beliefs of sexuality as exclusively biologically conditioned and thus unchangeable, my feminist post-structural view renders sexuality fluid, along with other

discourses such as class, race and gender. In corroboration, Tamale (2014, p. 151) adds that “sexuality is very much a socio-cultural invention that is closely linked to power and to the processes of subjugation.” As young African women, how they “do’ and experience sexuality is heavily influenced by society and culture” which, through ideological state apparatuses, provide guidelines on “how and with whom [to] have sex, what to desire, [and] how [to] express pleasure” (p. 151). I thus analysed participants’ narratives with an appreciation of their learning, (or scripting in social constructionism- see Simon & Gagnon, 1999) which I discussed in chapter five as inclusive of sexual knowledges and truths.

Like Simon and Gagnon, Butler (1990, p. 34) argued that there exists no “free floating” gender attributes, but “gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence”, circulating within a matrix of normative sexualities. Butler (1990, p. 151) refers to the “heterosexual matrix as a hegemonic discursive/epistemological model of gender intelligibility that assumes that for bodies to cohere and make sense there must be a stable sex expressed through a stable gender.” Throughout this chapter, I refer to how participants’ performances unsettled the social order, or heterosexual matrix, and also how their strategic attempts to destabilize the heterosexual matrix did not significantly alter the social order.

In their study, Morrell and Jewkes (cited in Bhana, 2017) argued that although “sexualities are produced...their production is often premised upon conditions not of their own choosing suggesting ways in which agency is and can be constrained by wider structural inequalities” (p. 246). My findings confirm that structural constraints were indeed present, but they were also not uncontested (Venganai, 2017). Citing Foucault, Venganai (2017) argued that “power is not only repressive, but also productive, in that it may provoke a counter reaction from the very people the power is supposed to constrain” (p. 163). I demonstrate how during interviews, young African women used language to narrate their (re)negotiation of power in SD relationships, particularly in the expressions of love, intimacies and desires. I discuss nuances of this power at the different points of the relationship, and how it intersected with the heterosexual matrix.

6.3 Negotiating courtship: ‘Ukushela/ukuqoma’

Love, intimacy and desire are negotiated differently across cultures, and social constructionists suggest that no individual makes decisions without societal or cultural influences (Burr, 1995; Jackson, 1999; Simon & Gagnon, 1999). As such, by virtue of being ‘young’, ‘African’,

'female', and 'student', participants' constructions of love, intimacy and desire make sense or become intelligible (Butler, 1990; 1999) within the limits of their cultural and societal constraints. During interviews, particularly at the beginning, I wanted to understand how SD relationships started, specifically to what extent young women themselves participated in the initiation and maintenance of these relationships.

In IsiZulu, 'ukushela' describes the process of proposing "love to a woman and literally means 'burning with desire for'" and the acceptance (consent) of the love proposal is "ukuqoma" (Doke et al., cited in Hunter, 2004, p. 7). The prevailing notion that ukushela is a role strictly reserved for men, and ukuqoma for women is well documented (Delius & Glaser, 2002; Hunter, 2004, 2010; Krige, 1950). I discuss this in the context of ukushela as narrated by participants. Unlike a marriage proposal, ukushela is "a declaration of interest" (Pattman, 2005, p. 502) and in this section I describe how ukushela is contested and reconfigured within a contemporary context.

6.3.1 If he drinks Hunters Dry, then sorry I'll pass

Alcohol was narrated by most participants as determining the possibilities for the SD relationship to be initiated. It was not alcohol per se, but the 'type' of alcohol that participants made mention of, shedding some light on aspects of class in SD relationship.

Zothile: For me, it is not difficult to get who I want, but I have to always tread carefully because I might be seen as desperate.

Researcher: Tread carefully, how?

Zothile: Don't make it too obvious, just sit back, it will happen, it always does. But you need to have a good eye in this thing for it to work

Researcher: Oh, I see, so where does this thing take place? Tell me more about the 'eyeing'

Zothile: At clubs, restaurants, anywhere... I mean literally everywhere, you just need to know how the game is played. So, me when I go to clubs, I don't go alone, mostly...my friends are also around, so we look, come together, agree, disagree and yah that sort of thing. [PAUSE] and you can't just pick anyone, like for me if he drinks Hunters Dry then sorry, I'll pass [laughs].

Researcher: So, you know your class, and guys who drink Hunters Dry are not part of it?

Zothile: *Hayi, never... Hunters Dry is cheap even students can afford it, not that I don't drink it as well but naaaa it's just cheap.*

Researcher: *I hear what you are saying, it is an affordable drink [nods], then what happens?*

Zothile: *You continue scanning, and you find those with Moet, Glen-livet, Glen Fiddish, you know other expensive whiskies. Then you know izinja ze game lezo (those are the top dogs)*

From the above narrative it is clear that Zothile and her peers were clear about how they identified their potential SDs, and the type of alcohol consumed by SDs was one of those identifiers. Hunters Dry in this case was identified as a drink of a lesser class, since 'even students can afford it.' It would seem that the more expensive the alcohol, the higher the potential for the SD relationship to be 'pursued', yet she also asserted the need to 'tread carefully because I might be seen as desperate.' Evidently, Zothile, as was the case with other young women in my study, still subscribed to the dominant sexuality script "in which women are positioned as reluctant recipients of male desires" (Allen, 2003, p. 220). The strong association of alcohol with SD relationships, particularly at the beginning of the relationship was narrated in multiple ways, and as for Slindile and her friends, alcohol enabled them to showcase their net worth to potential SDs.

Sometimes you just need to play these men at their own game, so just last week, cos NSFAS had finally paid for our meals, we decided to go to Eyadini, ngiyazi uyayazi [I am sure you know Eyadini] ... [I nodded in agreement –it's a famous hangout in Umlazi] so we pulled in money together, just 6 of us and we ordered the most expensive alcohol. We do this quite often even with money from men, but this time it was quite interesting cos iselokshini (it's in the township). You must have seen the looks on some men's faces, they looked at us, then looked at drinks on our table...and clearly, we were not their target market [laughs], like they couldn't believe that we had bought this alcohol ourselves and akukho snayi esichuthwayo (no man is being plucked) [laughs]. In a way it helped because we only attracted those who could measure up to our worth sikhathele inzinqonqela (we are tired of stingy men)

It was interesting to note that, while I did not pose a question directly about 'alcohol', it surfaced spontaneously, even during the maintenance of SD relationships. Participants' strategic use of alcohol to target or be targeted by potential SDs was a demonstration of the role alcohol played in these relationships. Both Zothile's and Slindile's narratives seem to

conform to neoliberal notions of choice, as evidenced in Slindile's claim that *'we are tired of stingy men'* thus justifying the choice to *'play men at their own game'* and like Zothile, scan properly, and *'pass'* if they drink Hunters Dry. In both narratives, I found that the need to act less 'desperate' was emphasized, and while strategies were put in place to circumvent appearing desperate, treading carefully meant making choices, but also not shifting from the norm. Their choices were therefore "framed through a 'right' or 'wrong' that has already been somewhat determined" (Foster, 2014, p. 146).

Zothile: I don't focus on it much but yena he enjoys it. And alcohol makes it bearable even though I wake up in the morning feeling awful even though I have that money.

Researcher: So, you are saying that the money is good but the sex is not so good?

Zothile: Not so good is an understatement, as far as I am concerned, I have never been intimate with him and yena -he is always telling me how much he enjoys it.

The way in which these two participants spoke about alcohol suggests that they were aware of alcohol as invoking masculine power, as was evident Wojcicki's (2002) study of survival sex and alcohol consumption within a South African township context. Wojcicki found that in taverns, it was widely known that "if a man buys a woman a beer, he is entitled to have sex with her that evening" (p. 275), then I understood why Slindile highlighted the significance of their action within a *township*. In a way, they were not township men's *'target market'* which explains the frown they got from some who went past their table. The narrative suggests that, them buying alcohol for themselves was a form of resistance against what is normalized within a township setting, yet similarly they subverted this power by using alcohol to attract men "*who could measure up to their worth.*" As Foucault (1991) argued "where there is power, there is always resistance" (p. 550), and subversion (Butler, 1999). While these two participants were conscious of not appearing desperate, some participants were similarly aware of the need to act desperate, and hereunder is my attempt to analyse their discourses.

6.3.2 Sometimes you just need to act needy and innocent

I discussed above how participants employed strategies that helped them to attract SDs, but also mindful of not appearing desperate. At this juncture, I analyse how acting desperate was

a strategy that enabled some participants to gain entry into the SD relationships, and the knowledge that this act of neediness was not permanent.

At the beginning in order to appear needy, you must look plain and simple but as the money comes in, you need to also move with it.

Gugulethu

They like hearing stories of how being a student is hard, so just give them that and you are sorted. Like me, I start with how I don't know my mother and how my granny is struggling and all I want is to make her proud, which is true but I spice it up to just get sympathy [covers face and laughs]... the story of NSFAS always works, I told you that granny got me a bursary from municipality, so it's paying but I just blame NSFAS and how it has been delayed, you know the normal stories [laughs]

Siyathokoza

I told him when he approached me that I was not allowed to be around boys at all, my parents would freak if they saw me with a man, let alone a man as old as my dad. I told the current guy that angijoli (I don't date) and he was impressed saying that he had not heard that in a long time.

Thandazile

Evident in the above quotes are the enactments of dominant constructions of passive femininities, and the participants seem to be justifying their passivity and innocence as necessary, especially at the beginning of the relationship. Appearing '*plain and simple*', according to Gugulethu was a strategy that she had tried and tested, and she went on to explain how men don't like '*omathandizinto*' (girls who like things) as it negatively paints you as someone who is a gold digger (see chapter five). In other words, through enactments of fragility and innocence, the participants were able to portray emphasized femininities and simultaneously reinforce hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 2002) in the portrayal of '*normal stories*' which, Thandazile's partner '*had not heard in a long time*', as she further explains.

He said that nowadays, you meet girls and baphaphile (too forward) and all they want is your money, especially young ones so for him I was not that type and I still respected my parents. It was funny because he kept saying that over and over again, and I guess

that is how he was complimenting me and from then onwards I was his girlfriend even though I don't even remember saying yes or him even asking me to become one.

It was clear that Thandazile's 'choice' to act innocent had paid off but, like Chapkis (1997), I argue that 'free choice' in sexual exchange relationships is impractical for young African women. Instead, it "can be understood as a place of agency where [i.e. women entering into SD relationships] make use of the existing social order" (p. 29-30). Although ukushela/ukuqoma occurred with fluidity, with narrated performances of tried and tested strategies, these were still enacted "within a particular set of constraints" that prevail within a "patriarchal capitalist system" (Sanders, 2009, p. 521). Knowledge of these constraints influenced certain discourses to be boldly pronounced.

6.3.3 Don't complicate things, love is sweet but money makes it sweeter

Aware of the constraints of a capitalist society, Landile stated she saw no need to '*beat around the bush and waste each other's time since after all, he needs sex and I need the money, there is no need to complicate things.*' Landile informed me how she is very firm about not engaging in relationships where she won't gain anything.

I don't work on promises, I need to know what I am getting myself into. If he knows he will be shagging me, I also must know how I will be compensated, uthando lusweet (love is sweet) but money makes everything sweeter. So, for me, don't even think about taking your chances.

When probed whether she approaches men or they approach her, she confirmed that she approaches them and puts them on a scale (*ngibafaka eskalini*) and if I see that *umashayashaya* (not the real deal or chancers), then I tell him straight '*to just forget.*' In a way, she wanted them to make the first move, but ukuqoma (acceptance) was highly dependent on her terms and conditions. The '*love is sweet but money makes it sweeter*' narrative corresponds with that of Selikow and Mbulaheni's (2013) study in which young women identified the inextricable link between love and money. In their study, participants mentioned that "I do love him but at the same time, food has to be on the table" (ibid, p. 86). I explore what 'love' meant in the context of the SD relationship further in this chapter. Money featured significantly during the SD relationship, even before the relationship began.

Participants in Masvawure's (2011) study were also very strategic in how they 'selected' their SDs and for some, not having to select them was another form of self-protection. As per Landile's advice '*not to waste each other's time*', three participants made mention of '*campus pimps*' and how through them, the pressure to negotiate entry in SD relationship was lessened. Two made reference to female pimps, while one (Nompendulo) had an actual experience with a male pimp. So, during our discussion on pimps, I asked Jabulile how this female pimping works. She explained that '*it's just girls who are experienced in this and they just hook you up, and what's nice about this is that you don't pay them yourself but the SD gives her her share.*' She was not clear about how much they received, but she did indicate that it was known who to approach if you needed a SD.

Researcher: So, these are the mediators?

Jabulile: Ya, you could call them that, but also like it's bigger than that ... like a pyramid scheme sort of thing.

Researcher: Oh, that is interesting...tell me more about this scheme.

Jabulile: How do I explain this but let's say I get you a sugar daddy, I will get paid for that and if you do the same, for him or his friends, you make extra cash, and so on and so on, Like a lot of money is exchanged here.

Researcher: I see what you mean, you seem to know a lot about it.

Jabulile: [interjects] NO! Ask anyone around here, they will tell you, akekho ongazi (everybody knows).

Except for Nompendulo, no other participant actually claimed to have been officially referred to a SD by a pimp, instead most were often hooked up by peers who helped them decide to qoma or not to qoma (to accept or decline proposal). This is not uncommon at this level of sexual scripting (Simon & Gagnon, 1986). Nosipho was not too sure if there was money exchanged, and unlike Jabulile, she expressed disgust at women who did this.

I have recently found out that there are girls who operate like pimps, like they introduce fresh girls to these older guys and I am not sure if they get paid but I don't understand how other women could do this to other women, it's just disgusting, you come here and you start trusting but they will mess you up.

The word pimp was used by Nompendulo, Jabulile and Nosipho to refer to the person in charge of hooking young students with SDs or vice versa. Inconsistent with Nosipho's detestation over *'how other women could do this'*, Masvawure (2011) found that pimps in a Zimbabwean university were not viewed in negative light by most of his participants in SD relationships. This was because the pimp acted as a "middleman and handled all communication between a female student and a client" (ibid, p. 90). However, pimps in Masvawure's study were all men and trusted by those who used their services, which could then justify Nosipho's disgust when such a service is administered by another woman - who according to her is supposed to be caring and trustworthy.

During one of my visits to the salon, a guy, possibly in his early 20s initiated a conversation with the guy who was doing my hair, and this somehow caught my attention. He spoke about this young guy who is known around Durban as "*Pussy Dog*" and he described him as admired by many for his ability to get *'izingane eziright –right kids'* (referring to beautiful young girls). Apparently, this guy gets calls from guys in Johannesburg to organize girls to have fun with, and to get as many as possible. I cannot get into the details of this young man's conversation, but what I gathered from it was that he actually admired this guy, and the guys who could afford to have fun with the many girls. Echoing these sentiments was a male participant in Masvawure's (2011, p. 168) study, who became a campus pimp, upon realizing that "pimping was *'easy money'* and that the *'demand'* for such services was high."

While analysing discourses, such as pimps/mediators and their current use I could not ignore the resonance between these modern mediators and amaqhikiza (women mediators in Zulu traditional society, see chapter three). Amaqhikiza are women who were considered sexually experienced, but was also known to have practiced self-discipline, and inhlonipho (respect) during their younger years (Delius & Glaser, 2002; Krige, 1951). Being guided by amaqhikiza is not so common nowadays, and Maureau (2014, p. 138) argued that this role has "not sufficiently been filled by other forms of sexual education." Nevertheless, the interview excerpts above suggest that the use of *pimps* as mediators enabled some women to not *'beat around the bush.'*

My analysis of the iqhikiza and pimp/mediator acknowledged how discourses in feminist post-structuralism carry multiple meanings within a modernist society. For Eisenstadt (2000), modernity and tradition can never be separated, and he supports his argument by highlighting

how traditional practices “in modern era, despite being greatly influenced by specific cultural premises and historical experiences, are distinctively modern” (p. 2). So instead of viewing participants as influenced by either modern or traditional constructions of femininity, I argue that they constructed their identities within ‘plural modernities.’ This highlights the changeability and fluidity of discourses, plus the convergence of the then and the now, as per feminist post-structural thought.

I discussed earlier Nompandolo’s interaction with the campus pimp, who although mentioned by her only (except for female student pimps mentioned by Jabulile and Nosipho), she claimed was notorious around his campus, as well as at the campus where the study was conducted. What I highlight here is that pimping is perceived differently across genders, which in the following excerpt allowed Nompandolo to use to her advantage.

I told him [campus pimp] this one time that he needs to hook my father up with a job, anything available through his contacts, cos he knows how to paint and also do bricklaying. [...] knows people who are up there, big shots. He called me a week later to say that I should call some guy from Port Shepstone, which was great since its closer to ekhaya. He was building a school closer to Port Shepstone. I don’t want to lie, I appreciate that he did that for me even though the job was only for six months, but the money was needed. Funny thing is that I never got a chance to meet that Good Samaritan who helped my father.

Nompandolo’s narrative demonstrates how even as students, their ‘*ekhaya*’ scripts of unemployment bothered them. She had mentioned during her first interview how her father could manage to secure jobs from white people, who unlike ‘black people’ were good payers, and although she refers to a black person here as the Good Samaritan, he was a ‘rich black man’ who was associated with the campus pimp. Her finding it funny that she never got to meet the Good Samaritan suggests that she considered all of ‘campus pimps’ associates as *hyenas* who saw women like Nompandolo, as *meat*. In this example, the relationship with the campus pimp fulfilled her ‘*ekhaya*’ needs, even if it was just for six months. Campus pimps, therefore also knew ‘*Good Samaritans*’ a script Nompandolo was not too familiar with (see next theme, *nika nika*). Below she discusses a more familiar relationship script that resonates with traditional notions of ‘*ukushela*’ discussed under the current theme. In Varga’s (2003) study, young women admitted that you can’t just say yes immediately, you need to do your

research and make the man chase after you and not the other way around. In Nompendulo's case, when she told her current SD that she had a boyfriend, he was not deterred.

I told him that I have a boyfriend, and he just said its ok, and I must give him a chance to prove himself. I thought I was chasing him away but instead, he kept insisting that everyone needs a 'spare wheel' and he was that, an old wheel though [laughs]. I had not met such, so what I did I googled him but could not find anything, then I went to Facebook, still nothing. So, this one time, I asked him to tell me about himself cos I knew nothing and I could see that made him happy since it showed I was a little bit interested, he just said I must not worry, he is prepared to treat me nicely, that's all I needed to know.

Without any background information about the man, Nompendulo was left with the promise of being treated nicely, a promise asserted by most participants. When I probed further on how she felt about not finding any information about him on Facebook, she brushed it off and said that '*cha ngabona vele nje amakhela no facebook vele akuhlangani*' (I realised that this man is old, and old men and facebook just don't mix). Nompendulo's partner was 41 years old and she later realised that he was married. When Nompendulo started asking personal questions, her SD saw it as a sign of progress (*ukuqoma*), and in any case he had already begun treating her nicely. One of the tricks of *ukushela* is to persevere "so that she will think that you find her special" (Van Reeuwijk, 2009, p. 102), which proved true in Nompendulo's case. I noticed that Nompendulo didn't say how exactly she accepted his love offer, which I also found in most participants' narratives of *ukuqoma*. Skhululiwe even gave me a biblical explanation, which I found interesting.

Skhululiwe: If he says he loves me, I am ok with that but I can't be saying I love you too cos vele ibhayibheli lithi siyathoba bona bayathanda—Because the bible says they love and we obey.

Researcher: So umqoma kanjani ke – then how do you accept his love?

Skhululiwe: By obeying

Researcher: But how, tell me how you accepted [name]'s love.

Skhululiwe: The usual nje... ok cos he had said it many times that he loves me, I eventually said – ok asizame ke (let's give it a try) and that's a sign of love [laughs]

Researcher: And he understood that this meant you love him?

Skhululiwe: Perfectly, in fact he was over the moon.

Nompendulo and Skhululiwe's excerpts above suggest that perseverance does pay off, and *ukushela* demands a lot of it. Skhululiwe's biblical justification of *loving* men and *obedient* women, and her understanding of the two as dichotomous roles was quite interesting. As mentioned in chapter five, Skhululiwe's father was a pastor, and during our time together she often referred to religious constructions of 'love' and the need to stay 'pure.' How Skhululiwe negotiated her religious beliefs in SD relationships, pointed to the "need to apprehend not only politics, history, and society, but also the place of "religion, spirituality, ethics and beliefs in the production of individuals' lives and meanings" (Rasmussen, 2017, p. 125), and I take the liberty to include race.

In the previous chapter I discussed how Sibusisiwe (22) presented herself as an intelligent and independent girl, for whom *'being black and beautiful comes with challenges'* as it did not allow her to perform her intelligence and independence the way she hoped she would. Although I did not ask any of the participants about their partners' race, it in some way found a way into our conversations. In Sibusisiwe's case she mentioned how, at the beginning of the relationship, *u-Mr (she referred to him as such- the Mr)* was so impressed with how well spoken and opinionated she was, *'especially for a Zulu girl.'* Judging by her expression while narrating, I realised that this for her was an affirmation that she was not only beautiful but intelligent as well.

The Zulu girl axis caught my interest. Oyewumi (2002) blames colonialism for its dichotomizing of "gender and racial categories ... as two fundamental axes along which [African] people are exploited and societies stratified" (p. 1). And although the racially gendered utterances came from Mr, Sibusisiwe was complicit in reinforcing racial and gendered power asymmetries (Bhana, 2016; Hunter, 2002; Manganyi, 1973; May, 2015).

In his book titled *Being Black in the World*, Chabani Manganyi (1973) argued that blackness in South Africa had been dominantly considered "unwholesome" whilst whiteness epitomized "societal standards of wholesomeness" (p. 6), a thesis clearly elucidated by the eminent post-colonial writer, Frantz Fanon (1961; 1967). In his *Black Skin White Mask*, Fanon describes the desire for whiteness, and how adeptness at a white – in that instance referring to the French - language gave one "honorary [French] citizenship", and could "open doors" to worlds and

cultures hitherto denied (Fanon, 1967, p. 38), and the complicity of African women and men in reinforcing and reproducing inferior-superior constructions of race. Manganyi (1973) described two images that we hold of ourselves and others, that is images that co-operate and those that don't co-operate, and both are exemplified in Sibusisiwe's excerpt. For example, Mr's image of Sibusisiwe, particularly her proficient articulation of English, didn't co-operate with dominant scripts of "being-black-in-the-world", and I was not too impressed with Sibusisiwe's complicity.

Researcher: He was right you are well spoken, and yes you are beautiful but that should not surprise you.

Sibusisiwe: I guess so, but it is nice when you hear it from a man.

Researcher: You mean a man of a different race, since uMr is not black?

Sibusisiwe: Not really, just men in general ... I mean... I hear what you are saying and ngempela (really) maybe he was just trying his softening tactics on me [laughs].

Researcher: Don't get me wrong, the compliment was befitting ...just not the 'Zulu girl' part.

Sibusisiwe: I see what you mean.

Furthermore, it emerged that *ukushela* is not always performed to achieve *ukuqoma*. One Friday evening, Slindile and I were scheduled to meet at Mug and Bean for supper. When I arrived, I saw a middle-aged man (I will call him Thami) already sitting with her, and I decided not to disturb them, but she raised her hand to indicate that I had to come over. As he left our table, I noticed that he went to another table where two other men were seated, and I couldn't help but notice how they shook hands. Slindile then went on to explain that this man had started *ukushela* and she just acted interested and went with the flow '*just to pass time, no harm in that.*' What I learned from this is that some men (in this case, older), as was the case with Thami, approached younger girls, not with the ultimate goal of being *qoma'd*, but more to prove their ability to *shela* and to engage in intimate conversations with younger girls. Hunter (2004) argued that it is through such masculine performances (by Thami) and compliance (by Slindile) that "male power [is] embodied and reiterated" (p. 20). Unaware, Slindile had partnered in upholding hegemonic masculinities and emphasized femininities (Connell, 1995).

The power to enable reiteration of male power was also evident in narratives of once off SD relationship encounters with men who just wanted to be seen with beautiful young girls.

Nosipho narrated her 'on the spot' relationships.

I wouldn't call these other ones relationships, cos they are on the spot relationships, like we go out, chill in public places where a group of men probably will call us to come sit with them. They talk and you are there listening to how well they are doing, and I am like... so what, 'talk is cheap', it ends right there for me. Sometimes you can take it further but some of these men just want to show off, and you just need to go with the flow.

Nosipho further explained how in these 'on the spot' relationships, any of the men could initiate *ukushela* and there is a possibility of more than one man proposing love to the same woman. They compete as to who would eventually succeed in winning the woman, and she had noticed several times how this competition was all about them and less about the woman. However, Nosipho mentioned how experienced she was in the game and for her 'talk is cheap' and she never pursued these relationships further, but her statement that 'sometimes you can take it further' suggests that she was aware of situations where these 'on the spot' relationships had progressed to SD relationships, as was true in Nonkonzo's situation.

Nonkonzo referred to how, when she went to the movies with her three friends to watch the movie *Inxeba* at Musgrave, there was a group of four men in their late 40's in front of them in the popcorn queue. Out of nowhere, one of them shouted '*amageja alingene abalimi*' (IsiZulu idiom - the hoes are equal to the diggers), suggesting that because there were four men, and four women, there could be a fair and equal distribution. As an IsiZulu language speaker myself, I had never imagined that such an idiom would find relevance within such a SD context, and Nonkonzo and I discussed this at length, and joked about the use of tactics of 'ukushela' within the Zulu culture. We even asked ourselves: *then who is the hoe? And who are the diggers?* And we could not establish that, and my discourse analysis suggests that diggers and hoes are not fixed categories. She went on to explain that they bought popcorn for them and soon thereafter, they were causing chaos inside the movie theatre, as they negotiated with other movie attendees to shift seats so they could sit next to their '*muntu wami-my person.*'

Although there are notable changes in the manner in which *ukushela/ukuqoma* has evolved, particularly how it is negotiated by young African women in a contemporary society, and in the context of SD relationships, it was clear that the ‘template’ remains unchanged. Most participants revealed that a woman still needs to wait for a man to make his first move, and she can at least strategize through flirting in order to fast-track the process of *ukushela*. In the next section I discuss what follows after *ukuqoma*. I disagree with claims by Varga (cited in Maureau, 2014) that “as soon as a woman has accepted her suitor as her lover, she becomes his; in a way he controls her” (p. 140). Such over simplistic claims according to Fook (2016, p. 67) “seem to split the world into two oppositional groups – the *powerful* and the *powerless* – with the accompanying assumptions that they are two mutually exclusive groups.” In my analysis of love, intimacy and desire, I bring relevance to Fook’s (2016) claims that power may be “expressed, experienced and created by [both parties] at different levels” (ibid. p. 71) of relationships, including SD relationships.

6.4 Negotiating love, intimacy, desire and money

Consistent with feminist post-structural theories, I continue to discuss the ‘talk’ between participants and I in order to explicate discourses of love, intimacy and desire that circulated in participants’ experiences of SD relationships. Moreover, my focus on ‘talk’ is foregrounded by an understanding “that language and discourse constitute meaning, and hence particular discourses enable and constrain people’s options for how to be and act in the social world” (Braun, Gavey & McPhillips, 2003, p. 241).

6.4.1 Pure love without money is poor love

My discussion thus far included how heterosexual norms (i.e., learned behaviour and truths) featured in the participants’ SD relationship narratives, particularly how these norms, although performed and challenged at a micro level, without noticing, actually reinforced macro level ideologies of femininities (and masculinities). Agentic strategies by participants to challenge heteronormativity have been highlighted, albeit with accompanying constraints. Argued here is that love, intimacy and desire in (SD) relationships are performed not as self-chosen but in accordance with societal expectations of heteronormativity (Butler, 1995).

Although I discuss individual participant’s experiences of love, intimacy and desire, I am simultaneously juggling these against macro-systems, for these provided participants with

discursive repertoires that intersect with race, gender and class (Braun et al., 2003). While these available repertoires, as per feminist post-structural thought, are never “singular [n]or fixed, [they] can be both oppressive and liberatory at different moments” (ibid, p. 255). I specify neoliberal modernity as a significant moment that, although not unchanging, continues to promote modernistic ideals, as evidenced in participants’ constant insistence on *‘looking good’* and *‘keeping up with latest trends’* similar to Masvawure’s (2010b) participants who just wanted to ‘look flashy on campus’ (see Chapter two).

Financial constraints were communicated as inhibiting achievement of neoliberal ideals that come with urban studentship. Conveniently, sex with older, wealthy men facilitated attainment of this flashiness. I discussed in chapter two the various definitions of transactional sex, and specifically SD relationships (Hunter, 2002, 2010; Kaufman & Stavrou, 2004; Leclerc-Madlala, 2005; Luke, 2005; Willard, 2013). I return to Willard’s definition as it resonates closely with how participants described their expectations, that is, their partners needed to “offer money or gifts” in exchange for “companionship or intimacy” (p. 17). These exchanges were not seen as anything out of the ordinary, in fact participants seemed to feel that they were entitled to attain these gifts, and SD relationships enabled the attainment. Similar to Kaufman and Stavrou (2004), gift giving for participants in this study was “a natural part of *all* relationship[s]” (p. 378), and SD relationships were not unique. This, some participants tested even in the interview context.

Landile: But you and I know that money is important in any relationship.

Researcher: How so, care to explain?

Landile: We can’t fool ourselves and say pure love this, pure love that ... pure love my foot [laughs].

Researcher: So, you are saying, there is no pure love?

Landile: Not exactly but without money, forget ... it becomes poor love.

Landile’s narrative was not uncommon amongst participants, who felt strongly about how good it felt to be treated like *‘queens’* and experiencing the good life they felt they deserved. Receiving and giving is described by Komter (1996, p. 300) as “the cement of social relationships”, which justifies its universal normalisation. Interestingly, in his study in Amsterdam on gift giving in intimate relationships, Komter observed that men gave less gifts than women, which was not the case in my study. However, participants agreed that in their

relationships with their boyfriends, the gifting was lacking, and thus the need to supplement the boyfriend relationship with the SD relationship.

The traditional boyfriend relationships, according to most participants, were seemingly less rewarding, thus not worth it.

I thought to myself... what is the use of having sex with my boyfriend, when he gives nothing? [Long pause] just love [longer pause] I mean life is not just about love. So even though we do the same thing with the sugar daddy, he is a full package ... like he knows I have needs ... as a student... yet this other one, our needs are the same.

Siyathokoza

But why not if he [SD] can pay for it, love can join the money later.

Yandisa

Siyathokoza, Yandisa's narrative above resonate with Bhana's (2017) article titled: 'Love grows with sex: teenagers negotiating sex and gender in the context of HIV and the implications for sex education.' Bhana highlights the significance of "micro-processes through which relationships are forged" (p. 71), and this is also highlighted by this study. As a follow up with Siyathokoza, I asked her how her relationship with her boyfriend was, since she did not seem too impressed with the idea of giving him 'sex for free'

Researcher: So, did you stop having sex with your boyfriend?

Siyathokoza: Nope

Researcher: I just assumed since you said that your current partner gives the full package...

Siyathokoza: [interjects] Ya but he is still a sugar daddy and nothing is permanent there.

The temporality of SD relationships was appreciated by most participants, some using words that suggest how they found clingy partners unappealing, as 'chewing gum' (Landile) and 'isimbhelambhela –an ever-present irritation' (Hlengimpilo). Interestingly, reference to these unappealing titles was made to boyfriends and SD preferences, ambiguities and inconsistencies were noticeable across and within these discourses of preference. While some participants considered clinginess or ever-present attention unappealing, some participants considered absence of it (to a certain extent) also unappealing, which Sibusisiwe qualified as her then boyfriend's 'lagging behind' especially since although unaware, 'he was in completion'.

Not just that like he knows that I write tests on Friday, he sends me messages of good luck, and maybe buys me something, and he always remembers to ask about the results, you know something out of the ordinary, he does this so casually. And then on the side I had this boyfriend who just sends the occasional: “Hi, how you, take care”, like really so this one time I told him that ‘uyaslacker’ (lagging behind) and I don’t think he thought much into it, but then when I just couldn’t make time for him, he got the message loud and clear, I mean he was in competition

Sibusisiwe

Beyond financial provision, Sibusisiwe’s relationship with her SD was validating and affirming, exactly what she ordered in chapter five: acknowledgement and affirmation of her intellect, which her boyfriend had seemingly taken for granted. This affirmation by *uMr* is criticized earlier as actually affirming racial or ethnic discourses. The above narrative, in its current form, is not infringing in any way; in fact, *uMr* is providing support that clearly Sibusisiwe cherishes, and symbolises love and care.

Contradictions in the narratives of love were common. Siyathokoza’s repeated use of the word ‘nothing’ was quite interesting since she used it in the context of both the boyfriend relationship and the SD relationship. Firstly, she minimizes the importance of love in her claims that her boyfriend provides ‘*nothing, just love*’ which she claims coexisted with money in the SD relationship, yet she also justifies her keeping the boyfriend for ‘*nothing is permanent there.*’ All participants had boyfriends whilst engaging in SD relationship(s) and like Siyathokoza, various strategies and multiple, complex negotiations were performed. Although Ziningi referred to the father of her children as ‘*baba wabantwana – father of my children*’, I include him as her boyfriend, even though her mother has constructed him as a fiancé –*umkhwenyana*, who in fact also started as a SD in high school (see Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Kaufman & Stavrou, 2004). These boyfriend/SD negotiations confirm Hunter’s (2004) assertion that in contemporary South African society, intimate relationships are “driven by the more pragmatic pursuit of money and gifts” (p. 1), and I add love. These complexities I discuss further under the theme ‘*nika – I give, you give...*’ and I bring to light the aspect of ‘playing your part’ which I introduced in chapter five.

6.4.2 'Nika nika – I give, you give': Just play your part

Most participants were clear on their modus operandi in SD relationships, and they were not shy to give me the details. Relationships of this nature were considered by participants to be stress-free and didn't require one to pin themselves down. I mentioned previously that Nikiwe was set on getting a Muslim husband in order to 'avoid complications' and here I quote her avoidance of relationship complications through her 'fling' with a 34-year-old postgraduate male student she had met on campus one Saturday morning, who according to her – was 'financially ok':

Nikiwe: Ok this guy is much older than me, like I am 21 and he is 34. We have been intimate and he is here on campus. It is not like we said we wanted a relationship, it just happened but we didn't want to be serious.

Researcher: Whose terms were those? And who initiated the relationship or the 'fling'?

Nikiwe: It was him but I made sure that he knows that I don't want any feelings involved.

Researcher: How does that work? Tell me

Nikiwe: It just means no feelings, no attachments, just sex.

Researcher: But how do you control that?

Nikiwe: Ya, it's very hard cos you can't tell your partner to not see other people, yet you are also saying no strings attached, I know I am being unfair.

Researcher: So, you don't want him to be involved with other people and you also don't want to give him the feeling of being in a relationship?

Nikiwe: As I told you, I was in two bad relationships and I didn't want to get hurt again.

Consistent with feminist post-structural thought, engaging in SD relationships was not without ambiguities. Nikiwe also highlighted how her 'fling' was able to provide for her, but for her this was not about the money, she just wanted sex and the 'money was also good.' The individual choice to love in this context disguises underlying assumptions of that love, and if left unexamined and unquestioned become common sense knowledge (Bauman & Tester cited in Sewpaul, 2015, p. 463). Masvawure (2010b) argued against the notion that sexual exchanges for African women were not always premised on money and/or material exchange only. While

Masvawure's claims may be well founded within the Zimbabwean context, my findings suggest that all SD relationships by young women in my study were in fact premised on monetary or gift/material exchanges. Thus, participants used strategies to ensure that they hooked up with men who had money, and could afford their lifestyles. Although I admit that some participants were far more explicit in this regard, than others. For example, Siziwe's explicit mention of *'I just want the money'* in her narrative demonstrates money as significant, and *'sex is just a bridge'*

Its ok, maybe it's me...I don't really look forward to sex like most girls, like I could even hear girls making the effort to spice their sexual lives, hay mina (not me) – actually I just want the money and unfortunately, sex is just the bridge (laughs).

Siziwe

In the above narrative, Siziwe positions herself as having no interest in sex and *'unfortunately'* she needs it as a *'bridge'* to get what she wants. A critical reading of Siziwe's narrative suggests that she identifies herself as personally responsible for crossing the bridge, and thus as a neoliberal self-determining actor (see Sewpaul, 2015; Wooley, 2017) she uses sex. The dominance of the neoliberal discourse in participants' narratives of sex in SD relationships, as a commodity, is what Wooley described as "the 'common sense' we know but seldom name or examine, like the air we breathe and take for granted" (p. 85). As such, understanding how such meanings are contextually constructed needed me to consider "the cultural, economic, and political context in which the [SA] society and education are situated at the current moment" (Wooley, 2017, p. 85).

In chapter five, I discussed how (alongside the family, mass media and religious institutions) the *ivava*, as an ideological state apparatus (ISA), inculcated students in my study "with specific ways of imagining, thinking about and thus understanding their places within" and outside learning institutions (Wolff, 2005, p. 225). Siziwe's statement that *'I don't really look forward to sex like most girls'* depicts her as somehow 'unique' since for her sex is not that important. When asked about how young people spice up their sex lives, it became clear that although some claimed to enjoy sex with their boyfriends, these spices were ultimately to keep their partners *'abashibilikayo'* - whose cheating needed to be controlled. In her ethnographic study of girls' friendships in schools, Hey (cited in Renold and Ringrose, 2008) conceptualized

the othering of sexual deviance or feminine hyper-sexuality as “deficit dumping” (p. 323), which was evident in Siziwe’s differentiation of herself from ‘*most girls.*’

Participants often narrated their SD relationships as motivated by not only financial benefits, as they confirmed that love, companionship, and pleasure that often characterize intimate relationships were not absent. Interestingly, all of the women in my study were involved with affluent men, who in many ways spoiled them with gifts, money and dinner dates. Money received in this context was narrated as a symbol of romance and care. Love and care in modern times has been transformed, and fulfils neoliberal desires, which promote individual gains, at the touch of a button, and hereunder I highlight words that suggest Nonkonzo’s individualistic desires.

*I like that he spoils **me** even without **me** asking for anything. He will send **me** e-wallet⁴³ for **me** to do **my** nails and have lunch, and **I** appreciate that since it shows that he is thinking of **me** even when **I** am not around*

Nonkonzo

Online monetary transactions were common among participants. Mushinga (2016, p. 52) also found that participants received money through cash transfers like “Ecocash”, and this was considered an unexpected gesture, but nonetheless appreciated. Participants thus differentiated themselves from those women who asked for cash from their partners. These technological advancements demonstrate the monetized love, which within globalized settings often eliminates human contact (see chapter three).

The lack of human contact facilitated by global advancements was viewed by participants as an advantage. Landile, at one point during our interview, mentioned that she had received an e-wallet message from her partner whom she had lied to, saying she needed to go to the clinic for a morning after pill. She lied to him that she didn’t feel like going to the campus clinic and requested that he send her money. She showed me a message (R500- US\$36) as proof of the transfer. It was evident that Landile was happy that she had fooled the SD since she confessed that she was on contraceptives, and she knew that he stressed if she mentioned pregnancy possibilities, the SD or ‘*uguy would act fast.*’ Participants, like Landile often used dominant sexual scripts, as power within SD relationships. What I also found was that this power was

⁴³ E-wallet is a mobile phone payment method that enables card-less transactions

not singularly possessed, and also cut across and within categories of ‘self’. Another strategy by participants, was to manipulate the very same positions that their SDs occupied. I mentioned in chapter five how Slindile’s relationship with the “man of God” began. Slindile used his position as a respectable leader to control the relationship. She was aware of the extent to which he took measures to keep the relationship a secret, surmised that she could use this as leverage should he want to terminate the relationship, and she talked about the possibility of him giving up the priesthood to pursue a relationship.

As the self comes into contact with the other, ontological insecurity becomes imminent and demands impression management (Ranzini & Lutz, 2017). Encounters between the self and others often become uncomfortable and, like Siziwe, attempts to hierarchize their positioning are not unique. During the interview process, participants felt the need to draw distinction between SD relationships and prostitution, with the latter labelled deviant and lacking class. Skhululiwe mentioned how *‘it’s not like we go and stand at Point⁴⁴ road.’* These distinctions were not without ambivalence, as participants’ narratives often shifted as is evident in Phiwokuhle’s statement.

I know you are not judging us, but let’s be serious, no one wakes up in the morning and decides that ‘I want to date a sugar daddy’, we go there for the money and of course what happens after that is not always within your control, love can happen anytime. We can sugar coat it all we like but oksalayo siyasebenza (in fact we are working)

Phiwokuhle was in a relationship with a *‘bhuti’* from *‘ekhaya’* who because of familiarity was a preferred choice. Her statement, *‘but let’s be serious, no one wakes up in the morning and decides that ‘I want to date a sugar daddy’* demonstrates admission that SD relationships are ‘chosen’ within constraints. In this sense, SD relationships are *‘just a bridge’* and interestingly, she does not underestimate the possibility of loving while working, which I discussed in chapter two –love, intimacy and money (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Maganja et al., 2007; Selikow & Mbulaheni, 2013). In Sub-Saharan Africa, the binary between appropriate and inappropriate financial expectations, is blurry, in fact “in much of the world the notion of provider masculinity is a normative, desirable manifestation of hegemonic masculinity” (Fielding-

⁴⁴ Point or Point road is an area in Durban CBD, and any mention of it in most local spaces often suggests a surplus of commercial sex work and brothels. As such, the decision to change the name Point Road to Mahatma Gandhi was even considered an insult, partly due to the area’s negative constructions. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/street-names-must-reflect-durbans-history-419295>

Miller et al., 2016, p. 25). This creates confusion when money is received for sexual exchange and individual's claim that *'it's work'*, yet they also leave space for love to happen. In this regard, Bhana and Pattman's (2011, p. 961) argument that for some women, "upholding provider masculinity is a strategic means to claim money", ensues. During this interview with Phiwokuhle, as well as with other participants, I often wondered if during their relationship, they were able to convey messages such as *'we go there for the money'* when with SDs, they 'sugar-coated' their subjective positions.

Citing Butler, Finlay (2017) argued that achieving recognition requires that one is made intelligible and such "recognition is dependent on the existence of an Other against whose reflection a subject understands themselves and who is reciprocally recognised and understood in the reflection of the subject" (p. 3-5). It was clear from the narratives that while participants insisted on SD relationship as oppositional to prostitution; their discourses did not confirm this, as there was an overlap in their 'categorization', thus suggesting no neat binary. She admitted that it's *'work'* but also left room for the many possibilities that this *work* held. The multiple possibilities that the SD relationship held for participants included risk, but were also not exclusive of pleasure, love and permanence.

For her, the relationship was narrated as instrumental, yet she confirmed that the direction that the relationship took was *not always within your control*. Therefore, I argue that the significance of time cannot be underplayed in SD relationship, this is in view of how participants' agentic performances manifested across time and place, a signifier of both coherence and change (Fook, 2016). I highlight this in relation to how participants' actions were "oriented toward the past, the future, and the present at any given moment" as also emphasized by Emirbayer and Mische (1998, p. 964).

Chapkis (1997) reminds us that 'free choice' in sexual exchange is impractical for women, "but instead can be understood as a place of agency where [women in SD relationships] make use of the existing social order" (p. 29-30). The culture of exchanging sex for money is therefore taken as constitutive, and it is within this social order that I became interested in how participants resisted and tolerated, what was 'normal'. What I gathered from listening to participants' lived experiences in SD relationships was that, contradiction and uncertainty of some thoughts or behaviours were the order of the day. I, therefore, needed to embrace these contradictions and the socio-cultural contexts of their experiences.

In the excitement of fun, and just playing around, participants engaged in risky relationships, assuming that they had the upper hand in these relationships. In order to appreciate the conceptualization of power by participants in this study, I needed to “begin from an understanding of the cultural construction of subjectivity – or how cultural contexts, practices, and assumptions inform young women’s thoughts and decision” (Sanders, 2016, p. 15). This is in recognition of “identities [as not only] impacted by our social context, but also [how] we construct our identities from those contexts and the competing discourses that circle within them” (ibid, p. 16). Discourses confer upon the individual what is acceptable within various social groups, such as being a student.

Honestly, nothing in this life is for free, u-nika-nika, the sooner you know that the less stressed you will be

Nompendulo

The above excerpts provided insight into how participants made sense of sex as a ‘*bridge*’ to financial opportunities, which Nompendulo considered ‘not free’, thus implying not within easy access. Siyathokoza’s acknowledgement of the ‘*entire package*’ and Nompendulo’s mention of ‘*nika nika*’ caught my attention as this depicted some level of reciprocity albeit unspoken. I then understood why Thandazile felt like she was not ‘*playing*’ her ‘*part*’ when she could not reciprocate with sex, and as with her other ex-boyfriends I discussed in chapter five, she couldn’t keep SDs. On the other hand, Skhululiwe, although also a virgin, learned very quickly how to avoid Thandazile’s distress:

I had to explain that I was a virgin, he got angry and felt like I led him on and wasted his time, yet there were girls he could have taken and they were willing to go all the way. Then when I told my friends about it, they gave me a few tips and said that I must do i-blow job cos they like it.

Within a feminist post-structural understanding of sexuality, the above accounts of heterosexual practices depict sex as learned and “contextual[ly] shaped by competing discourses of heterosexuality...[which] are seen to enable, and limit the possibilities of, material discursive practices” (Braun et al., 2003). Therefore, while Nompendulo boldly declared that ‘*nothing is for free*’, her subsequent utterances were filled with contradictions in that she regretfully admits to having given sex (or rather it being ‘*taken*’) for free, thus implying reciprocity. In essence, men were rendered by participants as always in need of sexual satisfaction, owing to their inherent sexual drive and even though Slindile claims that she ‘*can’t*

not do it’, and then quickly forcefully states: *‘I don’t mean he forces me’* almost as if to suggest her sense of control in the relationship. On Slindile reprimanding her SD and referring to him as *‘nigger’*, in this context resonating with how Fanon (1952) problematized an educated mulatto woman’s description of niggers as “lacking refinement” (p. 41). Drawing on Jean-Paul Sartre’s study of anti-Semitism, Fanon offers a dual Cartesian analysis to extrapolate how sexual stereotypes of black men are constituted.

When it is a question of the Jew, the problem is clear: He is suspect because he wants to own the wealth or take over the positions of power. But the Negro is fixated at the genital; or at any rate he has been fixated there. Two realms: the intellectual and the sexual...One cannot decently “have a hard on” everywhere. The Negro symbolizes the biological danger; the Jew, the intellectual danger.

(Fanon, 1952 p. 127)

In chapter five, I quoted Slindile referring to the father of her baby as *‘just black’* and again here, I refer to her racialized depiction of her 48-year-old SD, which propels me to conclude that a dominant script of black male sexuality had been deeply inscribed. This racial talk was not unique to Slindile, and proved to be reflective of the dominant discourses that were at participants’ disposal.

When the traditional script was disrupted, confusion and uncertainties ensued:

... like there is no sex at all, my friends don’t believe me. Like we touched, fondled and kissed and I always thought maybe he is still softening me up, maybe the paying up is imminent. Like he has hinted that it will happen, as in when, I don’t know

Sibusisiwe

Awareness of prevailing sexual/racial/gendered/class discourses by young African women, in a way, I argue, enabled and constrained their options for how to perform in SD relationships. The way in which participants described their responsibility to keep their SDs sexually satisfied often depicted their satisfaction as something unimportant with some friends offering options like “i-blow job cos *they* like it.” In these narratives, I realised that participants sought to depict themselves not as powerless subjects, but as mutually benefiting and there was nothing peculiar, evidenced in Slindile’s statement: *‘that’s how we handle things’* which in a way suggested unanimity. However, I found these accounts, although depicted as modern, to in fact

reinforce the traditional script of passive feminine sexuality, emerging as modern traditional scripts.

6.4.3 At least give some thought to my feelings

Holding the view that no stable gender exists, I argue that gender as fluid, malleable, and repeatedly performed, and opens up possibilities for it to be performed differently (or indifferently). This was a common ambiguity in my findings where I found participants shifting their positions, even during a single interview. This demonstrated how young women may view certain contexts as amenable to discussing gender non-conforming discourses that challenge the heterosexual matrix. This is evidenced in the interview with Gugulethu.

How do I tell him that I also want to be touched in a certain way? Yes of course I lead him on but he makes this whole thing about him and yes, I didn't intend for the relationship to get to this level and I enjoy being with him...but he ought to at least give some thought to my feelings.

Gugulethu's narrative points to the distress she experiences with her SD's inability to recognise that she 'wants to be touched in a certain way' even though she 'didn't intend for the relationship to get to this level', suggesting a twist of events. Like the young women in Jewkes and Morrell's (2011) study, participants mentioned how the SD relationship was unpredictable, thus constraining agency. Using Butler, Finlay (2017) argued that recognition can be achieved when it "take[s] place within the communicative practices in which the subject and other are mutually engaged" (p. 61), which was not the case for Gugulethu. Given the overwhelming conviction and knowledge she held regarding her feelings, I wondered what was preventing her from putting it into action. She said she had not intended for the relationship to reach 'this level', and what follows is the part where she told of this one time she tried to be 'free' with her ex SD:

Researcher: By 'free' what do you mean?

Gugulethu: Like all of a sudden, I found myself developing feelings for this guy, it happens... like it or not, it really does.

Researcher: Ok [nodding], so what happened?

Gugulethu: Yes, so we were having sex and I didn't care but I sought of got to like him and started missing him.

Researcher: Ok, and I guess the time together influenced that?

Gugulethu: It wasn't thaaaat long, maybe a few weeks or so just that it almost seemed like a real relationship too quickly, like I was free with him so I started showing him how I wanted to be touched and he just didn't pay attention to me, it was like – he gets the sex and I get the money, and that was it. I could see that he was trying so hard not to be committed to me, after all he was a committed husband and you could see that he didn't want to spoil his marriage.

Researcher: So, you are saying that even though you were seeing it as a real relationship, it still didn't allow you to communicate your needs?

Gugulethu: He didn't give me space for it, for him, my needs were money and that's it.

Researcher: I hear your point, so that has made you reluctant to let your current partner to know that?

Gugulethu: Hayi, ukubona Kanye ukubona kabili (once beaten twice shy)

Gugulethu later mentioned that she thought things would be better with the current SD, especially since he was not married. I then went on to explore how this relationship differed from her other 'real' relationship with her boyfriend.

Gugulethu: Do you really want to get there? I don't understand, maybe it's me but I don't think they make them like they used to, because this one cheats, like a lot, he is the reason I am in this mess.

Researcher: But, are you able to communicate your feelings to him?

Gugulethu: Hayi [no] these people are the same, I guess you can't get it all, can you?

Gugulethu's accounts suggest that she has a good understanding of how she wants to be treated but time and time again she has not been successful. She seems to have concluded that women are not supposed to express their sexual needs, and should not make sexual demands on their partners. Although she expressed this frustration, Gugulethu had learnt through experience that female passivity in heterosexual relationships is an expectation (irrespective of the nature of the relationship), and any attempt to contest this is not acceptable. The 'maybe it's me' comment pointed to how she had rendered herself unintelligible within a heterosexual matrix

“of desire [that] require[d] and institute[d] the production of discrete and asymmetrical oppositions between ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’” (Butler, 1999, p. 24). Even then, she kept testing the waters every now and again with her performances.

6.5 Negotiating safety in pleasure

As discussed in chapter one, how young African women in my study constructed the self or rather selves, is portrayed as an interaction between dominant scripts and internalized scripts of sexuality (Lloyd, 2007; Simon & Gagnon, 1986).

Although this study sought to ascertain participants’ negotiation of agency in SD relationships, I needed to acknowledge the context upon which these negotiations took place. The risk of HIV infection and pregnancy, alongside other social risks that threaten the self, had to be taken into consideration. Focus on HIV risk was significant, as participants often supported non-monogamous relationships. Participants often expressed their insistence on condom use, particularly at the beginning of the relationship, which for fourteen (73%) participants slowly vanished as the relationship progressed; two narrating consistent condom use; and three not having had sex with their partners. With boyfriends, the situation was not any different, however, within once-off (also known as one-night stands) sexual encounters, condom use was reported as consistent.

Inconsistent condom use in sexual encounters with SDs, as well in boyfriend relationships disrupts the normative and dichotomous assumptions that construct SD and boyfriend relationships as distinct categories. This binary according to Anakaraonye et al. (2018) does “not adequately capture the nuances of [...] women’s decision-making about safer sex practices” (p. 11) within a university setting. I found participants more concerned about falling pregnant than about the possibilities of contracting HIV, and this is reflected in the fact that none of the participants actually initiated HIV tests, except when their partners insisted that they have one.

6.5.1 He is so scared of HIV

During our interview, on separate occasions, Hlengimpilo and Slindile remarked that some of the SDs had insisted that they go for an HIV test before engaging in any sexual activity. Interestingly, both these participants later expressed their surprise as they had imagined that after testing for HIV, their partners would then feel free to have unprotected sex with them, which was not the case with them. Most participants had more than one SD, and although

Slindile had protected sex with one, she did not have it with the other[s]. It was evident that she was aware of the risks in concurrent sexual relationships, and even without mention, I understood why when her *other* SD resurfaced and requested that they go for an HIV test, she rushed to do it alone first.

Another thing is that when we got back together he said that he wants us to do blood tests, so I first went to the campus one so that I can know first and he was supposed to go and test with me 2 days later, so I showed him the results with date, and he was happy and he is so scared of HIV, but we are still using condoms, even when it's too nice he will continue with condom, and I don't understand why he requested that we test. So, he said we will use protection until we get married (closes eyes)

According to Slindile's excerpt, her partner was the one most scared of HIV, and she found it strange that they continued using condoms during sex, and behind the scenes also lingered marriage aspirations. The above also suggests that prior to her partner's insistence, Slindile was not aware of her HIV status, which was particularly worrying. In their online article on Truvada released on 27 May 2017, Times Live reported that university students across South Africa were now eligible to access Truvada, a drug that would prevent new infections of HIV to students who were currently HIV negative. Students were going to be counselled and offered this latest ARV treatment. However, in the same article, several other initiatives, similar to the latter, were reported to have failed due to poor uptake from students. I then wondered how this one would differ. This was not the focus of my study, but it was important knowledge nonetheless.

Participants in my study were not unaware of HIV information circulating around them. Most participants' discourses illustrated that they recognised the risks and possessed the necessary knowledge on sexual health, yet various constraints limited their enactment of this knowledge. The patriarchal notion of women as passive and dependent on men was demonstrated in the narratives by most participants. This is not peculiar for economically unequal relationships. Conroy et al. (2016) noted that decisions in heterosexual relationships, such as deciding to use a condom, are often determined by the one who identifies themselves as powerful at a particular time. While I have maintained that participants were not dupes of male power, and at various point in their relationships strategized to express agency, I argue that their agency was constrained, but not absent.

How young women in my study expressed agency is in their resisting and reconstructing modern context specific power relations, whilst also preserving historical ones.

6.5.2 He would use condoms but when he feels things, he removes it

During one of the interviews with Jabulile, she reported how her partner would use a condom during their first round, then not use it for subsequent 'rounds'. She did not express this as discomforting in any way, yet she also at times came prepared with the intention to use condoms but failed to sustain her intentions when her partner started to *'feel things'*

Jabulile: Ya we have talked about it cos usually he would use it and then 10 minutes later he would say "I'm starting to feel izinto ezi (things that are) different" and then ke ayikhiphe (he removes it). But ke 1st round siyayisebenzisa (we use it), 2nd round lutho usuke engasayifisi (never, he doesn't want it then) but at least nje.

Researcher: Who has the responsibility of bringing the condoms?

Jabulile: Mhhh, usually he is the one who buys them unless makungabe ngihamba nge (if I am using a) cab, I would request the driver to go via the garage to buy painkillers (laughs), then I buy so that mangifika endlini engenawo (when I reach his place and he doesn't have) I can always take mine out. When I do that he often asks "who said uzothola" (who said you will get some) (laughs)?

Researcher: So uhlale ucuphile (always prepared)

Jabulile: Laughs, what do you think? It's not like I am there to watch soapies [continues laughing]

Clearly depicted in the above narrative is the amount of power accorded to men over condom use. Such power has been found to increase young women's susceptibility to sexual violence, sexually transmittable infections and unplanned pregnancies (Jewkes & Morrel, 2012). Many participants reported that their SDs often waited for them to let their guard down and be so mesmerized that condom use seemed less significant. Zothile mentioned how her SD *'knows which buttons to press, I'm sure it comes with experience'* which she confirmed did not always allow space for condom use. My findings suggest that all participants, except the three in non-sexual relationships, had used condoms especially at the beginning of the relationship, with some stopping *'when they felt things'*. Conversely, some participants perceived the sudden non-

use of condoms as a sign that the relationship had reached a certain level of trust, and condoms were only used as and when other contraceptives fail.

6.5.3 We use condoms when contraceptives don't agree with me

At the time of our interview, Khumbuzile had been in a relationship with her SD for nine months. She indicated that she had been on the three-month injection, but did not go back on it since it didn't 'agree' with her, and only then did she consider condoms, which were easily accessible. This I observed during my visits to the residences, where boxes of (male) condoms were attached to walls, in passages and bathrooms. Unlike findings by MacPhail and Campbell (2001), narratives from participants in this study did not reveal "instances in which they had to have unprotected sex because they did not have access to condoms" (p. 20). Instead, participants often felt that condoms were still the responsibility of men, and if they didn't play their part, there were several other options at their disposal.

Khumbuzile: I tried contraceptives at the beginning of the year and they were not agreeing with me so I just stopped and we started using condoms.

Researcher: That's good, and do you both bring condoms?

Khumbuzile: Haybo, I let him do that. Even though he sometimes forgets and I have to take the morning after pill.

Researcher: That must be an inconvenience for you?

Khumbuzile: Well, yeah but if you want to know, the sex is good (we both laugh)

A critical reading of the above suggests that condom use coexisted with other options, that participants like Khumbuzile, negotiated during their SD relationships. During this particular interview, I noted that Khumbuzile was not too keen on expressing the consequences of her partner's forgetfulness, hence her sudden mention of '*the sex is good*' which emphasized her experiences of pleasure. Other participants did the same, especially when they identified questions that fractured their sense of self, with Landile even pointing out that '*but you know it takes two to tango, so there is no one to blame*' and Nikiwe interjecting when we spoke about risks in her flings: '*sex is beautiful and takes away life's pressures*'. These narratives illustrate how sexual health (risk), even in SD relationships was known, but was also not at the top of their list in SD relationships (see McPhail & Campbell, 2008)

These narratives highlight the “hidden transcripts of desire” (McClelland & Fine, cited in Nash, 2017, p. 262) by shifting from “reproducing the good/bad debates around black female sexuality [to] make space for theorizing, imagining, and inciting multiple forms of black female pleasures” (Nash, 2017, p. 263). This does not mean that risk is not pervasive in SD relationships, but that young women’s experiences of pleasure could expand the frameworks and vocabulary upon which we view and interpret young African women’s sexuality.

6.5.4 Not when I’m ovulating, we also can’t trust the 3rd party

During the interview, Slindile reminded me that there was another person that needed to be brought into the discussion, the wife. Before this, she had proudly explained how much excitement she provides for her Partner, and she knew that *‘he was definitely not getting it from the wife...and we all know wives are boring’* and this she said almost to get a response from me, which we both interrogated at length. It was interesting that the wife is included in Slindile’s justification for stressing the need for safer sex practice, since *‘we don’t know what 3rd party does.’* I got a sense that she was less focused on Partner’s sexual conduct, and instead was concerned about the other ‘woman’ bringing infections into their relationship(s). I discussed feminization of sexually transmitted infections at length in my earlier work, where women identified themselves as responsible for diseases and consequently did not disclose their HIV positive status to men, for fear of stigma and desertion (see Ngcobo, 2012). Again here, Slindile felt that they needed to start using condoms, since *‘it’s not only pregnancy that we should be preventing’*, according to the excerpt below, the wife was also seen as a risk.

I always say that if only I knew that maybe I’m the only person here I would say fine let’s not bother about it but the fact that there is a 3rd party and we don’t know what 3rd party does. So now I am thinking it’s not only pregnancy that we should be preventing. There is so much that is associated with unprotected sex.

Pause...ok, I think he pretty much controls that. I mean I have never really gotten to enjoy sex with him all that much. You know its sex. Laughs...as I mentioned before, the fact that I like him nje for him, sex is not sooooooo important. But ke, he controls it, he always has all the protection, I don’t even remember one day where I have had to buy condoms for him.

Before the above, Slindile had explained how they had been inconsistent in using condoms, instead her partner had introduced the ‘cycle’ method which she felt was not reliable since her periods were irregular. Nonetheless, she agreed to his suggestion, and when ovulating attempted to use the condom, but like Jabulile, she admitted that the condom was removed if off-putting.

Ama contraceptives, no. Condoms, well sssssometimes (a very long one), most of the time he would say ‘let’s work with your cycle’, which I don’t trust because I am not regular. Anyway, we would count and reach the day ... and I would say “no we shouldn’t be here and then take my temperature to check if I’m ovulating or not and then we would use a condom and in the middle of the intercourse he would remove it and say “hayi (no) soldier it’s not working” (laughs) ya so nakuyona akuyona into e (even with the condom, it’s not something serious).

While the above participants justify their intermittent condom use as agreed upon by both parties, it was evident that young women’s fear of pregnancy ‘not when I’m ovulation’ as well as SDs ‘feeling things’ shaped the decision to use or not to use condoms. Jabulile’s partner had learned how to work around her cycle, which was a newly learned strategy for her as well. Participants were always eager to learn new strategies, such as strategic use of alcohol at various phases of the SD relationship.

One of the strategies used by some participants to detach themselves from sex with SD was through alcohol use. I discussed earlier how alcohol functioned as a strategy at the beginning of the SD relationship, particularly by young women to lure their ‘target market’ and to identify their men’s social class before enticing them. I also found that alcohol was used as a coping mechanism to escape ‘playing their part’ and reciprocating with sex. Unfortunately, for some participants, alcohol rendered them vulnerable not only to sexual violations, but also other forms of physical abuse which participants narrated as inevitable. Yandisa described how this turned out for her.

Yandisa: He has slapped me once. I mean I was too drunk and the plan was for me to at least pass out and at least when we have sex I won’t be so alert. Then I got so drunk that I was told that I started acting up and dancing in front of him and his friends and he got embarrassed and his friends

told him to sort me out. I didn't feel anything then but the following morning I was so bruised, I missed lectures for the week. He apologized though and I also had to apologise as well because I had retaliated, drunk as I was.

Researcher: He slapped you... once, and you say he apologized, and that was it?

Yandisa: Ya, it's just that

Researcher: So, when you are drunk, how sure are you that condoms were used?

Yandisa: No, I know he does, I would be pregnant right now, especially since I'm not on any contraceptive.

A critical reading of Yandisa's experience points to an internalized sense of “*inevitability* of living with dangers which are *remote* from the control of individuals” (Giddens, 1990, p. 131), as indicated in her dismissive attitude towards physical abuse. Yandisa was one of three (16%) out of nineteen participants who narrated experiences of physical abuse in SD relationships. What I also realised was how participants defined abuse, almost as if it is expected to happen in these relationships, and goes by without much recognition. Thus, I found myself emphasizing some of their utterances, with the intention of disrupting the normalcy of abuse to challenge dominant and damaging ideologies of masculinities and femininities (Connell, 1995). For example, my question ‘*He slapped you once, and you say he apologized, and that was it*’ clearly hit a brick wall, and I found myself imagining the trauma Yandisa had experienced (but minimized its impact), and the consequences of missing one week of lectures. I discussed in chapter five, how Yandisa had been parented by her sister after her mother's passing in 2016; she mentioned how nothing else mattered and that's when she started taking alcohol. Whereas many participants admitted to being verbally abused by their participants, they immediately brushed it off as something that was ‘*just that*’ and this seemed to be another strategy of self-protection.

6.7 (Un)managing threats and negotiating the self

The experience of engaging in a SD relationship is complex and is influenced by multiple agents external to the SD relationship. Peers, family members, boyfriends, and SDs all influence a Sugar Baby's experience of her relationship. These individuals may create a situation in which a young woman who engages in a SD relationship may feel “attractive and empowered or degraded and powerless” (Bradley, 2007, p. 383). Participants often reported

that being in a SD relationship was seen by many as an embarrassment, yet some reported how they were the source of envy amongst their peers.

Identity construction for Giddens (1990, p. 124) is a “*reflexive project*” whereby individual identities are found “amid the strategies and options provided by abstract systems.” This is demonstrated by Yandisa, in the latter theme, who like most participants after self-interrogation found faults in themselves for having provoked the SD i.e., by publicly embarrassing him. On the other hand, Phiwokuhle explained how her former SD publicly embarrassed her in front of his friends.

Sometimes you go out there thinking it's going to be fun but these men can be rude. This one time, I went out with him [politician] and we get there he starts accusing me of making moves on his friend, and I sit there trying to explain and then he just apologizes to his friends that he thinks he “brought the wrong bitch.” I wanted to explain that it was actually his friend who was hitting on me but there was no time for that, everyone was just quiet and I understood that he just wanted ukuphakama ngegama lami – ‘to attract attention at my expense’, things we do for money, but that was the first and the last time, he tried calling me after that night and I blocked his number.

Phiwokuhle’s excerpt demonstrates the objectification of women’s bodies, and how men often compete as “consumers” in the quest for women’s sexuality (Bradley, 2007, p. 394). For the SD, his friend was a ‘victim’ of a woman who was unable to control herself. In their Swaziland study, Fielding-Miller et al. (2016) found that women in sexual exchange relationships “are not only at increased risk of HIV and intimate partner violence, but also face social risks including gossip and ostracism” which largely depends on how the relationship is morally viewed by society (p. 24). As such, in this example, the SD took advantage of the latter, and thus reminded Phiwokuhle of the stigma associated with engaging in a SD relationship. For the money, she was prepared to concede to her partner’s verbal abuse, but thereafter decided to terminate the relationship.

Terminating once off encounters with SD relationships also required various strategies, as explained by Nosipho.

Nosipho: So, these two men bought food and alcohol, then we went to some place at Ballito [elite location north of KZN] and these men were insisting that

we loosen up and feel at home, but hayi that place just did not feel at all like home.

Researcher: How many of you were there?

Nosipho: It was just my friend and I, the one I came with when we saw you as a group the first time

Researcher: Ok, the one on campus...so how did you get to this place?

Nosipho: At the time we were doing promotions with my friend at Gateway and they kept eyeing us and asking what beautiful girls like us had planned for the weekend, which initially I found annoying, but later, ke nathi (just as well) we thought, if they have money to waste, why not waste it on us?

Researcher: Ok, so you went with them with the intention to just waste their money, how did they approach you?

Nosipho: So, they first referred to us as “bantabami” and we didn’t think much of them. I mean we are tiny, and they were baba (daddy) old, not just any old but khehla (often used derogatorily for old grandfather) old

Researcher: Oh ok, like maybe how old?

Nosipho: Mid 50’s, and that is older than my dad and they were just discussing things we didn’t know much about and expected us to just drink and laugh at their stupid jokes. Then maybe around nine, we could see that going home was not happening and this situation needed us to think fast.

Researcher: Ok, so how did you manage that situation?

Nosipho: I sent my friend a WhatsApp message that we will ‘slizer’ and I was going to call the uber. I knew that when the uber came and if they didn’t want to let us go, I would throw a fit. So, the driver came and off we went. What a waste of our precious time, but at least we were safe, that time I could see that those men had already undressed us.

Researcher: So, you say this was a waste of time?

Nosipho: Definitely, but at least they had not given us any money, just food and drinks – or maybe they were hoping we drink and let our guards down, not a chance.

To slizer, according to Nosipho, is to leave without announcing to whoever is hosting you. Some participants also referred to *'ukushaya ikhona –to disappear'* (Khumbuzile and Landile) which shares similar meanings with 'slizering' (also see 'amaqola' in chapter five). Participants in my study were also familiar with terms used by Zibane's (2017) participants such as "kudliwa umuntu kudliwa imali" –loosely translating to "you eat a person, you eat the money" resonating with the theme 'Nika-Nika...' mentioned earlier. However, because of the discursive construction of SD relationships by participants, they were not always certain if the money would eventually come, or even if their safety was guaranteed. In the case of Nosipho, and her friend they got to enjoy food and drinks, and strategically performed 'slizering' to escape 'being eaten', which was not uncommon. This positioned young people as agentic, even though *'it was a waste of time'* which juxtaposes her concluding remarks that *'at least they had not given us any money, just food and drinks.'* I found her claims in the above narrative ambivalent in that she expresses regret and relief for drinking and eating the two men's money (see Wojcicki, 2002).

Regret and relief were feelings similarly expressed by Slindile after breaking up with, u-Partner.

Slindile: Ok, so I broke up with u-Partner (referring to 48-year-old SD), well I can't say we broke up but he relocated with his family to Joburg, and the message was clear that we won't be seeing each other. My other boyfriend as well, he has a new girlfriend. I am not too bothered.

Researcher: I am sorry about that, how did that impact on your life?

Slindile: We don't talk nje (like) this one time around March there was an event here in Durban and he phoned to say that he will come see me but he didn't come to see me. Yazi (you know) I didn't even ask him why he didn't come. He has even changed his numbers. What I am glad about is that there was no drama.

Researcher: What kind of drama?

Slindile: Like towards the end when he was telling me about moving to Joburg. I asked him where this whole thing put us as a couple and he didn't give me a straight answer. I just read between the lines that he was calling it quits. The drama maybe if I resisted and tried calling his wife behind his back.

Researcher: Ok, but you mentioned previously that his wife knew about you?

Slindile: Yes, she does, nje I could have caused drama for them cos I knew she was not happy about our relationship. But trust me there are many [Slindile's – real name withheld] out there, she will meet them very soon, even in Joburg [laughs]. She will think that she is bewitched.

Researcher: Bewitch is taking it too far.

Slindile: I am not saying that in a bad way, at the end of the day it was her man and she has every right to own him.

Researcher: What do you miss about the relationship?

Slindile: [Laughs, pauses] – everything. Like we worked as a team and we understood each other at a different level. We were different, him being married and me being that side-chick so we could connect and not bore each other. You see you (referring to me) go home and talk the same language with your husband, and we (referring to their relationship) like different things and explore.

This wife/girlfriend distinction was not new (see chapter four). Zothile had also made mention of it during our interview, 'yes you wives are boring (laughs)' (Zothile, 23) and debated between Thembekile and her friend during one of my visits at res. In the above excerpt, Slindile positioned herself as 'not bothered', yet she referred to them as "a couple", and reminisced on their 'teamwork' which she argued, the wife was not happy about. Interestingly, she mentioned, that 'there are many Slindile's out there' which brings into question her claims of understanding 'each other at a different level. We were different, him being married and me being that side-chick so we could connect and not bore each other.' It became clear that she had mixed feelings about the break up or Partner's relocation to Joburg, but her remark that 'it was her man and she has every right to own him' supports Zothile's in chapter four ('but he

still goes back to you’). During this interview, Slindile had entered into a relationship with the man of God (see chapter six), who fortunately for her did not have a wife, but he was also restricted by religion from ever getting one. Like Nikiwe, ‘man of God’ treaded with caution around his religious restrictions, which Slindile often used to her advantage, as I discuss in detail below.

It was not uncommon for SDs to want to hide their relationships with young women (sugar babies). I discussed how Slindile and her “man of God” initially met in chapter five (see ‘Stage surveillance: Turning the gaze’).

Slindile: I can’t phone him anytime to ask him to fetch me to take me to the pool or the mall. Even when I need to do my groceries, it needs to be at night. So, I only use malls like Pavilion or Musgrave cos they open till late, but mostly Pavilion. Pauses...like even on days when his helper needs to come to his home, on that day I need to leave the home early. Even when we take pictures, he doesn’t show his face.

Researcher: Tell me why you would expect him to show his face?

Slindile: Cos like, we are taking a picture.

Researcher: Could it be that he is unsure about where those pictures could possibly end up?

Slindile: Ya, but what about those pictures that he has on social media, what does he think? Like I don’t have access to them, I mean if I want them, I can always use them as my profile picture.

Researcher: Ok I hear you, but I was referring to pictures of both of you as a couple

Slindile: [Pauses, and then opens a picture on her phone, the picture has both of them standing in front of a mirror, his hands around her neck, her fully clothed but him without a top. Then there is a large emoji covering his entire face only]

While showing me the picture, Slindile sadly points at him and says “*see what I mean*”, there is also a video where they are both sharing a meal (prepared by her) and the picture only shows hands, two plates, her voice is heard, with him responding with *mhhh* to all her remarks on the

meal – which looks hearty, well prepared and presented in two disposable foil containers (Reflexive journal, 30 August 2017).

Researcher: Oh, I see what you mean

Slindile: So, yah, look his pictures are even in locked files

Researcher: Who locks the files?

Slindile: Well cos he always remarks that eeee nje (like) this must not come out.

Researcher: And so, what does this all mean for you?

Slindile: It is just all complicated. Even some of my friends have said that this is just weird

Keeping the relationship secret appeared to carry more significance for the man of God, than it did for Slindile. In this section, I discuss the extreme efforts by ‘man of God’ to make sure that this relationship remained secret, which was not always the case in Slindile’s sharing of information with her friends. Sharing included for many, sharing in search for advice, which many like Skhululiwe valued (advice on satisfying men as a virgin). As discussed in chapter three, sharing for university students was a norm, and this Simon and Gagnon (1986) consider significant during interpersonal sexual scripting. Therefore, although Slindile’s friends found her relationship *weird*, her ability to discuss it with her friends, (and with me) demonstrates some level of freedom, which she also enjoyed in the bedroom.

Researcher: Tell me more about your time together, the intimacy

Slindile: Well, he is shy, I get to be a bully, ya he is just a marshmallow and mina I just become a bully

Researcher: Marshmallow...tell me more

Slindile: [Laughs] Ya I just know nje that it’s my terms all the time, my terms except for when it comes to my bad habits like when on our way to his home I would ask to have a smoke and that for him is non-negotiable, he would say ‘cha (no), you won’t do that, wena vele (like) were you born a smoker’? And he often threatens to take me back to res when I want to smoke and I then have to wait for the morning – against my will.

Demonstrated above is Slindile's and 'the man of God's' "moving in and out of their various subject positions" (Mama, 1995, p. 120). Slindile had some sense of agency which she alludes to "power" in "keeping him" as he might be afraid of blackmail/exposure should she or he leave the relationship (see previous chapter) – so his religious position as a 'man of God' bears relevance. However, his position and the extreme lengths taken to maintain secrecy might serve as a double-edged sword – a frustrated sense of resignation and devaluation, and simultaneous power. She is the dominant partner – the 'bully' - in the sexual relationship. The powerful 'man of God' is, in the privacy of his room with her, 'a marshmallow.' Mama (1995, p. 120) argues that shifting of subject positions, demonstrated above, often occur consciously during individuals' "interactions with a diverse array of groups in their personal, political and working lives." One example of this was when Slindile shared how she had disappointed 'man of God' by not pitching up when he invited her and her friends for a braai/barbeque at his place. This was after he had invited along some of his 'colleagues' from his other part-time employment, and this provided opportunity to inquire on 'man of God's' other interpersonal relations, and their understanding or misunderstanding of the relationship with participant.

Researcher: So, they don't know that he is [a man of God]?

Slindile: Not that they don't know, the other job is from PMB and so all these people don't know me, he maybe told them that he was assisting an orphan, who knows (laughs) and they would definitely believe him.

Researcher: [Both Laugh], a welfare case

Slindile: ...and this one time he bought a new phone and updated his WhatsApp and he struggled to update his google maps, so I told him to use my phone to send the location to his phone and that would assist with retrieving his, and guess what popped up?

Researcher: What?

Slindile: He has saved my number on his phone as "Ward Councillor"

Researcher: [We are cracking now] so, you didn't ask him

Slindile: Just when I thought I was an orphan...boom I am a Ward Councillor!

The above discussion was not just funny, it also highlighted the shifting nature of subject positions or the self, which for feminist post-structuralism carries “implications for the process of reproducing or contesting power relations” (Weedon, 1987, p. 88). As the interview progressed, I realised that shifting from being a *bully* to *orphan* or even *ward councillor* was not what Slindile aspired for within this relationship. She wanted more. Unlike most participants’ conceptions of love, i.e. Siyathokoza’s, as less significant over money, Slindile grew to love this man of God –and this posed multiple dilemmas for both of them. This was unexpected from someone who had prided herself in her ability to ‘*build walls*’ which she justified by more claims such as ‘*it’s just me in the world.*’ However, Slindile’s world, to a certain extent, has always included ‘man of God’ (see chapter five), and knowledge of ‘man of God’s’ scandals, such as the allegations of having impregnated a young girl, who later aborted the child; hitting on Slindile; his use of power to beat her up when she fell pregnant at a young age –the church and Slindile’s family, not condemning his acts of violence, amongst many. All these suggest that ‘man of God’ was in fact not simply a ‘*marshmallow.*’ Therefore, Slindile’s claim of power or *marshmallowing* of him may in fact be illusory, yet its illusion also serves to manage or repair her seemingly previously threatened childhood self.

At the intrapsychic level of scripting, Simon and Gagnon (1986) render narratives as “symbolic reorganization by participants of their realities”, which in the above case demonstrates Slindile’s juggling of multiple realities. Feminist post-structuralists add that, no reality is untrue, as all emerge “from the person’s experience and imbibed knowledge of the various discourses and styles of being” (Mama, 1995, p. 121). Therefore, Slindile’s experience and knowledge of being beaten up or punished by ‘the man of God’ *cum* SD are reorganised to symbolize care and interest in her welfare, not in the *orphan* sense. In one instance, she proudly stated that she was where she “*wanted to be*” and this was a significant shift for someone who had also prided herself in her ability to build walls, all which she narrated as her responsibility to manage. She also, at some point during one interview, mentioned her aspirations to eventually get married to ‘man of God’ which was at the time constrained by his religion.

The need to manage one’s self-image was highlighted by participants as significant, even more significant than managing risk of violence or HIV in relationships. Young African women’s engagement in behaviours that society may deem aberrant, i.e. SD relationships (see chapter one, “Sugar Daddies Destroy Lives”), may “risk being cut off from social capital” and to avoid this they may need to “manage their social identities and sexual reputation” (Fielding-Miller et

al., 2016, p. 25). Below I continue discussing attempts by some participants to manage their social and sexual identities.

Sibusisiwe: I remember sitting at this restaurant and I kept looking down at the menu and he started saying: “babe I’m gonna come sit next to you” and I am like “no it’s fine you don’t have to come sit next to me”, I kept resisting. Then the waitress comes to speak to us, and she speaks directory to me in isiZulu. I mean he is Indian vele so she asks what I want to order...and he just responded by: “ok, knowing my girlfriend I am sure she is going to have a glass of wine...” and the girl laughed, and started apologizing and I didn’t even bother to ask what was funny.

Researcher: And how did he feel about that?

Sibusisiwe: Like he just said: “yes, my girlfriend”, I mean we all laughed but hayi I was embarrassed and I saw her walking back and talking to the other waitrons and to think I trusted that place because I like the lighting and we sit in the corner, and they don’t usually focus on us, or maybe they thought we were business associates or even daughter, who knows family relations have changed so much these days.

I discussed earlier Sibusisiwe’s comparison of her SD with her boyfriend who, according to her, was lagging behind. While enjoying being spoiled by her SD she narrated an incident where this came at the expense of her image, as a young African woman. In the above narrative, she expresses embarrassment over being seen with him in public, and being identified as his girlfriend. He (*uMr*), on the other hand, was not shy to show off his ‘girlfriend’, which was unlike the time when they were seen by the wife’s friend. While she enjoys the class afforded by her SD relationship, she recognises the constant gaze, by others and by herself. Apartheid policies were responsible for enforcement of racial segregation (see chapter three), and resulted in people’s examination of their behaviours as either normal/abnormal, legal/illegal. Thus, to be able to self-scrutinize, like Sibusisiwe, is in itself a display of power, which within neoliberal contexts has shifted from repressive ideological policies (see Althusser, 1971; 1973; 1998) of apartheid. Having positioned herself as an intelligent woman, who was not to be controlled by anyone, she was in this particular situation controlled by his public claim to her as his girlfriend.

Sibusisiwe's excerpt above bring truth to Bazzul's (2016, p. 7) argument that, "there is no 'correct' way to look at subjectivity and/or the self." Bazzul adds that "although we can think critically about a 'political subject', a 'neoliberal subject', or a 'subject of sexuality', these categories are organizing abstractions that allow us to understand subjectivities as they are constituted" (ibid, p. 7). Like Sibusisiwe, participants did not all enjoy being seen in public with SDs, however their financial status afforded them an opportunity to experience class, and get a taste of adult life. These experiences were not always favourable within certain contexts. This particular incident demonstrated the dominant conceptions of race understood by the waitrons in the above excerpt, as ideological structures that separate individuals into racial categories. *UMr* had also demonstrated evidence of this racial division in his remark on Sibusisiwe being well spoken, which he found impressive, yet not common. Manganyi's (1973) argument mentioned earlier on individual and sociological scripts of blackness bears reference.

Participants in my study were never loyal subjects of individual discourses. Nompandolo, in chapter five, mentioned how after giving birth, she went back to school and performed even better than those who were still virgins. She had aspirations, and having these allowed her to overcome whatever life threw her way, even the break-up with the father of her child. Young African women in my study were not without aspirations, and these were often constructed within their everyday discursive scripts. During my conversation with Khumbuzile, she mentioned that her engagements with the campus SD, who happened to also be her lecturer, helped her to look forward to becoming a graduate in record time and to making her parents proud. This was significant since she had informed me how her mother was struggling to make ends meet as her father was unemployed. Khumbuzile was in concurrent SD relationships and mentioned that the campus SD had provided her with what she needed, a good mark.

Good grades were important for the majority of participants. In fact, three of the participants (Thandazile, Nikiwe and Sibusisiwe) were golden key⁴⁵ holders. Like Nompandolo, some participants often emphasized how they were doing well and being in a SD relationship did not interfere with their academic duties. Academic performance, generally was an indicator used by most parents to measure 'good girl' compliance. Thandazile alluded to this.

⁴⁵ Prestigious awards for academically excelling students, in line with the university's mission is to be a truly South African university that is academically excellent, innovative in research, critically engaged with society and demographically representative, redressing the disadvantages, inequities and imbalances of the past <https://www.goldenkey.org.za/chapters/university-kwazulu-natal/2010-0>

At least for me I know that when it comes to books, I don't play around otherwise that would give the impression that sengiphumile esandleni –I have gone out of hand. So, whatever I do, books first.

Performing the 'good girl' script carried multiple meanings within a university setting. What was clear was that Thandazile was able to reconcile her *hlala ngentombi –sit like a girl script* with her academic performance, which is justified considering her sister's *exemplary* behaviour during her student years at a Durban tertiary institution. However, what I found arbitrary in her narrative is how girls who don't perform well, may be considered 'out of hand' when in fact, their academic struggles require more attention. Therefore, while her belief has driven her to excellence, it cannot be the only indicator of 'good girl'. However, I cannot undermine her efforts and justification for academic performance, as well as her 'virginity' script mentioned earlier, as all behaviour is socially constructed, and these constructions have socially organised her subject positions, across context (Mama, 1995; Simon & Gagnon, 1986). Therefore, while discourses of young African women were historically, socially and contextually constructed, the same discourses were adapted to manage threats endemic in SD relationships, thus managing or un-managing the self. While the narratives of participants mentioned above demonstrate continuous and conscious efforts by participants to manage the 'self', they did exercise power and enforced strategies to escape or confront negative connotations of SD relationships; they also did so by using available discourses of what it means to be a woman or a man. In this sense, their self-constructions occurred within constraining and enabling ideologies of heterosexuality which to a certain extent challenged the heterosexual status quo, (Butler, 1999), they simultaneously affirmed it.

6.8 Conclusion

For many young women in this study, SD relationships were not straightforward sexual exchange relationships, with money exchanged for sex. In the introduction of this chapter I discuss how narratives of young African women in my study included pleasure, which discounts simplistic warnings intended by "Sugar Daddy Destroy Lives" campaigns. However, throughout I demonstrated different constructions of this pleasure, and its coexistence alongside 'danger'. SD relationships were experienced as pleasurable, and dangerous, with evidence of simultaneous occurrence of both experiences. Participants in this study negotiated their SD relationship experiences at various points of the relationship strategically, and their scripts highlighted their mastery and misery.

SD relationship strategies, although negotiated using various scripts within multiple discursive fields, often conformed to the normative scripts of love, intimacy and desire. The dominant normative script of negotiating courtship –*ukushela* for example was narrated by participants who within various contexts, identified SDs. It was interesting how at this particular stage, participants positioned themselves as powerful enough to choose their *target* markets, yet at the same time that choosing needed to consider broader discourses that sanction gender, racial, and cultural intelligibility, which in this case included who *can* ‘shela –propose love’ and who *can* ‘qoma – accept love’. Some of the strategies enforced included use of alcohol to scan and pass, use of knowledge of familiar feminine scripts of innocence and passivity, while some were also clear that the relationship was about money, and there was no need to *complicate things*. One of the questions I asked in this regard, was to what extent participants who narrated the latter were able to ‘*not complicate*’ things within the SD relationship. Was communicating this subject position taking place within SD relationships, or did these understandings remain individual understandings at intrapsychic sexual scripting level.

During the SD relationship, participants expressed how they depicted themselves as loving, yet some considered love without money poor love. Of course, almost all participants entered these relationships for money, and they were cognisant of love, intimacy and desire possibilities, in fact some even expressed a longing for them. Within this subtheme, ‘nika nika, you give, I give: just do your part’, narratives re-inscribed the significance of reciprocity, which also was gendered and classed. Also significant was playing your part, and participants often consulted peers to get advice on strategic ways to play your part in SD relationships. Participants did not always play their part smoothly. They manoeuvred through various risks, which often threatened their physical health. Most participants prioritized the significance of their identities and the need to protect them. Throughout this chapter, I refer to the constitution and reconstitution of the self at various points of the relationship. The self, is a reflexive project which includes self-interrogation, and reorganization of social realities (see Simon & Gagnon, 1986). Of interest was how participants did not look far for strategies to protect the self, discourses that were available to them (discussed in chapter five) were reconfigured or reorganised, for many, emerging as new subject positions, which as the saying goes, was in fact a case of ‘same script, different cast.’

The following chapter provides the major conclusions drawn from the study and the recommendations.

Chapter Seven:

Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to detail the main conclusions that were drawn from the empirical research. Based on this, I make recommendations and provide a research summary.

Through in-depth interviews with 19 young African women in SD relationships, I asked: What are the sexuality scripts adopted by young female students in SD relationships? How do these female students construct and negotiate love, intimacy and desire in their sexual exchange ‘relationships’? How do they construct their control and agency in sexual exchanges within SD relationships? What are the limitations of the ‘agency’ within these relationships? This conclusion aims to bring all these questions together and, like Mama (1995), I do not promise “a neat story ending with all capillaries cauterised and stitched with surgical precision” (p. 159). Rather, in revealing how my study answered these questions, I “make a small opening through which, it is hoped, many new ideas and arguments may flow” (p. 159) around young African women’s experiences, more specifically in SD relationships.

This study found that as young women navigate new and shifting contexts, namely ‘ekhaya’ and ‘ivava’ their subject positions too shift. These shifts also occurred across relationships, such as the shift from the ‘boyfriend’ relationship to the ‘SD’ relationship. Through these, young women performed their sexuality, negotiated agency, and renegotiated their feminine selves, and this thesis highlighted how this took place in the context of SD relationships.

7.2 Becoming a young African woman: coherence, continuities and discontinuities

Simon and Gagnon (1986) proposed that sexual scripting, occurs at three levels namely, intrapsychic, interpersonal, and cultural (see chapter one). These scripts convey norms of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, as such various ideological apparatuses within society are entrusted with this ideological task. In Africa, de Boeck and Honwana (2012) caution against use of current meanings by youth, which they also use to construct future meanings, without “an understanding of the past” (ibid, p. 2). Thus, an exploration of sexual scripts of young African women in SD relationship, within a particular period and context needed to

integrate “this ensemble of influences [to] reflect the full complexity of the interaction between [...] the family, the society, and the world” (ibid, p. 2-3).

The African proverb ‘it takes a village to raise a child’ came alive in this theme, and pairs nicely with the quote “one is not born but rather becomes a woman” (de Beauvoir, 1949, p. 293). As such, participants’ sexual scripts of ‘becoming’ African women were not biological, but socially and institutionally scripted through ‘village’ or ‘*ekhaya*’ (see chapter five), and were tested and reconfigured within new contexts, such as university or ‘ivava.’ Findings from this theme support my initial claims of a multiple self, constructed through multiple subjectivities. This study accepts that sexual ‘selves’ are constructed not outside socio-cultural conditions, and in the same light, acknowledges instability of the ‘self’, particularly as it moves across contexts. Like Mama (1995), what I highlight here is how these subjectivities coexist “and the movement of the individual between them in the present – in other words, the multiplicity of subjectivity” (p. 117) i.e. as daughters, religious and cultural beings, mothers, students and as ‘sugar babies.’

Families were significant sources of sexual scripts, especially in the formative years for all women. I discussed how only five belonged to “the imagined traditional ideal”, which is nuclear (Collins, 1998, p. 62), while the rest did not conform to this “monolithic description” (Dominelli, 2002, p. 19). Nonetheless, participants had their own definitions of what constituted families, and often referred to ‘*ekhaya*’ – ‘home’ to refer to home, school, community, basically their immediate surroundings. The majority of the messages received from home reflected a distinction between messages directed to boys and those directed to girls.

The young women were taught very early what it meant to be a girl, and the script of ‘hlala ngentombi – sit like a girl’ seemed to dominate, and was passed down by the mothers or any ‘mother figure(s)’ around the young women. In this regard, not much has changed from pre-colonial times where mothers were mandated to pass down ‘*inhlonipho – respect*’ to their daughters (Delius & Glaser, 2002). Participants’ scripts suggested that mothers still placed value inscribing in their daughters the virginity script, with two participants’ narratives reflecting attainment of this (Thandazile & Skhululiwe) and the rest expressing how disappointed their parents were when they fell pregnant, and how some feared their parents knowing that ‘*it’s already gone*’ as was mentioned by Gugulethu, ‘*it*’ – being the hymen (see chapter five).

Of significance in the above findings is how the virginity script was reinforced across all participants' narratives. These messages of virginity were deployed by religious, cultural and familial state apparatuses of power. As such, there were often no contradictions between them, when it came to silencing or suppressing women's sexualities, yet Bhana and Pattman (2011) assert that young boys and girls do invest in their sexual pleasure. However, Bhana (2017) also recognises the effects of colonialism, religion, and history in framing young people as non-sexual, and finds concerning the various legislation that endorse asexual African youth, closing all avenues for talk around sexual pleasures. By breaking away from singular risky sexualities, as Bhana (2017) did, this study also highlighted how young African women "negotiate and invest in intimacy under varying social conditions" (Bhana, 2017, p. 251). In her article, she urges researcher to "acknowledge young Africans as invested in and motivated by sexual pleasures and desires whilst paying attention to the gendered, social and cultural conditions through which sexualities are forged" (p. 253).

In unison, the religious institutions were of great influence deploying sexual messages, or the silencing thereof. Participants referred to religious and family sexual messages indistinctively, as is the case with my discussion on the two categories. Families and religious institutions, that participants were part of, did not treat young women and men alike. One participant mentioned how the boys in her church wore their uniforms even after impregnating a girl, yet girls forfeited that opportunity, *'once it's gone it's gone'* - Skhululiwe. Another example of this unison between religious and familial scripts is evident in Nikiwe's referral to *'Muslim families'* when she referred to her parents' strictness. Interestingly, Nikiwe and most participants naturally referred to ethnic/religious/cultural explanations as 'truth', confirming Bazzul's (2016, p. 9) Althusserian argument that, "we are always already ideologically constituted as subjects through ideological apparatuses", religious and cultural institutions as examples of such apparatuses.

Almost all participants expressed to have disappointed their parents by falling pregnant and no longer being virgins. Jabulile's mother was one who expressed such. Her questioning why she had not taken contraceptives like other girls demonstrated the shifting of responsibilities between apparatuses of power. Jabulile's mother was fine with relinquishing responsibility to school teachers to teach her daughter about sexual health. This Bhana (2013) found to be a common tendency amongst parents to rely on Life Orientation, which I agree can be a dangerous inconsistency when educational scripts are not critically interrogated within the home.

My experience of the “fall from grace”, and that of participants, I view as ‘multi-sanctioned’ from religious, cultural, ethnical, gender and of course, familial discourses. I use ‘multi-sanctioned’ as a concept to expand from Bazzul’s (2016) understanding of science text discourses as ‘double-sanctioned’, implying text discourses’ approval by state and by disciplines. By infusing my feminist post-structural lens of ‘multiplicity’, I refer to all discourses available to and for participants (myself included) as multi-sanctioned. In the same breath, I point to the power to exercise choice within multiple discourses, where Foucault (1972) sets out the available possibilities for individuals, as well the *modus operandi* for their choices to be implemented, espousing agency. However, in this sense, agency or power, is exercised through available discourses of ‘becoming’ and ‘unbecoming’ a young African woman.

Available or ‘choosable’ discourses, according to Bazzul (2016), alleviate anxiety and confusion, such that power deployed through religious and cultural discourses over time, is not viewed as coercion, “but as a field of ‘positive’, commonsensical possibilities” (p. 14); a naturalisation that reflects *just how the world is* (Sewpaul, 2013, p, 119, italics, in original), with “the voluntary imprisonment of the free subject” (Sewpaul, 2013, p. 120). This featured significantly in participants’ narratives. One such example was Nompandolo’s mention of her father’s abusive tendencies towards her mother, and how she found it difficult to understand her mother’s tolerance of such, since they are not married. While I could understand her frustration, I also struggled to understand how she could accept abuse as a ‘choosable’ and thus acceptable discourse as a form of submission in marriage, which I challenged (see chapter five).

Nompandolo reported that she grew up going to church, and it was not surprising that she understood the marital ‘submission’ script I discussed in chapter three (*wives be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord*) which, as mentioned, earlier is also deeply embedded with cultural ideas of a good submissive wife. This script was not unique to Nompandolo, some participants understood this form of submission (abuse) as inescapable in marriage, with the promise of a ring ushering in a certain level of tolerance of abuse.

For many young African woman in my study, their formative scripts on love were traumatic. They reported having had their own fantasies about what love and sex meant in relationships, but in reality, met disappointments. Expressing her disappointment, Slindile narrated her experience of losing her virginity to a ‘guy [who] was just black, you know ‘lokshin (township) style’ providing racialized explanations for sexual behaviour. Slindile’s mention of ‘just black’

pointed to the idea of a distinct 'black' and 'township' sexuality, thus bringing in not only racial but also class explanations for sexual behaviour. It is evident that at an intrapersonal level, she had fantasised, and even rehearsed her sexual behaviour, yet at the interpersonal level needed to reorganise them to adapt to context and relations (Wiederman, 2015, p. 8).

Dominant in participants' scripts was how identifying with dominant norms of gender, race, ethnicity or class enabled them to gain intelligibility (Butler, 1999). This is important within social work practice where individuals are viewed in the context of the environment which may be enabling or/and constraining of the development of individuals. Shifting from *ekhaya* to *ivava* presented young women with these experiences which often demanded young people to reconfigure their *ekhaya* scripts to suit their current contexts, which was not easy.

Ziningi explained how she was unable to discuss with her mother, her concerns about referring to the father of her children as '*umkhwenyana – the husband/son in-law*'. This, and other participant narratives, demonstrated the extent to which pressures from family can force one to submit oneself to unfavourable situations. In this case, Ziningi mentioned how during one of her visits with the children, he forced her to wear a 'doek' – a headscarf, which is worn by *umakoti* – wife or fiancé as a sign of respect for the elders of her marital or future marital home. She however only agreed once, thereafter she refused to accompany him, since he remained adamant on her wearing the doek.

The above refers to one of many instances where participants resisted dominant constructions of femininity. I quote Ziningi in chapter six, where she explained how she aspired to '*get what he has already*' referring to her partner who had a professional degree, and stable employment. I found Ziningi's 'talk' and her 'thinking' agentic. These kinds of talks or thoughts allow young women, like Ziningi to envision what McNay (2000, p. 5) refers to as "lived relation between embodied potentiality and material relations" which in a way helps to identify constraints and possibilities for these potentialities to manifest. Indeed, the interview allowed for conversations that identified dominant ideologies of femininity and masculinity and the extent to which these may constrain how one's aspirations materialise.

It was common for participants to report incidences where they had to give into what SDs wanted, thus subscribing to dominant sexual scripts, even to the detriment of their health. On the subject of contraceptives, Zothile mentioned how her '*boyfriend did not approve*' her using any form of contraceptive since it was going to make her '*wet and [her] body wobbly*.' I earlier discussed how this increases women's chances of HIV risk (Ngcobo, 2012), who often go to

extremes to remove fluid from their vaginas in order to accommodate male pleasure. Dry sex is one of the factors contributing to women's increased vulnerability to HIV infection. The notion of sex as being for male sexual gratification was strongly held, and women were fine with complying with this notion, provided their other needs were met. Within this notion, participants oscillated between knowing their sexual needs, and being unable or unwilling to communicate their needs to partners, and hindrances to performing the latter meant unmet sexual needs. This inability or unwillingness to communicate sexual needs, and to negotiate condom use points to young women's "complicity in and the reproduction of asymmetrical relations of power" (Bhana, 2016, p. 137). The *ekhaya*, good girl, sexually demure and submissive script was so powerful, that despite knowing about the possibilities of unplanned pregnancies and HIV/AIDS, participants refused to take responsibility for condom use, as powerfully demonstrated by Khumbuzile, who exclaimed: *Haybo* (loosely translated into "oh no!), *I let him do that. Even though he sometimes forgets and I have to take the morning after pill.*

The above suggests the continuing ever-present "discourses of sexuality in which women are positioned as the reluctant recipients of male desires – rather than as the initiators of sexual activities" (Allen, 2003, p. 220). Later I highlight incidences where this reluctance was in fact a strategy, where sex was just a bridge to multiple possibilities, which for some did include pleasure. However, at times young people planned in advance to not experience pleasure in sex, which also carried dire consequence. Use of alcohol to cope with sex with SDs created more harm, as demonstrated in Zothile's experience and acceptance of being physically abused.

This study found that before young people arrive at university, they are exposed to racial, class, gender, sexual and ethnic scripts, which are dichotomously categorized, such as the dominant discourses of femininity and masculinity. Embedded in these scripts or discourses is the emphasis on 'doing your part' right, thus achieving intelligibility (Butler, 1999; Epstein, O'Flynn, & Telford, 2000).

Ivava, a colloquial term referring to university presented a platform for testing old sexual scripts from 'ekhaya' within new contexts. Owing to South Africa's post-apartheid policies, ivava is diverse, and embraces diverse discourses. As such, "no single account" was puzzle fitting, instead discourses or scripts "worked as background for one another, and they often [found] their most powerful articulation through one another" (Butler, 1999, p. xvii).

Identities are never stable, but fluid and the university context ushered in new possibilities for participants to reconfigure their selves, which with a shift in context needed to be “interpreted in the light of changing and specific situations in which they are located” (Fook, 2016, p. 99). Findings showed that young women constructed and performed their feminine scripts from ‘ekhaya’ to ‘ivava’ with some continuity, but through a process of negotiation and renegotiations. Negotiation occurred through external processes of interactions with peers, lecturers, university, media etc., whilst renegotiation included sense making of the shift and reconstruction of new or reconfiguration of old gendered identities. Young people in SD relationships recognised that doing gender meant performing feminine scripts, and noting the relational nature of discourse, and the intrapersonal negotiations of scripts, they learnt to interpret and assess how others behave, as well as their own behaviour. Foucault referred to this as ‘surveillance’.

Sexuality scripts, from ‘ekhaya’ to ‘ivava’ and the narratives of ‘becoming’, are discussed in the first analysis chapter which is divided into two sections, then in chapter five, I critically analysed young women’s narratives in relation to their constructions of love, intimacy and desire, and I highlight throughout, how they negotiated agency, and the limitations thereof in these relationships. Very early in my study, I took time to familiarize myself with what Gee (2011, p. 29) refers to as “all talk and writing that has gone on” around a specific phenomenon, which foregrounds assumptions of my two literature review chapters (two and three).

7.3 Young African women as neoliberal subjects of gender, race and class

Identities, according to feminist post-structuralism are fluid, flexible and fragmented and are thus never complete nor singular, but are always becoming and multiplying, and are “meant to be used and employed, and do not necessarily emerge from an individual biography” (Marques, 2010, p. 320). Discourses of gender, race, and class are socio-culturally and socio-politically constructed (Sewpaul, 2013), thus refuting essentialist notions of biological constructions. Undoubtedly, various global, political and local advancements have positioned young African women as decision-makers who invest in the reflexive process of the self (Giddens, 1992).

While I mention above, and throughout the thesis, that identities are always changing, the process of self-reflexivity in a new context demonstrated the continuities and discontinuities of discourses. Participants in my study were in transition, between *ikhaya* as young African women and *ivava* as young female students, and thus renegotiated various tensions posed by this script within an urban university. Giddens (1992) particularly highlights the freedoms that

these movements, in this case movement of students into universities, and shifting from “traditional ways of doing” (ibid, p. 87) gender, bring.

Participants made mention of *ivava* scripts as multiple, ambiguous, yet also not posing a threat to ‘traditional ways of doing gender.’ In Nikiwe’s case, she was adamant on getting herself a Muslim boyfriend so as to avoid complications, while Thandazile and Skhululiwe also needed to be mindful of their virginity script. Sibusisiwe’s expression of shock when complemented by her SD on the eloquent manner in which she spoke English, reaffirmed racial categories of black as bad, and white or Indian as better. Even narratives of conversations amongst peers demonstrated this, where participants were warned not to do what ‘*they - whites*’ do such as openly engaging in intimate relationships on campus, as one’s academic performance may suffer (see Nonkonzo, chapter six). The latter reinforces more than one dominant discourse of race, one being that unlike their white peers, African women’s sexualities should be silenced (see Allen, 2013); and that there is a distinct white sexuality and African sexuality (see Caldwell et al., 1989).

Discourses on class also differentiated between those who had it and those who were ‘china’ mall types, and the latter advised by Jabulile to ‘*stay in your lane.*’ I discussed, in earlier chapters, various efforts by the post-apartheid government to redress oppressive policies of the past that were governed by the script of segregation. In some participants’ narratives I realised that this script had reincarnated, one that resonates with how Zakes Mda’s *Black Diamonds* exhibited their newly found wealth in democratic South Africa. It was concerning to listen to this as a mother of two children who are preparing to come to university to acquire their right to become educated, which as demonstrated the script of ‘slay queens... slay queen wannabes’ needing to be performed in style.

The young women expressed why looking good was important, such that even walking into class by some participants turned eyes. Among participants, this varied between envy and admiration of the fashionista, with some expressing a sense of accomplishment for being able to afford to wear designer labels, and to show off. As such, Zibane (2017) refers to how female learners in her study made numerous efforts to dress up for *inkwari* –bash/party, and through this dressing up, they felt powerful, and Masvawure (2010b) to student participants who similarly paraded their flashy lifestyle, obtained through SD relationships.

While participants often referred to how, like Masvawure’s study above, they had style which *farm girls* and *freshers* could not afford, they also admired their ‘freshness’ and envied them

as ‘boys’ on campus found them more attractive. What was confusing with this was also how participants often referred to these boys as not their ‘target market’ and as neoliberal subjects who were ‘agentic’ and able to decide who they wanted, they explored options outside familiar contexts. Young women, affirmed by neoliberal contexts often misappropriated these freedoms as free from structural constraints, which foregrounds my argument below on their choice of SD relationships.

This section has offered insight into how “gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence” (Butler, 1990, p. 34), within the university context - *ivava*. Below I discuss findings on how participants narrated their strategic negotiations agency at various stages of their SD relationship, which extends my criticism of ‘neoliberal choice’ theorized in chapter one.

7.4 Contesting monolithic notions of neoliberal choice

Neoliberal discourses of choice challenge Butler’s (1990) thesis on the heterosexual matrix which I employ in chapter six to demonstrate how love, intimacy and desires were negotiated differently across cultures. The heterosexual matrix provides a “grid of cultural intelligibilit[ies] through which bodies, genders and desires are naturalized” (ibid, p. 151). Neoliberalism suggests freedom ‘to be,’ ‘to do,’ and ‘to choose’, freedom concomitant with girl-power (see Ringrose & Renold, 2012).

Using Fairclough’s (1995) discourse analysis, I critically analysed choices within broader socio-structural and cultural milieus in order to understand what shapes young African women’s discourses of love, intimacy and desire within contemporary contexts. Here, I criticize monolithic neoliberal discourses of choice and consumerist ideology invoked by young African women in my study. Without analytic lenses, participants’ negotiation in SD relationship could simply pass as free-will, which is not the case. Sewpaul (2015) argued that, “neoliberalism was engineered and gained ground primarily on account of the lure of the language of liberal theory with its emphases on individualism, ownership, choice, flexibility, and competition” (p. 463) and by the manufacture of desire through disingenuous use of apparatuses of capitalist control (Leonard, 1997), where one’s worth gets defined by one’s purchasing power and material wealth. Discursive constructions of free-will by participants consistently reaffirmed dominant and fixed ideologies of African femininities, bringing together powerful discourses on race and class. Influenced by Sewpaul (2005; 2006; 2008; 2013; 2015), I viewed these discursive constructions of free-will in SD relationships as

demonstrating “taken-for-granted assumptions that are reproduced among people on a daily basis” (2015, p. 466). This is not victimhood nor does it denote power, but a recognition of constraints within which young women in my study situated agency, thus reconstructing the self. Therefore, agency by young African women in this study is conceptualized as consistent with feminist post-structural understanding of agency as situated and narrated within the constraints and possibilities of neoliberalist ideologies (see chapter one).

This thesis examined how young Black African female students negotiate agency and reconstruct identities in SD relationships. In chapter one, I provided an introduction to the study and the theoretical framework; chapters two and three presented a literature review of transactional sex in Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as the historical constructions of female sexuality. In chapter four, I detailed the methodology, while in chapters five and six I presented findings of the study guided by content and discourse analysis. In this chapter, I rewind and reflect on the research process and findings of the study, which includes how the study answered the research questions explicated in chapter one. Thereafter, it considers the study’s contribution to education, research and practice, broadly and within social work.

As students, the study acknowledges that they are multiple beings, who move between settings within and outside of university. Although the *ivava* scripts were evidently far more contradictory than *ekhaya* scripts, participants’ narratives demonstrated continuity, with some disruptions between and within both contexts. This is not unusual as universities are microcosm of the socio-political, economic and cultural worlds that they are located in.

My engagement with young people in SD relationships transcended focusing on the sexual exchange, but sought to establish the meaning that they constructed as university students within an urban setting. This study rejects the universal category of ‘woman’ and ‘African’ but embraces the nuances in the experiences by African women, within specific locations, i.e. *ekhaya*, and *ivava*, where scripts and discourses are shaped, and negotiated. As such, how they frame their sense of agency, compared to young women broadly who engage in SD relationships, was of significance. Previous studies, especially those done for AIDS programmes, have highlighted the gendered economic disparities, low levels of education for women, as factors that contribute towards young women’s engagement in SD relationships or transactional sex, which increases their chances of being infected with the disease.

This study focused on young African women, who are neither uneducated nor in adverse poverty, but who still engaged in SD relationships, which are notoriously known to ‘destroy lives’, and thus understood within the discourse of ‘danger.’ In engaging with women within this educational setting, my study concurred with Masvawure (2010b) who argued that it is not necessarily lack of education or poverty that propels young women to engage in ‘dangerous’ sexual practices, but rather the socio-economic and gendered inequalities, along with the gendered, racialized, classed, and neoliberal ideologies, which have over time provided a vocabulary of possibilities and impossibilities. As such, the demand to look good and more importantly to be seen were dominant scripts, and to achieve this within available opportunities (see chapter five, “Stage surveillance”), such as the SD relationship was not always without constraints.

Within what was possible, young women were aware of the possibility of contracting HIV in these relationships, educated as they were. However, this awareness did not feature as priority when navigating these relationships, it was rather a matter of using ‘sex as a bridge’ to getting what they wanted. Also using discourse analysis, Anyango (2012, p. 163), argued that “the language used to speak about HIV and AIDS reflects the speaker’s personal biases and understanding or lack of it”, which was also found by this study. Young women in my study spoke about HIV, only when I raised the issue of condom use during our interviews, and most narrated contradictory discourses of sometimes being ‘in control’ and also ‘not in control’ when it came to condom use. This latter was not narrated with as much concern as I would have thought it warranted, and this highlighted the coexisting ‘concerns’ that occur in SD relationships, such as money, companionship, love, intimacy, desire, contraceptive use, pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

The narratives of young women in SD relationships can be narrowly read as desperation to circumvent economic hardships of university life. What this study found was that young women were somehow fearful of what was ahead, and often related not necessarily being desperate for money, but more about ‘not having money.’ A conversation I had with Zothile also suggests that, ‘students will always need money’ and students in this case referring to female students. Entrenched in the scripts of young women in my study was the need to be provided for as women, and the need for men to provide. Interestingly, this provision was expected even from young men who, like women in my study, were also full-time students. Most discourses by young women suggested that they had been disappointed many times by ‘small boys’ – *abafana* hence they found ‘boyfriend/girlfriend’ relationships to be stressful,

unlike SD relationships which provided sense of relief, or the promise thereof. 'Istress sabafana' – boys' stress included the cheating, and just the fact that they were immature and refused to 'grow up.' Therefore, young women forged 'boyfriend scripts' of love, intimacy and desire alongside the 'SD script' of financial provision and sexual exchange, in order to enjoy 'the full package.' This then challenges essentialist understandings of love, intimacy and desire as 'true love' or 'pure love', and opens up new constructions of love within unpredictable and shifting contexts.

While this study did not focus on 'motherhood', it was an ever-present discourse, including participants' experiences of teenage motherhood. This was not surprising, considering that seven out of nineteen participants were mothers, with six of those having had their children while at high school. Participants' narratives of motherhood, which Nkani (2012), and Ntini and Sewpaul (2017) discuss at length, were multiple. What was clear was that *'falling pregnant and disappointing parents'* was more challenging than the mothering experience, which they mostly narrated as a fulfilling experience. I also found the script of financial provision as a predictor of 'fatherhood', with most even restricting fathers' access to their children, when they couldn't provide financial support. Affordability was an issue, which was also in relation to affordability in terms of cultural requirements, such as to pay for *inhlawulo* – *payment of damages* (see chapter three). This is a form of acknowledgement of impregnating a woman outside of wedlock, which simultaneously infers acknowledgement of paternity. *Inhlawulo*, for some like Ziningi, gave the father of her children the impression that, she was now his *'ingoduso – fiancé'*, a script she refuted.

Another finding within this theme was how young women stressed the importance of 'marriage' and the need to ensure marriageability. Young women often invoked religious and cultural scripts to narrate aspirations of marriage. In fact, Epstein et al. (2000) argued that finding "long-term partners, even spouses" at university was an aspiration discursively framed not only by students but by their families as well (p. 156). Nikiwe (chapter six) refers to her 'ideal' husband as one who should be of the same religion (Islam), yet she did not conform to the "strictness" of Islam that her parents wanted, and she did not want to complicate things. Also fears of not being 'marriageable' were communicated by some participants. In the case of Gugulethu, her concern was that she was no longer a virgin and her 'future husband' would be disappointed to find a *'free-way'*. On the other hand, although self-identifying as a virgin, Skhululiwe was more worried about not being young enough, since in her church, *'if you are*

not chosen in your twenties, you must just forget.' The participants held onto the neoliberal ideal of the two parent, nuclear family with the man as provider.

Discourses of marriage by participants in my study were far from homogenous, or even predictable, yet they were still constructed within the dominant script of women as marriage material. A script that caught me by surprise was from Slindile, when she mentioned how 'wives' are boring, yet many times during our conversations, she positioned herself as potentially being someone's future wife. What this finding demonstrates is how young women's choices "in the private sphere are in fact public issues constituted by the gender" structures (Oyewumi, 2002, p. 3). Embedded in these structures are discourses of what it means to be a man, and what it means to be a woman (Connell, 2002), yet even within these categories are other categories, such as single and married women.

The production of multiple categories at university demonstrates ontological plurality, "not only in terms of multiple identities, but also in terms of locational and relational power" (May, 2015, p. 39). I realised that some participants saw themselves as more modern in relation to certain young women whom they constructed negatively as *farm girls*, who were seen as backwards. The *farm girl* script was also in some way a source of envy, as although these girls were viewed as backwards, they were 'still fresh' and innocent, which boys found attractive (see chapter five). This finding also demonstrates how "power structures relations between different subjects within or across discourses" (Weedon, 1997, p. 110), and how power "create[s] conditions for identities to emerge (or be submerged) (Steyn & van Zyl, 2009, p. 9). Also, in relation to *slay queens*, *slay queen wannabes*, *amaqola*, *cool rich kids* and other categories mentioned in chapter six, my study demonstrates fluidity of these categories in practice, and how young people are not simply recipients of categories. I discuss below how these labels were contested, thus demonstrating women's agency negotiation within dominant discourses.

7.5 Negotiating agency within enabling and constraining contexts

Interviews with young African women in SD relationships provided insight into negotiations of agency within these relationships and how young women position themselves as subjects within discourses. For most participants, they aspired to be in loving relationships, but while waiting, SDs were available for money. While it was evident that young men were eager to have relationships with them, the women found them immature, or unable to provide for them materially as they wanted them to. Participants felt that the university as a space of 'freedom'

afforded them the opportunity to explore, and be able to have sex with older men who were willing to compensate them for sex.

The context of university afforded young women in my study sexual scripts that I mentioned in chapter six. Their becoming young African women did not end *ekhaya* but is a continuous process that includes negotiation, and renegotiations. Some came to university with *umphako* from home which carried sexual messages, of sitting like a girl as well as religious, class, ethnic and disability scripts. I mentioned the various labels, i.e. slay queens, farm girls, fuck boys, not so good girl, stoners etc. These labels were often bestowed upon individuals especially those that were demeaning, but the 'slay queens' and the 'rich kids' were mostly admired. Scripts at university, which were interpersonally shared amongst peers, included in them heteronormative markers of love, intimacy and desire, which were key in my examination of discourses constructed in SD relationships.

Participants entered SD relationships using various strategies. The first one which I did not anticipate, or rather it's underlying rhetorical content. Participants explained how alcohol was crucial at the beginning of the relationship. Firstly, alcohol was a measure of class which young university students could not measure up to, and as a marker of the wealth of potential SDs. This process was described in detail by participants. This was a strategy that I did not find anywhere in literature except in Wojcicki (2002) and even then, it was just exchangeable commodity, and the strategy by some women was to drink the men's money and leave without reciprocating with sex.

Another example of agency in relation to alcohol was how some young women in my study would occasionally go to places of entertainment, to look for SDs using alcohol. This occurred in a manner I found intriguing. One participant explained how when they had money, they would go to Eyadini to just chill and buy expensive alcohol. This alcohol was a measure of their worth, and the assumption was that men who saw them drinking could ascertain whether or not they could afford them. This was not a reflection of agency only; it was also a form of disrupting the masculine script, while simultaneously reaffirming it, by getting money from SDs, to pay to gain access to more SDs. This I found concerning, and it was not the only concern when it comes to the script of *ukushela*.

Even the ladies who scanned men's drinks or even those that had availed their alcohol to be scanned for affordability, none of them actually performed the script of *ukushela*, yet they were able to perform various strategies in order to be noticed or '*shelad*' by SDs. They were

conscious of not deviating from the dominant feminine script. Participants were aware that *ukushela* was reserved for men and *ukuqoma* for women. However, as Butler (1999) confirms, performances are never repeated in their original form. These young women were able to explain how being in a SD relationship was self-chosen, and I guess in a way knowing what is needed out there is another form of agency, or power as they were able to use what they have to get what they wanted.

Conscious of not choosing and being chosen, participants often landed up with SDs who they were not too sure about. They complied, even without knowing, yet they still challenged the script of men holding power that is uncontested. Within these relationships, they were able to request what they needed, but sometimes it was difficult to decide when this should occur, immediately after the sex or maybe wait, but they could not communicate this in protection of feminine innocence, yet anxiety was experienced, because of this uncertainty. It is this *uncertainty* that was a marker of difference between them and prostitutes who would negotiate a price upfront in selling sex.

Participants also used feminine scripts of *ukuqoma* which presuppose innocence. For instance, Thandazile's performance of a passive innocent girl was admired by the SD who mentioned how rare it was to come across such. What struck me here was Thandazile's lack of awareness when it came to how both of them were performing the norm of *ukushela/qoma*, and implicit in the script were the compliments, that left one feeling good and 'warm', as was found by Maureau (2014). Thandazile was one of the two virgins that found it hard to accept that she could not play her part by giving the man sex, which she said put a strain on her but at least she was still "complete". She did not stop there, she had many relationships, even though there was no sex. Within the good girl script, she explained how she was preserving herself for Mr Right.

Also a virgin, Skhululiwe explained how her religious script was responsible for her having kept her virginity. In the SD relationship, she was initially in the same predicament as Thandazile, but her peers (interpersonal scripts) helped by advising her to perform blow jobs as "men liked it". She however, explained that this did not last long, since after some time the men wanted the real thing, and to avoid penetrative sex she changed SDs like 'amaphenti, like panties'. So, her religious script was not fixed, but changed meaning across context. While she was still a virgin (intact – in her words), she was performing her virginity differently within a new context thus demonstrating scripts as historically constructed, yet contextually specific.

For Sibusiswe, the non-penetrative sexual relationship created doubts in her not being able to play her part according to the 'nika/nika' script.

I discussed the nika nika script in chapter six. Participants were able to explain in their own words the "I give, you give". What is crucial at this point is the language - not just the underlying but the IsiZulu language which does not place value in nouns, or possessive nouns. Thus, I was not instantly able to gather who gives first, and the period between the 1st nika and the 2nd nika, did these processes occur concurrently? What I also found here was how participants expected this even from their boyfriends, who were also students, just like them. The provider discourse was dominant, yet the terms of providing still rested on the man. None of the young women in my study clearly pointed out that they out-rightly requested for specific amounts of money. If at all they asked, they waited for the SD to send whatever he could at that point.

The nika nika script, I found illusory, since it claimed that both sex and money were important, yet in most women's 'talk' in my study positioned their ability to 'please' sugar daddy as very significant. What was also interesting is how they highlighted the nika/nika discourse as central, in a way claiming equal partnership throughout the SD relationship. While participants shared stories of happiness, and how they felt appreciated, what was also evident was their eagerness to please, and their staying within dominant feminine and neoliberal scripts.

Sex before marriage was wrong for all participants - specifically losing virginity. There were regrets expressed and participants made sure that I understood where they were coming from. Their scripts presupposed female chastity. Some had already disappointed their parents by falling pregnant, most had lost virginity, parents didn't know, some were worried about marriageability, while some thought 'it's already gone' so there was no need to play the good girl script.

7.6 Significance of the findings

This study sought to examine how young African women negotiated agency in SD relationships and how they constructed or reconstructed the self in the process. In exploring this, nineteen young women between the ages of nineteen to twenty-four consented to being interviewed. Although all of the women in my study were students, some of their taken-for-granted

assumptions and understanding of risk in relationships were concerning, thus challenging our current interventions as educators, social work practitioners, and researchers.

According to Althusser (1998), ideology functions at institutional levels, such as school or family before entering the level of consciousness. Universities, and their perceived freedoms and neutrality provide space for interrogation of ideologies, even if there exist claims of ideological freedom. As Althusser (1998, p. 118) argues, “Ideology never says: I am ideological” and in this way, educators should proactively use the educational space to interrogate neoliberal, gendered, racial, and cultural ideologies.

Challenging or deconstruction of taken-for-granted assumptions, such as culture, religion, class, and race should be at the centre of curriculum development. This is not my denial of culture, religion, class or race, but as Mills (2003), a concern with how they “enable certain things to be thought and said rather than the individuals that articulate those things” (p. 106). This can be done through historical and contemporary analysis of discourses that shape students’ subject positions. Therefore, appraisal and implementation of democratic opportunities afforded by post-apartheid government, which include access to free and fair education and gender equity cannot be considered outside socio-structural, and socio-economic constraints. A typical example, FeesMustFall (see chapter four) demonstrates how government interventions that promote ‘access’ should pay attention to various conditions that that may constrain that access.

Socio-structural, political, religious and cultural discourses as well as neoliberal consumerist discourses were heavily invoked by young African women in my study. The emancipatory approach of bringing these discourses into pedagogical practice can thus allow educators to examine the extent to which they are deeply entrenched, and how these constrain both action and thought (Sewpaul, 2008; 2013, 2015; Sewpaul, Ntini, Mkhize and Zandamela, 2015). Social work educators should also reflect on how social work discourses and policies have served to constitute subject positions of our students, clients and research communities.

As educators and social work professionals, we are interpellated into multiple ideological subject positions (Althusser, 1998; Butler, 1999). As such “we rarely recognise our own collusion in reproducing prejudices and stereotypes” (Sewpaul, 2013, p. 122). Sewpaul argues that social workers should be at the forefront of revealing “the concealing function of common sense” (p. 122), yet as university educators we are often responsible for normalizing inequalities and privileges (Mulally cited in Sewpaul, 2013). Thus, knowledge and

understanding of our roles in deconstructing sources of inequality and privilege needs to be infused within curricular. This is endorsed in the Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles (IASSW, 2008), with principles 4.7 and 4.8 reading as:

4.7 Social workers recognise that dominant socio-political and cultural discourses and practices contribute to many taken-for-granted assumptions and entrapments of thinking, which manifest in the normalisation and naturalisation of a range of prejudices, oppressions, marginalisations, exploitation, violence and exclusions.

4.8 Social workers recognise that developing strategies to heighten critical consciousness that challenge and change taken-for-granted assumptions for ourselves and the people whom we engage with, forms the basis of everyday ethical, anti-oppressive practice.

Althusser's notion of interpellation in this thesis has not been given much theoretical significance, for it affords the subject little agency. However, feminist post-structural theorists, such as Butler (1990, 1999, & 2004) and Foucault (1971, 1978, & 1987) situate the subjects as not unable to challenge, resist, and reconfigure interpellations. Feminist post-structural theories as well as Simon and Gagnon's (1986) sexual scripting theory allowed for balanced understanding of young African women's SD relationships as both pleasurable and dangerous. This theoretical lens provided opportunities to reveal young African women's strategies to resist ideologies of femininity, which in SD relationships was still constructed within male privileging discourses. Although SDs were not part of my sample, a multi-dimensional lens of feminist post-structural provided some insight into the multiple subject positions of SDs (see stage surveillance: turning the gaze, chapter five). SDs are 'responsible and committed family men, familiar bhutis, babas, and men of God, mentors, role models and 'pimps and hyenas.' At the same time, women were pimps, slay queens, fuck girls, IDC's, virgins, as well as freshers, farm girls and fresh girls. This multi-dimensional shift challenges health campaigns, with a singular discourse on risk and danger, mentioned in chapter one.

This shift within discursive constructions of SD relations as chosen, consented to and mutually beneficial ironically suggests joint responsibility for the exploitation that occurs within the relationship, thus refuting essentialist feminist approaches that attribute male power as solely responsible for exploitation. It is a finding of this study that young African women in SD relationships were not powerless, and I discussed strategies that they narrated to situate this power.

Foucault's (1987) analysis of power as 'anywhere and everywhere' provided understanding of power as never exerted over individuals but as relational and situational, which was my theoretical and research stance. Participants, however, invoked understandings of their choices

as individuals, showing no recognition of the power of ideological hegemony on their “free choices.” Within the neoliberal discourse, sex was reconstituted as a tradeable commodity, and they constructed their choice as a right, albeit shameful in many instances, since they had been doing it for free anyway. This was common, and participants monitored other university students’ performances of ‘free sex’ and ‘paid sex’, yet the distinction between the two were blurry. Participants critically engaged in a process of self-surveillance, and often suggested that they themselves were under the gaze, whether in *ekhaya* or *evava* spaces, or in relationships with boyfriends and/or SDs. Foucault (1991) refers to how self-surveilling subjects become ethical subjects. Young African women engaged in this process through continuous observation of what was normal and what was not, and these often related to neoliberal consumerist standards. At the intrapsychic level, the imposition of socio-structural constructions emerge as self-constructed.

At intrapsychic sexual scripting (see Beres, 2013; Jackson, 1999), participants invoked various, albeit persuasive, sense making of SD relationships; these varied from participant to participant. One example that I have repeatedly referenced is Siziwe’s – ‘*sex is just the bridge*’ and how it might critically read as “sex is the only bridge, and it is my responsibility to cross that bridge.”

7.7 Recommendations for future research

- Future research may benefit from exploring experiences from a more diverse group of students, which can incorporate a wider range of subject positions. In particular, future research can benefit from including young women from varied racial, and socio-economic groups, as well as men who engage in sex with men or women for monetary gain.
- Research on perceptions and understandings from the student population, who may or may not be in SD relations, can further provide understanding of how young people within African universities construct SD relationships.
- Using focus-group discussions where knowledge negotiations occur beyond the one-on-one interview, may allow further interrogation of common-sense knowledge as well as assumptions on race, gender, sexuality.

7.8 Conclusion

Research transforms and opens one “to its analytical possibilities” (Ingrey, 2013, p. 281), and my journey reflects this. I was privileged to engage with young African women who were navigating through waithood (see Honwana, 2012) with its multiple contradictions and demands. The young women in my study were smart, were all ‘Born-Frees’, with rights, as enshrined in the South African Bill of Rights (RSA, 1996), which the social work and human rights discourses appraise as follows:

To be born free and having the right to liberty presupposes that each human being has freedom of choice in the conduct of his or her life; however, this right is restricted by that the enjoyment of rights must not infringe the freedom of others.

(Ife & Tosoriero, 2006, p. 3)

For the young women to understand their rights to sex as more than *‘just the bridge’*, they need to develop awareness of discursive constructions that have justified male power, and recognise their role in re-inscribing hegemonic masculinities and emphasized femininities, which both enabled and constrained their own agency, despite their overtly stated claims to free choice. I defer to the wisdom of Bordo (1993, p. 300) who claimed that, “To begin to see differently requires ... that people come together and explore what the culture continually presents them as their individual choices *but which is* [...] instead culturally situated and culturally shared” [italics added] and, as this research shows, it is not only being culturally situated that matters; it is the normalisation and naturalisation of neoliberal situating that must also be challenged and changed. To conclude, I cite Hall (1985) who cogently argued that: “We are not entirely stitched into place in our relation to the complex field of historically-situated ideological discourses exclusively at that moment alone ... We remain open to be positioned and situated in different ways, at different moments throughout our existence” (p. 103); an argument which coheres with the feminist post-structural theoretical lens that underscored this study.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Gatekeeper permission



18 June 2015

Mrs Nolwazi Pearl Ngcobo
School of Social Sciences
College of Humanities
Howard College Campus
UKZN
Email: ngcobon@ukzn.ac.za

Dear Mrs Ngcobo

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) towards your postgraduate studies, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

"Sweetening the pot: Negotiation of agency and (re)construction of self for young, Black African UKZN female students in Sugar-Daddy relationships".

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by approaching black female students between the ages of 18 to 24, currently in sugar daddy relationships, on the Howard College Campus.

Please ensure that the following appears on your notice/questionnaire:

- Ethical clearance number;
- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
- gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

You are not authorized to contact staff and students using 'Microsoft Outlook' address book.

It is noted that you will be conducting your research with due confidentiality and anonymity.

MR B POO
REGISTRAR (ACTING)






Office of the Registrar

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 8005/2206 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 7824/2204 Email: registrar@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

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Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville



28 June 2018

Mrs Nolwazi P Ngcobo 9902302
School of Applied Human Sciences – Social Work
Howard College Campus

Dear Mrs Ngcobo,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0883/015D

Project title: Sweetening the pot: Negotiation of agency and (re)construction of self for young, Black African UKZN female students in Sugar-Daddy relationships

Approval Notification – Amendment Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application and request for an amendment received on 31 May 2018 has now been approved as follows:

- Change in School
- Change in Supervisor

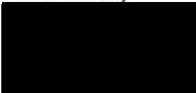
Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form; Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for period of 3 years from the date of original issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully



.....
Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

cc Supervisor: Professor Vishanthie Sewpaul
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Maud Mthembu
cc School Administrator: Ms Ayanda Ntuli

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymnm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

Appendix B: Ethical clearance

Appendix C1: Recruitment poster

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS REQUIRED

ARE INTERESTED IN BEING A PART OF A GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH STUDY?

- ARE YOU A FEMALE STUDENT BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18 – 24?
- ARE YOU IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH SUGAR DADDY?
- ARE WILLING TO VOLUNTARILY SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT?

If this notice speaks to you, please send me a WhatsApp message on 0725275391

Appendix C2: Revised recruitment poster

“YOU GOTTA HAVE A J.O.B IF YOU WANNA
BE WITH ME”

Are you an African female student between the ages
18 to 24?

Are you in a relationship with an older man that
provides...?

Are you willing to voluntarily share your experience
in a safe environment?

Please consider participating in my research study

For more information, please CALL /WHATSAPP OR SEND PLEASE CALL ME to Nolwazi
Ngcobo (without mentioning your name) on 0725275391

Appendix D: Letter of consent

Participant's letter of consent for the study

Dear Participant

I am registered for a PhD in the School of Applied Human Science, at the University of KZN. I am exploring the following topic: **Negotiation of agency and (re)construction of self for young, African UKZN female students in Sugar-Daddy relationships**. My focus will be on 16 to 20 female students currently in SD relationships, how they make meaning of their relationships, negotiate agency and how the 'self' is constructed in the process

The study involves individual interviews. Each interview session will take approximately 1 hour and will be audio-recorded at your consent. All the interviews will not interfere with your lectures as they will be conducted at the time most convenient to you. The details of the study will be thoroughly outlined to you. Please bear in mind that there will be no payment for your participation in the study, only transport or refreshments may be provided depending on the time and place of the interview.

The data from the interviews will only be utilised for the research process. Participation in the study is voluntary and you are not obliged to respond to questions asked if you are uncomfortable, and you can withdraw from the study at any time. Should you require any counselling, you will be referred to UKZN counselling services and the researcher is also a trained social worker who will advise on the appropriate interventions. Anonymity will be upheld at all times by using pseudonyms in the writing up of the thesis and material will be kept safe in the University for five years and thereafter discarded appropriately. Feel free to contact my supervisor, Prof Vishanthie Sewpaul: sewpaulv@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your cooperation and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs. N.P. Ngcobo

Tel: 0312602430

I _____ have been informed about the study entitled Negotiation of agency and (re)construction of self for young, African UKZN female students in Sugar-Daddy relationships by Ms. Nolwazi Ngcobo

- I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.
- I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.
- I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.
- If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at ngcobon@ukzn.ac.za or 0725275391.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

DECLARATION

I _____(pseudonym) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research study. I consent to participating in the study and understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time that I want to.

DATE

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

Additional consent

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview: YES / NO

Signature of Participant

Date

Appendix E: Interview Schedule

Biographical information

Name: _____ (use Pseudonym)

Age: _____

Level at UKZN: _____ (undergrad – 1st, 2nd, 3rd etc.
/post-grad)

Financial Assistance: _____

Religion: _____

Residence (YES/NO): _____

Home: _____

Relationship status: _____

Children (YES/NO) _____

FAMILY COMPOSITION

Name (use pseudonyms)	Relationship to you	Level of education	Employment status	Area of residence

- What does it mean to be a young African female student?
- Tell me about relationships,
- How old is your partner?
- Who initiated this relationship?
- What pressure did you feel (if any) to enter into the relationship?
- How do you refer to your partner? Is he your boyfriend or your sugar daddy?
- Who controls this relationship? At which points of this relationship do you see yourself in control? Expand
- How long have you been in a relationship with your partner?
- Is he the only partner you are involved with currently?
- Is he married? If yes, how do you negotiate that?
- What does this relationship mean to you?
- How often do you see each other?
- Who decides on when you meet and where?
- Do you at any point feel that you are using/taking advantage of your partner?
- What is your role in the sexual relationship?
- Who initiates sex in the relationship? How free are you to express your desires with your partner?
- Who initiates condom use? How free are you in the sexual relationship?
- What does sex in this relationship mean for you?
- Is there money or gifts (or both)? When are these given? How are they given?
- If the above was not present in the relationship, would you remain in it?
- What would happen if he gives you gifts and there is no sex from you?
- Is there ever abuse in the relationship?
- Does the SD relationship need to be hidden from others? If yes, who is responsible for this?
- Generally, how do you compare with your peers who are not in SD relationships? How do you identify with them?
- What aspirations do you have? Are you in control of them currently? Tell me more about your current 'self' and your possible future 'self'