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**Trading Sugar:
Teenage Girls, Older Men, Sexual Choice and Gender Inequality
in the slums of Kibera, Kenya**

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A dissertation submitted in *fulfillment* of the requirements for the award of the
degree of
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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Acknowledgements:

This thesis is dedicated to six girls from Kibera, Kenya: Natasha, Kim, Maureen, Sharon, Lady S. and Marsha, who spent months sharing their incredible lives with me. Their stories are the reason why these pages are so important.

University of Cape Town

Abstract:

This thesis describes and analyzes the lived realities, sexual choices and the meanings accorded to these experiences of six sugar girls who have relationships with sugar daddies. These girls are aged 18 to 20 and from the slums of Kibera, Kenya. Kibera is now widely referred to as Africa's largest slum, where 95% of the population is said to be living below the poverty line and HIV rates are believed to be double the rate of Kenya as a whole.

This study utilizes a multiplicity of qualitative research methods, each carried out in a manner that is congruent with the goals and principles of feminist research. Raewyn Connell's concept of emphasized femininity/ies which describes a form of femininity that is complicit with patriarchy and locks women into subordinate social and sexual positions, is adopted to explain the girls' constructions of femininity, agency and risk. Poverty and patriarchy are key constitutive elements in the emergence of emphasized femininities and commodified sexualities which result in young women being both subjects and objects of sexual behaviour that is simultaneously agentive and dangerous. On the one hand, this study locates the girls' agency in their resiliency and creativity in enacting an economic strategy which capitalizes on their bodies and their love as a means of negotiating their precarious life circumstances. On the other hand, this inquiry reveals the extent to which the agency of these sugar girls is at the heart of their vulnerability. By embracing views of women's bodies as "supermarkets to be sold" and love as dependent on material exchange, these girls are also buying into views of sexuality and love that best fit with hegemonic narratives of masculinity and emphasized narratives of femininity.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction: Sugar Daddy Relationships and the Feminization of HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa

When AIDS was first identified back in the early eighties in the USA, it was associated with gay men and then injection drug users. Today, its face has changed. It is largely black, young, and female. It is the face of the young women from the Kibera slums who sat in the “Gender, Human Rights and HIV/AIDS” classes that I facilitated in Kibera throughout 2008. Sub-Saharan Africa, which holds 10% of the world’s population, is now home to 57% of the world’s cases of HIV infection (UNAIDS 2007) and of these cases, women aged 15 to 24 make up 75% of those infected (UNAIDS & WHO 2008). In Southern and Eastern Africa young women aged 15 to 24 are between three to six times more likely to be infected with HIV than young men of the same age (UNAIDS 2006). In Kenya, the site of this study, young women are four times more likely to be infected than their male counterparts (National AIDS and STI Control Programme 2008).

Factors relating to both sex and gender have disproportionately increased the rate of HIV infection among women aged 15-24 (Leclerc-Madlala 2008a). HIV has been called a “biologically sexist organism” (McBarnett, 1988, p. 71) referring to the fact that the virus is more easily transmitted from men to women, than from women to men. Several studies have shown that since semen carries more HIV than vaginal fluid and since women’s genital surface is more exposed than men’s (Farmer et al. 1993), women are two to four times more likely to contract HIV from a male, than a male is from a female (Baylies 2000). For younger women, the genital tract’s immaturity is also believed to increase the risk (Glynn et al. 2001).

This study however, is concerned with the sociocultural and economic factors that increase young women’s vulnerability and with one phenomenon in particular that is seen as a major contributor to the feminization of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa, sugar daddy relationships. As suggested by the title of this study *Trading Sugar: Teenage Girls, Older Men, Sexual Choice and Gender Inequality in the Slums of Kibera, Kenya* this research focuses on the lives of six young women, aged 18 to 20, from Kibera who engage in cross-generational, transactional relationships with older men. In these types of relations, younger women (sugar girls) trade sex with older men (sugar daddies) for sugar which comes in the form of money, gifts, clothing, employment, payment of school fees and other types of financial support (Luke & Kurz 2002).

The link between the feminization of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa and cross-generational, transactional sexual relationships has now been made clear by the substantial amount of scholarly work published on the subject. Empirical evidence shows a higher HIV prevalence in young women in age-disparate sexual relationships (where the man is at least five years older than her) compared with sexually active young women whose partner is less than five years older. And this risk increases even more dramatically in cross-generational relationships (where the man is at least ten years older) (Glynn et al. 2001; Gregson et al. 2002; Kelly et al. 2003; Longfield et al. 2004; Hope 2007a). Even socially sanctioned cross-generational, transactional sex in the form of marriage does not offer protection to young African women from HIV/AIDS (Glynn et al. 2001). On the contrary, in Kenya, Uganda and Zambia, data reveals that young married women, aged 15 to 19, are more likely to be HIV positive than their unmarried, sexually-active female peers (Kvasny & Chong 2008).

Sugar daddy relationships are seen to increase women's vulnerability to contracting HIV for several reasons, four of which I will highlight below. The first is that older men, with more sexual experience than the peers of young women, are more likely to be infected with HIV (Laga et al. 2001). The second reason is that the perception or worry of risk among both parties in these relationships is often low (Longfield et al. 2004). In Kenya, the site of this inquiry, studies have shown that young women are much more concerned with pregnancy and with being discovered in a cross-generational relationship than they are with HIV/AIDS and that older men often seek out younger women specifically because they believe them to be free of HIV (Ulin 1992; Nzioka 2001; Longfield et al. 2004). The third reason is that transactional relationships are more likely to involve coercion and violence because as several studies reveal, giving money to a young woman in exchange for sex leads many men to feel that they have purchased the girls' sexuality (Dilger 2003; Luke 2003; Epstein 2007). This sense of ownership on part of the sugar daddies plays a major role in limiting the girls' ability to negotiate condom use (Dilger 2003; Luke 2003). Finally, the fourth reason that sugar girls are more vulnerable to HIV is because they themselves have a high likelihood of seeking out multiple concurrent relationships which are seen to be a major cause of the spread of HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa (Epstein 2007).

1.2 Views of Sugar Daddy Relationships in Sub-Saharan: Prostitution and Informal Sex

Common throughout Sub-Saharan Africa (Silberschmidt & Rasch 2001; Luke 2003; Swidler & Watkins 2006) cross-generational, transactional relationships have usually been

understood in two ways. In the first literature, sex between younger women and older men has been seen as part of a pattern of women, often in conditions of poverty, who engage in such relations to earn money. These women are seen as commercial sex workers and prostitutes and their male partners are their customers (Meekers & Calves 1997; Wojcicki 2002; Elmore-Meegan et al. 2004; Trotter 2008). The second approach has been to understand such relationships as “informal sex work” (Wojcicki 2002) or in transactional terms that move beyond the category of prostitution by “recognizing the role that gifts play in fuelling everyday sexual relations between men and women” (Hunter, 2002, p. 100) (Nyanzi et al. 2001; Silberschmidt & Rasch 2001; Hunter 2002; Leclerc-Madlala 2004; Longfield et al. 2004; Cole & Thomas 2009). This literature argues that regarding all such relations as prostitution denies the intricacy of these relations and “misses a great deal of what motivates and sustains such sexual patterns” (Swidler & Watkins, 2006, p. 1). In these relationships, the young women are positioned as girlfriends and their older male partners as their sugar daddies (Nyanzi et al. 2001; Hunter 2002; Leclerc-Madlala 2004; Longfield et al. 2004). While the duration of these relationships varies greatly, ranging from one time occurrences to years, these partnerships are generally seen to last longer than those in the first category (Kuate-Defo 2004; Hunter 2009). What both literatures share in common however, is a concern about HIV infection rates and relatedly, about the empowerment of women, as a way of giving them the ability to protect themselves from sexual risk taking, which in turn, is understood as occurring within a context of acute gender inequalities.

In this study, I use the terms sugar daddy and cross-generational, transactional relationships interchangeably to describe the partnerships of the six sugar girls who took part in my research. Their relationships with older men span both categories in the literature. For some of these girls, their relationships with sugar daddies have lasted over two years and included offers of marriage and thousands of Kenyan shillings. Other relations have lasted for less than an hour. I also refer to the trading of sex in which these girls engage as both transactional sex work and prostitution, for unlike in previous studies of transactional sex where the young women view their sugar daddies as their “boyfriends” and make a clear differentiation between sugar daddy relationships and prostitution (Nyanzi et al. 2001; Hunter 2002), each of the six girls in my study, regardless of the length and transactional nature of her engagement with a sugar daddy, referred to her relationship as prostitution. These girls were adamant that the men with whom they trade sex are not their boyfriends, but their *mteja* which is Swahili for customers, or their *sukeni* which translates into sugar or sugar daddies. They also refer to them most often as their *ATM cards*. While many of the girls

have also had boyfriends, these men fall into a different category. Unlike their relationships with sugar daddies, which they see as purely instrumental and seek to keep secret from others because of the shame they associate to these relations, their relationships with boyfriends are more public, involve feelings of affection and love and are not purely for the purpose of seeking money, though financial support is an important part of these relationships. In this way, my study straddles what has previously been presented in the literature as two separate categories, described above, sex work and transactional relationships with sugar daddies.

The second aspect which makes this study unique is the fact that it does not look at sugar daddy relationships only from the point of view of their exploitative nature (which however is not being questioned) but from the point of view of the girls' agency and the ways in which such relationships are fitted into their own narratives of femininity. This literature, on teenage girls and their sexual relationships, remains poorly developed and we know very little about how they themselves explain their sexual choices and life circumstances. This study makes a contribution to filling this gap by providing a platform for hearing and considering the voices, as well as describing and analysing the views, of a set of sexually-active young women in Kibera, Kenya.

The final characteristic that differentiates this study from others which have sought to understand the social underpinnings of HIV, is its focus of the role of emotions of affect, and love in particular, in the practice of transactional sex. While the HIV/AIDS epidemic brought renewed energy to the field of sexuality studies in Sub-Saharan Africa, the grounding of sexual behaviour in intimate and affective relations has been frequently neglected. More often than not, intimacy in Africa has been reduced to sex (Cole & Thomas 2010). This study seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the feminization of the HIV epidemic by paying specific attention to the manner in which female sexual behaviour is grounded in emotional frameworks and by looking at the role of love in shaping sexual practices.

1.3 Purpose and Rational of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationships of young women to sugar daddies by examining their own understandings and descriptions of these relationships. As indicated in the sections below, it is important to understand the logic and dynamics of these relationships in terms other than simply of gender inequality, poverty and patriarchal power. While these factors are all very important, this study will seek to analyse the accounts of young girls who are currently in sugar daddy relationships in order to understand constructions of femininity, the agency of young women in sexual relationships and the

romantic, material and emotional limits of these relationships. Only when we have a deeper sense of the lives that young women lead and the reasons for the choices they make, can we develop interventions that will truly help them, that will grip onto their realities and provide a possible alternative to the risky and insecure lives that they currently lead.

1.4 Research Questions

This research seeks to address three main questions:

1. What are the material parameters of the relationships between teenage girls and their sugar daddies?

This first question is designed to provide the biographical context necessary for making sense of the gendered sexual choices that these six sugar girls make. It will look specifically at their living circumstances, family, level of education, employment, and plans for the future. Having already worked in this area, I am mindful of the powerful reach and impact of poverty in the lives of these sugar girls.

2. What are the gendered relational dynamics within their relationships with sugar daddies?

This second question is designed to gain clearer understandings of the level and limits to girls' agency within sugar daddy relationships.

3. What are the gendered narratives of the girls in so far as their conceptions and experiences of love for men with whom they transact sex are concerned?

This final question seeks to understand the affective dimensions of transactional sexual relationships. Its purpose is to elicit a holistic statement about the girls' conceptions and experiences of love for men with whom they transact sex and ultimately, to enable a better understanding of how love impacts on their sexual choices.

1.5 The Research Setting

This research takes place in Kibera, Kenya. Kibera has been selected as the site of this study for two main reasons. The first is that I worked there throughout 2008 (my previous work in Kibera is further explained in chapter 3) and was able to develop a close relationship with young women in one particular community. These relationships enabled me to overcome many of the difficulties that frequently accompany research of such a sensitive nature. The second reason is that the situation of extreme vulnerability of young women in Kibera warrants such research, both to better understand their lives and to assist in the development of effective feminist interventions. Several studies have shown that poor urban

women are more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviour, including initiating sex earlier, practicing dry sex, receiving payment for sex and having more partners, than their rural poor and richer urban counterparts (Hargreaves et al. 2002; Zulu et al. 2002; Elmore-Meegan et al. 2004; Dodoo et al. 2006). Kenya's Health and Demographic Survey, for example, found that sexually active women, aged 15-19, residing in Nairobi and other urban areas in Kenya had the highest rates of risky sexual behaviour among all women in the country, due mainly to their having multiple partners and transacting sex in exchange for money and gifts (Waithaka & Bessinger 2001).

Kibera is Africa's largest slum and one of Sub-Saharan Africa's poorest areas with 95% of its residents said to be living below the poverty line (Amani Communities Africa 2009). Kibera is also one of Sub-Saharan Africa's most densely populated areas (Erulkar & Matheka 2007). With an estimated population ranging from 600,000 to 1,000,000 people living within 2.5 square kilometres, it houses more than a quarter of Nairobi's total population (Amani Communities Africa 2009). To put this in context, Nairobi's population is estimated to be approximately 2.7 million and at least 60% of its residents live in slums, including Kibera, which account for less than 5 per cent of the total municipal residential area (East African Standard 1998 as cited in Dodoo et al. 2006).

The land that now makes up Kibera was originally allotted to Nubian soldiers in 1918 in exchange for their service to the British colonial government during the First World War. Kibera, at that time, was a forest located some 4 kilometres south west of Nairobi. When Kenya gained independence in 1963, Kibera and other slum settlements in Kenya became illegal since they were not built on the basis of a land tenure system. But despite their illegality and the fact that the land is owned by the government, Kibera and other slum settlements in Nairobi have continued to expand as rural urban migration brings employment seekers to Kenya's capital. Since many migrants are unable to afford renting decent housing in Nairobi, they find themselves renting shacks in the slums. In Kibera, the average size shack is 3 metres by 3 metres and is made of mud, corrugated sheets, and dirt or concrete floors. The average monthly rent in Kibera is 700 KS (approximately \$9.00 US) (Amani Communities Africa 2009). In Kilimani, the middle class neighbourhood just outside of Kibera, where I stay while in Kenya, and where many women from Kibera work as house cleaners and men work as security guards, monthly rent for a one bed-room apartment, with security, plumbing and electricity, is around 45,000 KS (approximately \$586.00 US).

Given the illegal status of Kibera and other slum settlements in Nairobi, the government and landlords are not obligated to provide services to the residents. Because of

this, youth in Kibera grow up in deplorable living conditions, lacking basic infrastructure and services including safe water, proper housing and sanitation, healthcare, garbage collection, law enforcement, and access to the education and employment needed to lift them out of poverty. The unemployment rate among youth in Kibera stands at approximately 80%, and it is estimated that unemployment or underemployment for the entire slum stands at 35-45% (Carolina for Kibera, n.d.).

Kibera's rampant unemployment, poverty and idleness contribute to a feeling of disempowerment among many young men in Kibera, leading many to sniff glue and abuse drugs and alcohol. It also leads many to overcompensate for their inability to fulfill their traditional masculine role of providing for their families by overplaying other ideals of hegemonic masculinity in the forms of risky sexual behaviour (elaborated further in other sections of this thesis) and violence. This latter ideal of hegemonic masculinity, when combined with Kibera's tribal diversity and the over-willingness of Kenyan politicians to manipulate ethnicity in order to stay in power, makes violence a constant threat in Kibera. All of Kenya's major ethnic groups (including the Luo, Luhya, Kikuyu, Kalengin and Kamba) live in Kibera and when the country experiences tribal tensions, Kibera is often one of the first places where such conflicts escalate into violence. Most recently, following the 2007 post-election violence in Kenya, Kibera residents experienced killing, looting, arson, rape and ethnic cleaning.

For several reasons, which I highlight below, this environment makes young women in Kibera "hypervulnerable" (Leclerc-Madlala 2008a) to engaging in risky types of cross-generational or age-disparate, transactional relationships, ranging from early marriage to prostitution (Ulin 1992; Heise & Elias 1995; Silberschmidt 2004; Luke & Kurz 2002). First, for many poor young women, sex is the only currency by which they can meet their survival needs (Heise & Elias 1995; Zulu et al. 2002; Zulu et al. 2003; Epstein 2007). Second, young women are aware of the economic value of their sexuality and can use it to acquire the gifts and consumer goods associated with subsistence and modernity that they desire (Luke & Kurz 2002; Hawkins et al. 2009). Third, young women are specifically sought out by older men because they are believed to be free of HIV (Heise & Elias 1995; Luke & Kurz 2002). Fourth, the weakening of traditional family and social structures over young people's sexual education and behaviour has led to a void of information on reproduction and relations with the opposite sex among young women which is often filled in incorrectly by their peers (Komba-Malekela & Liljestrom 1994; Nyanzi et al. 2001; Luke & Kurz 2002; Dilger 2003; Van den Berghen 2008). Finally, many young women from urban poverty backgrounds have peers

and role models who have transacted sex for money (Zulu et al. 2003) and with little moral censure of such relationships, they are widespread and often the norm (Zulu et al. 2003; Karlyn 2005; Hawkins et al. 2009).

A 2007 survey of 1675 youth aged 10-19 in Kibera, confirms these vulnerabilities. The survey found that on average girls' first sexual partners were at least four years older. Moreover, 43% of the girls who participated reported that their first sexual experience was either through coercion or in exchange for promised money and gifts (Erulkar & Matheka 2007). These findings fit with those of a 2001 study of more than a thousand men in Kenya on their non-marital sexual partnerships which found that 70 percent of these men were five or more years older than at least one of their recent non-marital sexual partners and 20 percent had been involved in a sexual relationship with an age difference of 10 years or more (Luke 2005).

Transactional, age-disparate and cross-generational sexual relationships expose young women not only to unwanted pregnancy and the dangers of illegal abortions, they also dramatically deepen their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS whose prevalence rate is estimated to be extremely high in Kibera. 15% of the residents of Kibera are infected with HIV compared to 7.4% of residents in Kenya as a whole (National AIDS and STI Control Programme 2008). Amani Communities Africa (2009) estimates that "1/5 of the 2.2 million Kenyans living with HIV/AIDS live in Kibera" (p. 18). Moreover, a recent survey on the rate of prostitution in Nairobi also sheds light on the severity of this issue. The survey, conducted by the Kenya Ministry of Public Health, found that there are on average 7000 prostitutes in Nairobi's Central Business District every night, and that the HIV prevalence among these women stands at approximately 34%, almost five times the national average (Gathura 2009).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I review the existing literature on transactional, cross-generational relationships in Sub-Saharan Africa and locate these relationships within the larger picture of the feminization of the HIV epidemic in Africa. I examine two portrayals of adolescent girls and their experiences within sugar daddy relationships in Sub-Saharan Africa. Though both are grounded conceptually in feminist theory, they differ in the way that they view girls' meanings of and motives for engaging in sugar daddy relationships and following from this, in their perceptions of the level of girls' agency and risks in these relationships.

I begin by detailing the first conceptual framework, which is informed largely by feminist views of girls in developing countries and in Sub-Saharan Africa in particular. In this framework, transactional sex is viewed as a gendered survival strategy. Young women in sugar daddy relationships are largely seen as victims of coercion and poverty, for whom sex is the only currency they have to meet their basic needs (Heise & Elias 1995; Baylies 2000). This literature emphasizes the gendered nature of the HIV epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa and locates the increased vulnerability of young women in the gendered identities, inequalities and behaviours, common in highly patriarchal African countries, that frequently result in women being denied their rights to reproductive and sexual health (Baylies 2000; Tallis 2000; Varga 2001; Luke 2003; Morrell et al. 2009). It also locates the failure of many HIV prevention programs to bring about the desired behaviour change and reduce HIV infection rates in young women in their neglecting of the gendered realities of the lives of young women (Baylies 2000; Dworkin & Ehrhardt 2007; Kvasny & Chong 2008).

Next, I examine the second framework, which is informed by an increasing literature on identity construction, agency and the affective dimensions of transactional relationships and their impacts on sexualities and risk. This framework argues that equating all sugar daddy relationships and sex worker with exploitation, or viewing sugar girls as "passive victims easily lured by the glitter of consumer goods" (Brennan, 2002, p. 255) not only negates the myriad variety of experiences of young women who engage in transactional relationships, it also ignores the extent to which poor women are capable of making their own choices (McClintock 1993; Brennan 2002). In this framework, sugar girls are viewed as engaging in sex voluntarily with their sugar daddies and these relationships are seen to be driven by "emotional security, love, pleasure and social status" (Weissman et al., 2006, p. 86). Moreover, young women are portrayed as active agents who commodify their sexualities in

order to profit financially, socially and emotionally from relationships with older men (Nyanzi et al. 2001; Leclerc-Madlala 2008a; Hawkins et al. 2009; Smith 2010). This literature interprets sugar daddy relationships as reciprocal (if unequal) transactions.

I conclude the literature review by detailing what both conceptual frameworks share in common, which is an agreement that regardless of whether girls enter into sugar daddy relationships for the purposes of subsistence or consumption, by coercion or by desire, their agency in negotiating sexual intimacy with their sugar daddies is constrained by gender inequality, as well as by the threat and use of violence, thereby placing them in situations where they are at a high risk of becoming infected with HIV.

2.2 Feminist Views of Women in Developing Countries

Historically concerned with the oppression of women, especially with the ways in which race, ethnicity, class, ability, age and sexual orientation interact with gender to generate overlapping and interlocking forms of oppression (hooks 1989; Baylies 2000; Eisenstein 2004), feminists argue that the sexual lives of women are “embedded in the social, political and economic structures of their lives” (Rashid, 2008, p. 146). According to a feminist conceptual framework, risk behaviours, which are seen to be responsible for poor reproductive health outcomes, “depend not only on the characteristics of the two individuals in the match but also on the power differentials between them” (Luke, 2003, p. 69). In the era of HIV/AIDS, feminists argue that disempowered femininity in sexual relationships, resulting from the subordinate position of women in society, threatens the sexual health of women and leads to their increased vulnerability to HIV (Holland et al. 1991; Gupta 2000; Luke 2003; Parker 2004). Vulnerability in this situation, as defined by UNAIDS is a “measure on how much control people have over their sexual health and the risks they are exposed to” and in the case of HIV/AIDS, the concept refers to “the likelihood of being exposed to or forced into a situation where there is a risk of HIV transmission” (Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development, 2003, p. 65). When applied to girls in sugar daddy relationships who are often viewed as having little control over their sexual health, feminists locate their vulnerability, not in their ignorance of risks but in “the structural context in which behaviour occurs, including the gender ideologies and patterned relations which inform it” (Baylies, 2000, p. 15).

Underpinning this view of the disempowered femininities of women is the recognition that gendered identities are socially constructed (Epstein et al. 2004) and that these constructions are embedded in relations of power that are “derived from the social meaning

accorded to biological differences between men and women” (Blanc 2001). According to feminists, in highly patriarchal societies, women are socialized into emphasized femininities (Connell, 1987, p. 184) that teach them to “over-respect men” and to “relate to them in a submissive and obedient manner” (Campbell et al., 1998, p. 54) including in areas of sexual relations (Tallis 2000; Ampofo 2001). Emphasized femininities also lead to emphasized sexualities that are “constructed to complement and serve the dominant ideology of masculinity and men’s sexual pleasure” (Holland et al., 1990, p. 12). At the same time, men are socialized into hegemonic masculinities that link masculinity to sexual experience, violence, risk taking and militate against condom use and respect for women’s rights (Connell 1995; Foreman 1999; Bujra 2000; MacPhail & Campbell 2001). Inevitably, according to this framework, the interplay of emphasized femininity with hegemonic masculinity confers on men the role of “gatekeepers to women’s sexual and reproductive health” (Varga, 2001, p. 180) and inhibits women’s capabilities to negotiate sex, let alone safer sex (Baylies 2000; Blanc 2001). Thus from this feminist perspective, the primary risk factor for contracting HIV/AIDS in cross-generational, transactional relationships is women’s emphasized sexualities resulting from the interaction of emphasized femininity and hegemonic masculinity within the wider patriarchal context which gives rise and meaning to these identities in the first place (Heise & Elias 1995; Baylies 2000; Tallis 2000; Varga 2001).

2.2.1 Gender Socialization, Hegemonic Masculinities and Emphasized Femininities

Within this framework, the risky behaviour of men and women is problematized and rooted in hegemonic masculinities and emphasized femininities that are learned through gender socialization. Gendering, according to this literature, begins at birth and continues through to old age, but its impact is believed to be strongest throughout childhood and adolescence during which time “notions of appropriate sexual comportment, awareness and understanding” of gender roles are shaped (Varga, 2001, p. 177).

Much research has shown that boys and girls begin internalizing the qualities of hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity when they are very young and that “childhood pressure to fit the expected gender roles” leads children, by the age of 6, to be able to express and behave in accordance with sex roles (Ampofo, 2001, p. 198). Simpson (2007), who conducted research on the sexual behaviour of a cohort of 24 of his former male students in Zambia, found that by the age of 5 or 6, boys had already internalized the belief that they should be active whereas girls should be passive. This was evidenced in the men’s recalling how even at that young age when they began to explore the bodies of girls, what

was most important in these explorations was the fact “that the boy should lie on top of the girl” (Simpson, 2007, p. 175).

Adolescence, in particular, is seen as a crucial period for differentiation and intensification of gender roles, where “attitudes, behaviours and hierarchies of power in intimate and sexual relationships are rehearsed” (Ricardo et al., 2006, p. 66). During this time, opportunities increase for boys but the opposite is true for girls who are increasingly socialized into emphasized femininities while they are forced to “remain at home and do the household chores” (Ampofo, 2001, p. 198). In the Masaka district in Uganda, for example, adolescence has traditionally been the period when teenage girls were “socialized into womanhood” by the *ssenga*, the paternal aunt. During this process, girls were taught how to maintain a household, as well as how to be submissive and desirable to their future husbands by not refusing sex with them, elongating their labia minora and remaining a virgin until marriage (Kinsman et al., 2000, p. 157). Due to rapid social changes in Uganda this practice is less frequent today but young girls still report receiving the same messages emphasizing the unequal status between husbands and wives before their weddings (Kinsman et al. 2000).

Boys, on the other hand, are socialized into hegemonic masculinities that allow them new found freedoms and privileges (Okonofua 2001) while simultaneously teaching them “the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (Connell, 1995, p. 77). But boys’ new privileges come with a cost, for just as their world expands, so too does their “vulnerability to appear as a real man” (Simpson, 2007, p. 186) which predisposes them to new risks. Indeed, for boys, adolescence is the period when “the association between physical strength, sexual strength and social capital” (Simpson, 2007, p. 183) is made even clearer with boys continuing to be admired for their strength, athletic abilities, fighting abilities and their number of sexual partners (Simpson, 2007, p. 176). It is during these formative years that many young men begin to perceive sex as a performance of masculinity which will gain them status in the eyes of their peers, as opposed to an act of intimacy (Nzioka 2001). For the young men who do not meet these ideals of hegemonic masculinity to a satisfactory degree, either because they are unable to or choose not to conform to such expectations, the costs are high. They often find themselves the objects of ridicule by their peers and their masculinity is questioned (Ampofo 2001; Varga 2001). The fear of such scorn makes many young men vulnerable to conforming, as best they can, to gender norms which put them and their partners at risk of HIV.

2.2.2 Hegemonic Masculinity, Emphasized Femininity and the KAP-GAP

The ideals of hegemonic masculinity that teach men to engage in casual sex with multiple partners pose serious health threats, but even more serious, according to this framework, is the fact that all too often the social construction and interplay of masculinity and femininity throughout Sub-Saharan Africa militate against the teachings of the most popular HIV prevention methods, especially the PEPFAR funded ABC (abstain, use condoms and be faithful) method (Dworkin & Ehrhardt 2007; Kvasny & Chong 2008) even in cases where there is wide awareness of the risks of unprotected sex. In Kenya, for example, a study conducted in 2001 found that young women were much more concerned with unwanted pregnancy than with HIV/AIDS and preferred withdrawal and periodic abstinence as methods of contraception. This study found that only 37% of males and 10% of females reported using a condom in their last sexual encounter (Nzioka 2001). A more recent study, conducted in 2010 by the I Choose Life organization, found little difference. The study showed that despite the fact that 77% of students at the University of Nairobi are aware of their HIV status and the dangers of unprotected sex, only 43 % of students surveyed reported using condoms consistently in the past three months (Ngirachu 2010). Similar risky patterns of behaviour have been found throughout Africa including in Zambia (Simpson 2007), South Africa (Campbell et al. 1998; MacPhail & Campbell 2001), Uganda (Blanc & Wolff 2000; Nyanzi et al. 2001), Nigeria (Ajuwon et al. 2001) Ghana (Ampofo 2001), Mozambique (Hawkins et al. 2009) and Tanzania (Nnko et al. 2001; Dilger 2003).

Literature within this conceptual framework sheds lights on this phenomenon, which has come to be known as the KAP-GAP, the term that describes the failure of the Knowledge-Attitudes-Practice approach to HIV transmission to change risky sexual behaviours (Epstein et al. 2004). This framework explains the KAP-GAP by emphasizing that gender, rather than knowledge of the threat of pregnancy, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, is a greater predictor of sexual behaviour (Swart-Kruger & Richter 1997; Blanc & Wolff 2000; Ampofo 2001; MacPhail & Campbell 2001; Epstein et al. 2004; Simpson 2007). It emphasizes that HIV programs, including the widely popular ABC approach, have sought to change individual behaviour by appealing to the rational, volitional thinking of youth. In the process they have ignored and negated the impact of gender relations and broader social and economic factors on the “contexts in which individuals attempt to enact behaviour change” (Dworkin & Ehrhardt, 2007, p. 13) and thus have largely failed to stop the spread of HIV (Tallis 2000; Campbell & MacPhail 2001; Morrell et al. 2001; Okonofua 2001; Parker 2004; Kvasny & Chong 2008). According to this framework, understanding the KAP-GAP and the

greater vulnerability of young women to HIV requires knowledge of how hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity in Sub-Saharan Africa mitigate against condom use and inhibit women's abilities to practice both abstinence and safer sex.

2.2.3 Hegemonic Masculinity Discourages Condom Use

For men and women throughout the world, condoms have various meanings which are rooted in "socially constructed conceptions of appropriate sexual behaviour" (Holland et al. 1990). For many men in Sub-Saharan Africa who subscribe to ideals of hegemonic masculinity, condoms do not fit so easily into their notions of appropriate masculine sexual behaviour (MacPhail & Campbell 2001). Negative views of condoms, linking them to promiscuity, infidelity, disease, infertility and interrupted pleasure are common and have played a major role in dissuading their use (Blanc & Wolff 2001; MacPhail & Campbell 2001; Nnko et al. 2001). A popular reason given by men to rationalize the non-use of condoms in Africa is the belief that condoms interfere with pleasure that can only be attained through flesh to flesh sex (Campbell et al. 1998; MacPhail & Campbell 2001; Silberschmidt & Rasch 2001; Nolen 2007). In Mombasa, Kenya where, depending on the time of year between 2000 and 10 000 sex workers service men in the port, rail, trucking and tourism industries, a survey conducted of male clients of female sex workers listed fifty ways that men rationalize unsafe sex. Overwhelmingly the number one explanation given was "I can't eat sweets with the cover on" (Thomsen et al., 2004, p. 431). Other reasons cited by these men and others throughout Africa included beliefs that condom use is equal to wasting one's sperm (Silberschmidt & Rasch 2001; Dilger 2003; Coast 2007) or that condoms are defective, harmful and spread AIDS (Thomsen et al. 2004). Denial of HIV/AIDS, religious beliefs forbidding condom use and highly fatalistic views of life are also used to rationalize unprotected sex (Thomsen et al. 2004).

It is worth elaborating further on that last rationalization for unsafe sex. Perceptions and emotions of fatalism and precariousness that pervade the lives of many African men and women have been found to play a large role in dissuading condom use. Many studies have found that where there are higher levels of disempowerment and lower levels of perceived self-efficacy, it is less likely that people will engage in "health-promoting behaviours" (Campbell, 2001, p. 279) including safer sex through the use of condoms. Among mineworkers in Carletonville, South Africa, for example, where the HIV prevalence was estimated to be at 25% (Campbell, 2001, p. 275), HIV was often seen as simply "one more threat to health" in addition to violence, work injuries, death underground and other

common diseases (Campbell et al., 1998, p. 52). These circumstances lead many miners to think about their pleasure before their safety. As one mineworker put it, “the dangers and risks of the job we are doing are such that no one can afford to be motivated with life – so the only thing that motivates us is pleasure” (Campbell, 2001, p. 280). In such an environment of high risk working conditions, constructions of masculinity that see men as brave, fearless, risk takers enable miners to cope with the stress and difficulties associated with “going underground” (Campbell, 2001, p. 276) but at the same time also increase their risk of becoming infected with HIV through their dual association with “going after women” in order to satisfy their “insatiable sexuality” for maximum pleasure through flesh to flesh sex (Campbell, 2001, p. 282).

Similar views were expressed by young men in Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa, where HIV/AIDS makes up just one more “thing that could kill them tomorrow” along with “political violence, car-jacking, malaria, an accident in the mine shaft” (Nolen, 2007, p. 359), by young men in gangs in Atlantis, Western Cape who use sex as an escape from the daily threat of violence (Walsh & Mitchell 2006) and by unemployed young men in an Eastern Cape township in South Africa who use sex as means gaining status and respect among their peers (Wood & Jewkes 2001). Truckers in Kenya also face difficulties in the job including “the state of the roads, police corruption, low wages, the threat of bandits, bribery and the time away from home” and these all “affect the driver psychologically” pushing him to find relief and “making him weak in the face of temptation” that comes in the form of unprotected sex with the commercial sex workers that line the truck stops (Nolen, 2007, p. 51).

Fatalistic views related to HIV itself also play a role in discouraging both men and women from taking an active role in protecting themselves from the threat of infection. In the Mara region of Tanzania, many youth describe having accepted the fact that they may die an early death from AIDS. According to one young man, “AIDS has become normal – like an accident on the road. Some will die, others will take the next bus. However, nobody will give up travelling because of the accidents of others” (Dilger, 2003, p. 30). This fatalistic outlook echoes feeling expressed by youth throughout Africa. In KwaZulu-Natal, high prevalence and visibility of HIV has not resulted in the adoption of preventative practices. Rather, according to Leclerc-Madlala (1997), it has resulted in Zulu youth perceiving themselves as a “lost generation” and becoming resigned to the fact that they may die of AIDS. With regard to unprotected sex in cross-generational, transaction relationships, many sugar girls themselves have stated that the benefits of sugar daddy relationships outweigh the risk of contracting

HIV. They argue that they want to live life to the fullest while they are “young, beautiful and still alive” (Leclerc-Madlala, 2008a, p. 520).

2.2.4 Gender Inequality, Emphasized Femininities and Disempowered Sexualities

Whereas men’s vulnerability to HIV is often fuelled by hegemonic ideologies that dictate risk taking and see unprotected sex with numerous partners as a means of escaping from life’s problems (MacPhail & Campbell 2001; Nolen 2007), women’s vulnerability, as viewed through a feminist conceptual framework, is often rooted in hegemonic masculinity’s abuse of unequal power and use of violence as a means of fulfilling its ideals and expectations (Wood & Jewkes 1997; Blanc 2001). For both married and single African women, the greatest factor that increases their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS is gender inequality and the risky femininities and masculinities that it produces, which often prevent or deny women their right to negotiate sex and safer sex and increases their likelihood of being coerced or forced into sex, either through physical violence or poverty (Holland et al. 1991; Wood & Jewkes 1997; Baylies 2000; Tallis 2000; Ampofo 2001; MacPhail & Campbell 2001; Erulkar 2004).

Statistics in Africa reveal incredibly high levels of coercion which Erulkar (2004) defines as “a range of experiences that compel a person to have sex against her or his will” including “the use of violence, threats, verbal insistence, deception, cultural expectations or economic circumstances” and for which the consequence is a “lack of choice to pursue other options without severe social or physical consequences” (p. 182). One of the earliest surveys of coercion in Africa, taken of 10,000 female secondary students in Kenya in 1993 found that 24% reported their first sexual encounter had been forced (Youri 1994). A more recent study conducted in Nyeri, Kenya, in 2001 found little change; 21% of female respondents reported having experienced “sex under coercive conditions” (Erulkar, 2004, p. 182). In instances of sexual coercion, young women find their vulnerability to HIV increased by the high likelihood of physical injury to their genital tract which eases the passage of HIV into the bloodstream (Baylies 2000; Glynn et al. 2001; Morrell et al. 2009).

In many cases where African women desire using condoms, men’s internalized “negative attitudes towards condoms” (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001, p. 1623) often impede women’s decisions in sexual and reproductive matters, leaving many women with no choice but to engage in unprotected sex (Ampofo 2001; Wood & Jewkes 1997). Findings from a survey in Ghana revealed that only 27% of females indicated that they could refuse sex if their partner was not willing to use a condom (Ampofo 2001). In South Africa, young women

also reported how “attempts to discuss condom use” were sometimes enough to trigger “sexual coercion and violence” by their male partners (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001, p. 1622).

Within these realms of gender inequality, ideologies of hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity help to normalize and justify the physical and sexual violence that men inflict on women. In South Africa, for example, the “stereotype of young men as uncontrollable slaves of their sexual lust” is exploited by some young men to justify their “predatory behaviour” on young women (Morrell et al., 2001, p. 93). In Ghana, “only 28% of male youth and 37% of female youth agreed that a girl should leave her boyfriend if he beats her” and 13% of girls and 16% of boys agreed that it is acceptable for a “boyfriend to beat his girlfriend to show who is in control” (Ampofo, 2001, p. 201). In Meru, Kenya where 19 secondary school girls were killed and another 71 raped by male students in 1991, the principal of the school was quoted as saying: “the boys never meant any harm against the girls. They just wanted to rape” (Erulkar, 2004, p. 187). Moreover, several other studies conducted throughout Africa found that sexual coercion is viewed by both male and female youth as a signs of male love and devotion (Wood & Jewkes 1997; Varga 2001). In South Western Nigeria, traditional Yoruba norms hold that forced sex on a female is acceptable if the male “has spent a lot of money on her” (Ajuwon et al. 2001, p. 122). In South Africa, rape by boyfriends is seen by many as a common occurrence in relationships. According to one young woman, “They find you on the street and they force you to go home with them so they can have sex with you. It is rape but we don’t call it rape because they are our boyfriends” (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001, p. 1623).

But this feminist framework also emphasizes that where coercion does not force women into having unsafe sex, conforming to ideals of emphasized femininity often does. Whereas in some cases, carrying condoms can be a source of prestige for men by highlighting their sexual activity, the effect is often the opposite for girls (Nzioka 2001; Varga 2001; Dilger 2003). Many young women throughout Africa are socialized into an emphasized femininity that teaches them to deny an interest or pleasure in sexual relations, to be unknowledgeable in sexual matters and to submit to their partners’ decisions in this area (Ampofo 2001). Playing out these gender demands prevents many young women from seeking condoms at family planning clinics or discussing condom use with their male partners (MacPhail & Campbell 2001; Silberschmidt & Rasch 2001). And the social sanctions for those young women who do not conform to this ideal of emphasized femininity can be quite severe. In the Carletonville area of South Africa, in Makueni District of Eastern Kenya and rural Uganda, girls who are known to carry condoms are called “prostitutes,” “loose,” “bad girls,” “bitches” and

“promiscuous” and are seen by many of their male peers as unworthy of trust (MacPhail & Campbell 2001; Nyanzi et al. 2001; Nzioka 2001; Dilger 2003). In order to avoid being the source of town gossip and labelling, many girls are pressured to put their reputations before their sexual health.

This framework also acknowledges that where physical violence or the threat of it does not force women to have sex without a condom, gendered economic inequalities often do (Heise & Elias 1995; Baylies 2000). Inequalities between men and women in Africa in areas such as access to literacy, education, healthcare, employment, credit, land and inheritance leave many women in a disadvantaged position that makes them economically dependent on men (Dworkin & Ehrhardt 2007; Van den Bergh 2008), a dependence that “is often expressed – both within and outside marriage – through sexual relations” (Baylies, 2000, p. 7). And, as literature within this framework emphasizes, when teenage girls and women trade sex for material or personal gain or when they are economically dependent on their boyfriends or husbands, they are far less likely to insist on condom use (Campbell 2001; MacPhail & Campbell 2001; Dworkin & Ehrhart 2007).

2.2.5 Gender, Age and Economic Asymmetries

Finally, this framework underscores the manner in which gender combines with age and economic asymmetries to deepen the vulnerabilities of young women in sugar daddy relationships to contracting HIV by constraining their abilities to negotiate condom use and reduce partners (Heise & Elias 1995; Baylies 2000; Ampofo 2001; Luke & Kurz 2002; Kvasny & Chong 2008). Worth clarifying is the fact that “economic asymmetry” as used by Luke & Kurz (2002) does not refer to the difference in incomes of the two partners but rather to a “transaction, or a transfer of money or gifts between partners” which itself is associated “with greater wealth of the male partner and a need or desire for monetary resources by the female partner” (p.6). According to Luke (2003), within cross-generational, age-disparate and transactional relations, age and economic asymmetries determine the level of power differentials between the two people involved, and the greater the differential, the greater the vulnerability of the young girl to engaging in risky sexual behaviour. Luke (2005) argues that money and gifts, like violence, severely constrain or discourage girls from negotiating condom use with older men by citing statistical evidence from her work with men in Kisumu, Kenya that shows that the larger the age and economic asymmetries, the lower the probability of condom use. These findings fit with other studies showing that gifts or money can be barriers to condom use (Stavrou & Kaufman 2002; Hallman 2004), as well as those that link age

differences between partners to risky sexual behaviour and HIV infection (Gregson et al. 2002; Kelly et al. 2003). A study in Botswana by Langeni (2007) cited by Leclerc-Madlala (2008a) found that “for every year’s increase in the age difference between the partners,” the odds of having unprotected sex increased by 28% (p. 518). Dupas (2006), drawing on Luke (2003)’s review of more than 45 studies of cross-generational, transactional relationships throughout Sub-Saharan Africa locates this increased likelihood of girls engaging in unprotected sex with sugar daddies in the man’s financial “capacity to compensate for the risk” by, for example, offering more money for flesh to flesh sex and by what the girl perceives as his ability to either facilitate an abortion or provide for a baby should she become pregnant (p.3).

In the preceding pages, I have summarized the literature on cross-generational, transactional relationships in Sub-Saharan Africa that fall under a feminist conceptual framework of views of women in developing countries. This framework highlights the manner in which hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity, sculpted by poverty and patriarchy, leave young women in sugar daddy relationships with “too little power within their relationship to insist on condom use” but “too little power outside of these relationships to abandon partnerships that put them at risk” (Heise & Elias, 1995, p. 939). In the following pages, I detail the second feminist conceptual framework that informs this study, one which considers the agentive and affective dimensions of sugar daddy relationships.

2.3 Identity Construction and Sugar Daddy Relationships

Feminists also recognize that sexuality is not only socially constructed and constrained by patriarchal and economic power relations but that sexuality is also the product of individual agency (Holland et al. 1990). There now exists an increasing literature on how young women understand and actively construct their own femininity, how it is played out in their relationships, and of the central socializing role of peers, family, culture, media and globalization on the development of young women’s sexual identities (Kinsman et al. 2000; Padilla et al. 2007; Leclerc-Madlala 2008a). This literature rethinks the presumption that cross-generational transactional relations are purely pinioned by poverty and coercion and argues that for many young women in Sub-Saharan Africa, these relations provide a positive sense of identity, an ambiguous means of empowerment (Nyanzi et al. 2001; Nzioka 2001; Hunter 2002; Chatterji et al. 2004; Leclerc-Madlala 2004; Hawkins et al. 2009) and often involve emotions of affect, including love (Cole 2009; Hunter 2009; Smith 2010).

2.3.1 The Agency of Sugar Girls

While this framework does not deny the fact that commodified sex is frequently a consequence of the gendered nature of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa, nor does it refute the manner in which gender, class and age asymmetries translate into various health risks for young women in sugar daddy relationships, it also takes into account “the multiplicity of meanings” that these relationships have for young women (Humphreys et al. 2008) as well as the agency, albeit circumscribed, that young women exhibit with their sugar daddies. Rather than viewing sugar girls purely as innocent victims of older men (Pala 2009), this framework highlights them as “active social agents” (Luke, 2003, p. 77) who redefine and commodify their sexual identities in order to benefit financially and emotionally (Nyanzi et al. 2001; Silberschmidt & Rasch 2001; Hunter 2002; Hope 2007b; Luke 2005; Leclerc-Madlala 2008a; Leclerc-Madlala 2008b, Hawkins et al. 2009; Pala 2009; Smith 2010). It emphasizes that adolescent girls and unmarried young women use the power of their sexuality to initiate relationships with men in order to exploit them for resources used not only for subsistence but for consumption, and that in this process, they derive a positive sense of esteem and identity (Hunter 2002; Leclerc-Madlala 2004; Karlyn 2005; Leclerc-Madlala 2008a; Hawkins et al. 2009; Pala 2009). In this framework, sugar girls are viewed as “entrepreneurs” (Hawkins et al., 2009, p. 179) who devise and enact a strategy that is mutually beneficial to both parties; the girl massages the man’s ego and satisfies him sexually, while simultaneously satisfying her own financial, social, and emotional needs (Nyanzi et al. 2001; Longfield et al. 2004; Leclerc-Madlala 2008a; Pala 2009).

This framework highlights several ways in which girls exert power and control in sugar daddy relationships. These include: seeking out relationships with older men because they generally provide the greatest economic benefits (Nyanzi et al. 2001; Luke & Kurz 2002; Longfield et al. 2004; Hawkins et al. 2009) and allow girls to access the commodities of modernity (Nyanzi et al. 2001; Smith 2001; Leclerc-Madlala 2004; Leclerc-Madlala 2008b; Hawkins et al. 2009), having a high level of control over relationship initiation, including having multiple partners at the same time in order to maximize the benefits of each relationship and so that one partner can be substituted for another if necessary (Luke 2003; Leclerc-Madlala 2004; Hawkins et al. 2009), the ability to delay sex in order to maximize the amount of money or worth of gift they receive (Komba-Malekela & Liljestrom 1994; Nyanzi et al. 2001; Stavrou and Kaufman 2002), the ability to continue, terminate a relationship or refuse sex if they do not benefit financially or if the man’s demands for sex become too much (Komba-Malekela and Liljestrom 1994; Nyanzi et al. 2001; Silberschmidt & Rasch 2001;

Longfield et al. 2004; Hawkins et al. 2009) and finally, in some cases, the ability to control pregnancy, using it to secure their future socio-economic status (Silberschmidt & Rasch 2001; Luke & Kurz 2002).

2.3.2 Sugar Girls Negotiating Social and Economic Change

This literature also highlights young women's agency in negotiating changing economic and social conditions by forging relationships with older men as a means of satisfying new consumer needs and goals created by globalization (Leclerc-Madlala 2004; Brennan 2007; Epstein 2007; Padilla et al. 2007), as well as meeting needs that are no longer being met by marriage (Hunter 2002; Leclerc-Madlala 2008a), cannot be met by parents (Nyanzi et al. 2001; Silberschmidt and Rasch 2001; Jones 2006) and are unlikely to be met through education and employment (Cole 2004; Karlyn 2005; Hawkins et al. 2009). Studies throughout Sub-Saharan Africa reveal that many young women perceive sugar daddy relationships as offering them upward social mobility in the form of education, access to employment or marriage (Silberschmidt & Rasch 2001; Cole 2004; Nkosana & Rosenthal 2007; Hunter 2009; Cole 2009; Smith 2010), an investment for the future (Luke 2003; Cole 2004; Karlyn 2005), the ability to assist their families financially (Smith 2010) and the ability to be modern and sophisticated (Nyanzi et al. 2001; Karlyn 2005; Jones 2006; Leclerc-Madlala 2008a; Hawkins et al. 2009; Smith 2010). In many cases, young women believe that attaining the qualities of modernity and sophistication comes about through consumption (Hunter 2002; Wight et al. 2006; Leclerc-Madlala 2008b; Hawkins et al. 2009) and through being sexually experienced, sexually liberated and having multiple partners (Kinsman et al. 2000; Nyanzi et al. 2001; Spronk 2005; Leclerc-Madlala 2008a; Hawkins et al. 2009). Sugar daddies are therefore commonly seen as a means to achieving each of these goals.

Some the terms used by the girls themselves to refer to their sugar daddies further speak to the instrumental ways in which these relationships are perceived by many young women. In Mozambique, sugar daddies are called 'cows' that the girls milk (Hawkins et al. 2009), in Botswana, they are also called "sponsors" (Nkosana & Rosenthal 2007), in Tanzania, they are known as "investors" (Dilger 2003), in South Africa, they are referred to as "ministers" (Leclerc-Madlala 2004), in Niger, "lenders" (Masquelier 2009) and as I mentioned in the introductory chapter of this thesis, in Kibera, Kenya girls refer to their sugar daddies as their "ATMs."

2.3.3 Transactional Sex and Positive Meanings

This framework also acknowledges that cross-generational, transactional relationships have positive social and emotional meanings for both sugar daddies and sugar girls. For sugar daddies, relationships with younger women serve as a display of both “economic status and virility” (Smith, 2001, p. 141). Well aware of these prevailing ideologies of hegemonic masculinity, including where a man’s image in the eyes of his peers is attached to his number of girlfriends (Connell 1995; Nyanzi et al. 2001; Silberschmidt & Rasch 2000; Hunter 2002; Smith 2009), many young women are skilled in exploiting these gendered ideals in order to demand gifts, clothing and other consumer goods through what Hawkins et al. (2009) term “the guide of a relationship” (p. 178). But beyond the consumer benefits of sugar daddy relationships, this framework recognizes that for many young women, their motivations also lay in the security that sugar daddies can provide, in the approval they receive from their peers, and in the fun and pleasure that these relationships can entail. Moreover and equally as important, this framework recognizes that for many young women throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, transactional sexual relationships provide feelings of self-respect, and involve emotions of affection, including love (Cole 2009; Hunter 2009; Smith 2009).

For many sugar girls, the positive meanings they attach to cross-generational, transactional relationships result from the fact that such relations provide a sense of security (Leclerc-Madlala 2008a). In Uganda, for example, many girls expressed “secretly cherishing the idea of having a sugar daddy” (Nyanzi, 2001, p. 92) believing that older men could provide them with better economic support than their peers, as well as a better social life and the possibility of marriage, payment and facilitation of abortion, and supporting a child if necessary (Nyanzi 2001; Silberschmidt & Rasch 2001; Luke 2003; Masquelier 2009). For these same reasons, such relationships are often condoned by parents who hope that older men will be able to contribute essential items to the household and/or offer the possibility of marriage to their daughters (Nyanzi et al. 2001; Wojcicki 2002; Longfield et al. 2004; Zulu et al. 2003; Wight et al. 2006). In some cases, girls reported preferring sugar daddy relationships to marriage simply because they understood that the material support that these provide would enable them to remain independent (Silberschmidt and Rasch 2001; Leclerc-Madlala 2008a).

This literature also recognizes that for many girls, sugar daddy relationships are a source of approval from their peers. Teenage girls in Uganda (Nyanzi et al. 2001), Botswana (Nkosana & Rosenthal 2007), Mozambique (Hawkins et al. 2009), Kenya (Longfield et al. 2004), Tanzania (Silberschmidt & Rasch 2001), Swaziland (Jones 2006) and South Africa (Leclerc-Madlala 2004) frequently reported that their ability to attract the attention of men

and transact their sexuality for fashionable clothing, jewellery, make up, cell phones and other gifts, provided them with what girls in Botswana described as a “top up” (Nkosana & Rosenthal 2007) that increased their social standing in the eyes of their peers. In Kenya, girls recounted being excluded from social circles if they did not have stories to share about their sugar daddies and often asked their “broker” friends to set them up with an older man so that they would be able to fit in (Longfield et al. 2004).

Sugar daddy relations are also a source of fun and pleasure for young women. In a questionnaire among teenagers in rural Uganda, 21% of the girls responded that the primary reason they had sex with older men was because they enjoyed it and appreciated the fact that older men could teach them new skills and offer “wider sexual experience and satisfaction” (Nyanzi et al., 2001, p. 92). Furthermore, in Mozambique, young women who frequent bars, discos and parties for the purpose of having one night stands with older men were clear that it is not always the men who want sex, they also want sex and unlike men, who have to pressure women and offer financial rewards, these women have the power to seduce men by caressing and kissing them (Karlyn 2005).

2.3.4 Transactional Sex and Respect

Additionally, this framework locates the positive meaning that young women attribute to sugar daddy relationships in traditional African norms that dictate that for sex to be respectable, it must be transactional (Nyanzi et al. 2001; Wight et al. 2006; Hawkins et al. 2009; Smith 2009) and in the view that such relationships should be guided by the “principal of reciprocity” (Wight et al., 2006, p. 993). The widely used phrase “there is no romance without finance” in Nigeria and Uganda captures well this intertwining of sex and material exchange (Smith, 2009, p. 164). Indeed, the practice of demanding gifts and money in exchange for sex is viewed by many young women as a sign of self-respect and women who do not benefit from sexual relations are seen to be lacking agency (Nyanzi et al. 2001; Wight et al. 2006; Smith 2009). This is best exemplified in the following statement, in which one Nigerian University student speaks of the relationship of another female university student to her sugar daddy: “All he gave her was soap – ordinary soap. She was swept away by all this rubbish talk about love. But he was just playing her. She did not benefit at all” (Smith, 2009, p. 165). Moreover, in many cases, women who show interest in having relationships without material gain are regarded with disapproval and have their respectability questioned. In rural Northern Tanzania and in the rural Masaka district of Uganda, such women are called “loose” or “prostitutes” and can be accused of wanting to spread HIV. Because of this, many young

women admit that even if they were rich, they would still demand money or gifts in exchange for sex (Nyanzi et al. 2001).

2.4 The Affective Dimensions of Transactional Relationships

Finally, this framework recognizes that for many young women throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, transactional sex is not only a sign of self-respect and agency, but often involves feelings of love (Cole 2009; Hunter 2009; Smith 2009). Underlying this acknowledgement, is the recognition that where transactional sex is the norm, gifts and money are seen by young women as validations of their personal and sexual worth and also as demonstrations of a partner's commitment and love (Nyanzi et al. 2001; Silberschmidt & Rasch 2001; Cornwall 2002; Stavrou & Koffman 2002; Wight et al. 2006; Leclerc-Madlala 2008a; Cole 2009; Hunter 2009). Studies suggest that this was true even of bridewealth. Recalling her former husband, an elderly lady in Madagascar described proudly how he "even paid a bull for her." According to Thomas & Cole (2009), this was proof to her of not only "her productive and reproductive value, but also of how much her husband had loved her" (p. 22).

Making sense of these interpretations of love as evidenced through gifts and money, requires a consideration of the affective dimensions of transactional sexual relations, an area which has only recently begun to be explored by scholars. Whereas in previous studies, intimacy in Africa was frequently reduced to sex (Cole & Thomas 2009), this framework seeks to "complicate models of intimacy" by emphasizing the power of material exchanges "to reflect and produce emotionally charged relationships" (Cole & Thomas, 2009, p. 21). Moreover, it views Western conceptions of romantic love as inadequate for understanding the forms of affect and intimacy experienced by young women in sugar daddy relationships (Poulin 2007; Cole & Thomas 2009). Unlike in the Western world, where love and money are often seen as inherently opposed to one another (Zelizer 2005) and where money in exchange for sex is generally viewed as material compensation (Poulin 2007), this framework views intimacy and exchange as mutually constitutive (Cole 2009; Hunter 2009; Smith 2009). Love, in this framework, is seen as expressed through money, gifts and "a range of material exchanges that both solidify and build on the sexual and emotional nature of the relationship" (Smith, 2009, p. 164).

Drawing mainly from anthropological scholarship, literature within this framework emphasizes the "socially ordered, linguistically mediated, and culturally specific" aspect of emotions, as opposed to viewing them as pre-social essences (Jackson, 1993, p. 39). It holds

that emotions are “as much biological as they are social” and “as much interpersonal as psychologically individual” (Rebhun, 1999, p. 21). Its approach is also materialist, emphasizing what Brennan (2007) and Scheper-Hughes (1992) have termed the political economy of emotion or the manner in which emotion is “a symbolic representation grounded in the basic material conditions” of people’s lives (Scheper-Hughes, 1992, p. 402).

When applied specifically to sugar girls’ conceptions and experiences of love, this framework roots their discourses, sentiments and practices of love in the sexual economies in which they engage, and in the economic contexts, and pre-colonial and shifting kinship practices and their resulting gendered ideologies that shape the contours of these sexual economies (Hunter 2007: Cole & Thomas 2009). It also draws on a political economy of love approach which considers the ways in which economic contexts affect the meanings and practices of love (Scheper-Hughes 1992; Rebhun 1999; Brennan 2007; Padilla et al. 2007). A political economy of love approach roots “people’s lived experiences and practices of love” in social and economic inequalities (Cole & Thomas, 2009, p. xi) and considers the manner in which asymmetries in gender, class, age and geography function to maintain these inequalities (Brennan 2007; Hunter 2007; Padilla et al. 2007). Finally, this framework also considers the two-way relationship between sexual economies and political economies of love where the dense and persistent intertwining of sex and material exchange shapes conceptions of love, and such conceptions of love continue to fuel these types of sexual exchanges.

2.4.1 Cross-Generational, Transactional Sexual and Affective Relations within a System of Gender Stratification in Sub-Saharan Africa

Recent work by Cole (2009) and Hunter (2010) which explores the links between gender, affect and the political economy of sex root young women’s gendered ideas of sex and love in pre-colonial, patriarchal kinship arrangements based on polygamy and bridewealth and in shifting political economies of love (Cole 2009; Hunter 2010).

Historically the practice of cross-generational, transactional sex can be traced back to the traditional homestead in pre-capitalist African societies where polygamy, arranged marriage and bridewealth were commonly practiced (Ulin 1992). Polygamy was not uncommon throughout Sub-Saharan Africa since it satisfied the great deal of labour that was demanded by pre-capitalist modes of production. Men were able to take several wives in order to expropriate their labour and be provided with the next generation of workers and it was not uncommon for there to be great age differences between husbands and wives (Caldwell et al. 1993; Gordon 1996). These marriages were characterized by a transactional

element. Cattle were traded between the husband and the bride-to-be's family, marking the transfer of the rights to a woman's sexuality, offspring and labour from one lineage of men to another and instigating new social alliances (Dodoo 1998; Dilger 2003; Silberschmidt 2004; Jones 2006; Van den Bergh 2008; Hunter 2009). While women had some degree of choice over future marriage partners (Hunter 2010), in most cases it was elders, who were in the best position to benefit from certain matches, who handled marriage arrangements (Masquelier 2009). Also, the more money a man had, the more wives he could marry, which in turn increased his amount of land to be cultivated (Silberschmidt 2004). These systems of bridewealth and polygyny, according to Swidler & Watkins (2006) served as a means of wealth sharing and distribution. Underpinning the practice of polygyny, they argue, were "cultural codes" that conferred upon men "a moral obligation to share their resources with others" by, for example, taking several wives according to their status and power (Leclerc-Madlala, 2008a, p. 522).

From these pre-colonial kinship arrangements arose gendered ideals and expectations related to sexuality and love. According to Hunter (2010), the system of bridewealth gave rise to masculinities that emphasized the male provider role, and to emphasized femininities that stressed the importance of women becoming wives and mothers. The desire to achieve this dominant feminine ideal of wife and mother to legitimate children also impacted on women's views of men as potential partners and shaped the way they fell in love. Despite narratives from women suggesting that love came from the heart, Hunter (2009) emphasizes that practical consideration about what constituted a good man, were also deeply intertwined with these emotions. Good men were seen as those who had the ability to pay a woman's bridewealth and build a homestead, thereby allowing her to achieve her dominant, albeit emphasized, feminine ideal. Consequently, according to Hunter (2009) women did not fall in love not with men who brought them flashy gifts, but rather with men who displayed the qualities that would allow them to pay their bridewealth. These qualities included reliability, hard work, sacrifice, industriousness, thriftiness and commitment. When a young man claimed to love a woman, proof of this love was seen as his payment of bridewealth to her father (Hunter 2009). Hunter (2010) calls the love that arose from these gendered expectations of a man's paying bridewealth and supporting a wife "provider love" (p. 42).

Today, however, many young women throughout Sub-Saharan Africa no longer expect payment of bridewealth and marriage as a proof of love (Hunter 2007). Under British colonialism and later neoliberal economic restructuring, these pre-colonial kinship arrangements were severely disrupted. The imposition of taxes led to various changes

including the migration of men to the cities to take part in the wage economy and take on the role of breadwinners (Silberschmidt 2004; Spronk 2010). In the cities, many men experienced difficulty obtaining employment and were forced to live in slums (Zulu et al. 2002; Spronk 2010), a situation which only worsened when structural adjustment programs were imposed on African countries beginning in the 1980s. These social and economic changes have had a profound impact on the emotions and sexual behaviours of both men and women.

For men, rife unemployment had led to widespread disempowerment, which, according to Silberschmidt (2004) has heightened their likelihood of engaging in risky sexual behaviour. As she explains, under conditions of economic difficulty, the material conditions that have sustained patriarchy for centuries are destabilized, leaving many men unable to honour their roles as breadwinners (Silberschmidt 2004). This inability to fulfill their traditionally masculine responsibilities threatens many men's authority, identity and sense of self-esteem leading them to respond to their disempowerment in a variety of ways, including through increased alcohol consumption and by overcompensating for their loss of authority by exaggerating other masculine ideals including: aggression, control over women, and sexual prowess (Silberschmidt 2004). Sex with multiple partners, in particular, is seen by many men as a legitimate way to enhance their masculine identity (Silberschmidt 2004). Older men with some resources and, at the same time, less prospects of unskilled manual labour, often use their meagre resources to forge relationships with younger women. For a variety of reasons, including the precariousness that defines poor men's lives which prevents them from taking their health seriously, sexual encounters often take place without the use of condoms (Campbell 2001; Silberschmidt 2004; Nolen 2007).

At the same time, with the decline of small scale subsistence farming, many young women have also taken to the cities in search of new livelihoods (Epstein 2007; Hunter 2007). Here, many also experience difficulty finding employment and end up in informal settlements where they engage in transactional sex with men in order to survive (Hunter 2007). From this sexual economy, which Hunter (2007) describes as an "important mechanism for the redistribution of formal and informal earnings and the provision of shelter for migrant women" (p.697) has arisen complementary gendered meanings and practices of love. In this social and economic context, women have "reworked the patriarchal male provider role" to "place new demands on men" (Hunter, 2009, p. 148). Whereas in the past men were expected to demonstrate love by taking and supporting wives, today they are expected to show love by providing gifts and money to women outside of marriage (Hunter 2009). In this context, the hegemonic masculine provider role continues to underpin women's

expectation of material support and at the same time, enables men to “call on women to enact their duties as girlfriends, such as to provide sex” in exchange for their material support (Hunter, 2009, p. 150).

But as Hunter (2009) emphasizes, these sexual exchanges are not always disembodied acts, nor are they purely instrumental. Rather, embedded in many of these exchanges are obligations, emotional attachment and “moments of deep intimacy and pleasure, as well as at times the pain of physical violence” (p.152). As Hunter (2009) makes clear, while transactional sexual relationships in South Africa manifest clear asymmetries in gender, class and race, a deeper understanding of these relationships requires “factoring love as a powerful social force” (Hunter, 2009, p. 152).

In looking at current ideas of love among young urbanites in Madagascar, Cole (2009) found a similar relationship of love to money, one that was increasingly influenced by globalization and a desire for the commodities of modernity and Western conceptions of love and romance, but also deeply rooted in pre-colonial, rural understandings and practices of love. Cole (2009)’s study also expresses very clearly the influence of cultural factors on perceptions and practices of love, and the extent to which “sentiments described in the vocabulary of one language differ fundamentally from another” (Rebhun, 1999, p. 20). In Malagasy, the term *fitiavina* is used to refer to love. However, in meaning, *fitiavina* is different from the English word for love, and understanding its meaning, according to Cole (2009) is crucial for understanding both the sexual economy of young urbanites in Madagascar and their conceptions of love.

While the term love, as taught by Christian missionaries in Africa, and as commonly thought of in the Western world, implies a dichotomy between emotional attachments and material interests, *fitiavina*, on the other hand “is part of long standing cultural practices that explicitly treat affect and exchange as mutually constitutive and distributed across social networks” (Cole, 2009, p. 113). Similar to the relationships that Hunter (2007 & 2009) describes in South Africa, in rural Madagascar *fitiavina* is constituted “through the continuous reciprocal exchange of material support and care” (Cole, 2009, p. 113).

Fitiavina takes many forms and structures intimate social relationships in Madagascar, including between parents and children, neighbours, lovers and most importantly, between descendants and ancestors. According to Cole (2009), the relationships between ancestors and descendants in Madagascar serve as a model for other relationships and therefore stand as a “prototype of *fitiavina*” (p. 113). Affective and material reciprocity underpin these relationships, with ancestors expected to love and bestow blessings of fertility and prosperity

on their descendants and descendants expected to reciprocate by “recognizing the beneficence of their ancestors in rituals” (p.114). The central concepts of reciprocity is also evident among neighbours who support one another with material provisions and gifts in exchange for labor, and among parents and children, where parents love and honor their children, and in return children honor their parents with “gifts and other material expressions of attachment” (p. 114). When it comes to intimate male-female relationships, the concept of *fitiavina* is less straightforward. According to Cole (2009), “the added dimension of sexual desire in creating connections and directing the flow of resources” complicates this model of love, with “sex, affect, power and exchange” becoming intimately linked in a “sexual economy” (p. 116).

The practice of *fitiavina* in present-day Madagascar is also gendered and linked to men’s traditional hegemonic roles as providers and women’s emphasized roles as wives and mothers, who are expected to provide labour and sexuality in exchange for material security. While the changing political economy of Madagascar has led to increasing shifts in kinship patterns, the practice of *fitiavina* in male-female relationships has changed as well. Today, money frequently replaces labour and services as the main means of exchange in many relationships. But gender roles continue to impact on the way in which *fitiavina* is practiced. Men, for example are expected to show *fitiavina* by providing gifts, usually in the form of mass commodities, to women who are expected to reciprocate by offering their “sexual and domestic services, and labor” (Cole, 2009, p. 117).

2.4.2 Love as Money, Love of Money, Love or Money

These conceptions and practices of love, fusing affect and exchange and foregrounding material support and sex, frame transactional sexual relationships throughout Sub-Saharan Africa (McFadden 1992; Silberschmidt & Rasch 2001; Hunter 2010). In these intimate male-female relationships, money acts as both an expression of love, and as a motivation for seeking love, making it such that it is “almost impossible to tease apart love, sex and money” for “the pleasures of one are clearly bound up in the pleasures of another” (Cole, 2009, p. 122). But while Cole (2009) and Hunter (2009) emphasize the expression of love through “thoughtful acts of mutual assistance - practices that are simultaneously material and meaningful” (Hunter, 2009, p. 136), they, like other scholars also recognize that many young women speak about love in contradictory terms and frequently describe two different types of love, one which is based on emotional attachment and physical desire, and another which is rooted in economic support (Cornwall 2002; Brennan 2007; Masquelier 2009; Smith 2010).

Hunter (2009) writes that while young South African women describe a man's ability to provide for them as proof of his love, they also speak about a pure love that does not depend on money. Cole (2009) found that girls in Tamatave distinguish between clean love "*fitiavina madio*" (p. 129) in which material benefits are absent and *fitiavina*, in which giving gifts and money are a core part of affection. Evidence for these different views of love is also found in the fact that many young women keep two partners, one from whom they seek monetary support and another for whom they have romantic feelings (Brennan 2007; Cole 2009; Hunter 2009; Smith 2010).

2.4.3 Varying Degrees of Affect and Exchange

Love, as it is presented in this framework, is best conceived of as though it were on a spectrum where the extent to which affect is dependent on material exchange varies to different degrees. At one end of the spectrum, we find what Brennan (2007) refers to as "emotion driven" love (p. 204) or what young women in Madagascar refer to as "clean love" (Cole, 2009, p. 129). This love is driven by a desire for romance and for satisfaction of emotional needs, not money, and is felt as occurring spontaneously and uncontrollably. This view of love fits best with Western views of love. At the opposite end of the spectrum, we have what Brennan (2007) refers to as "strategy-driven" love which is almost entirely dependent on material exchange (p. 204). Here love is experienced as a rational, calculated emotion, which arises either out of difficult and precarious circumstances that push young women to engage in a sexual economy for reasons related purely to subsistence (Heise & Elias 1995; Zulu et al. 2002; Zulu et al. 2003; Epstein 2007) or out of young women's desire for gifts and consumer goods associated with modernity (Luke & Kurz 2002; Hawkins et al. 2009).

Brennan (2007)'s work with resort and sex workers in the Dominican Republic is useful for illustrating the manner in which difficult economic circumstances sharpen the tensions between emotion and materialism and give rise to views of love at the farthest end of the spectrum, where it is most dependent on material exchange. According to Brennan (2007), strategy-driven love in the Dominican Republic arises directly out of the material conditions faced by resort and sex workers, for whom limited economic opportunities (similar to those found in post-colonial Sub-Saharan Africa) give rise to a desire to leave the Dominican Republic. This desire to leave, coupled with their concerns for better treatment in the household, sexual fidelity, financial security and a better future for their children result in a "performance of love" whose aim is to obtain a marriage certificate and a visa sponsorship

(Brennan 2002). Under these conditions, romantic dreams of love “take a backseat to financial concerns” (Brennan, 2007, p. 216).

2.4.4 Love and Globalization

An understanding of love, which fuses affect and emotion to varying degrees, would be incomplete without a consideration of the gendered impacts of globalization on the African continent. Two specific dimensions of globalization are especially relevant here: first, the penetration of the Western media and its portrayals of love and modernity, and second, the imposition of neoliberal economic policies.

Though several studies show that romantic ideas of love existed in Africa long before colonialism or globalization (Hunter 2009; Masquelier 2009), Padilla et al. (2007) emphasize that the more recent penetration of Western media in Africa has “reshaped local economies of love” (Thomas & Cole, 2009, p. 4), leading many youth to embrace Western ideas of romantic love, alongside, or in place of the types of love that centre material support in exchange for sex (Frederiksen 2000; Clark et al. 2010). These Western discourses frequently view love and money as “hostile worlds” (Zelizer, 2005, p. 22) and privilege emotional closeness, physical attraction, individuality as opposed to kinship obligations, choice of marriage partners, and monogamous and companionate marriages (Swidler 2001; Hirsch & Wardlow 2006; Clark et al. 2010). Moreover, Western love is often portrayed as a “kind of elation that comes with losing control of one’s senses or wits” (Brennan, 2007, p. 204) with the term “falling in love” capturing best the widely held view that we come to love “with no will and no capacity to choose” (hooks, 2000, p. 169) and that we are “swept away, caught up in the rapture” of an “effortless union” (hooks, 2000, p. 170). Finally, modern Western love is also often presented as becoming more and more egalitarian and democratic and less dependent on marriage. Giddens (1992) uses the term “confluent love” to describe these types of relationships which are based on a parity of emotional exchange and influenced less by gender inequality.

Additionally, the Western media has also given rise within many young women to a desire for a modern lifestyle and consumer goods linked to modernity such as clothing, cell phones, make up, jewellery, cars, meals in nice restaurants, etc. (Leclerc-Madlala 2004; Epstein 2007; Cole 2009; Hawkins et al. 2009).

But while on the one hand, globalization in Africa has given rise to Western views of romantic love and modernity, it has also created the very economic conditions that make embracing such notions of love and attaining this modern lifestyle difficult. Though poverty

and inequality were pervasive in Africa before neoliberalism, many scholars emphasize the extent to which neoliberal reforms, mandated by international leaders to ensure debt repayment and economic restructuring, have only further exacerbated the situation (Wichterich 2000; Brennan 2007; Epstein 2007; Hunter 2007; Cole 2009; Masquelier 2009).

Despite greater demand recently for increased regulation of the global economy, neoliberal strategies, including free trade and privatization, best describe the nature of the policies that link today's world economy. In many developed countries, they are national policy. In developing countries in Africa, neoliberal policies were imposed through structural adjustment programs (SAPS) by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Though the implementation of structural adjustment programs varies from country to country, most typically lead to: reduced government spending on social programs such as healthcare and education, privatized public services, emphasis on the production of goods for export (including cash crops) over goods produced for the local people, the elimination of barriers to the flow of goods, services and money, the devaluation of currency and the stagnation of wages (Zerkel, 2001, p. 36).

While all of this is done in the name of creating the maximum amount of cash flow so that countries can repay their debts, the precarious socio-economic conditions that result from macroeconomic policies also impact on local sexual economies, and in turn, on how men and women imagine and negotiate love. As alluded to in previous pages, Hunter (2007 & 2009) describes how macroeconomic policies have aggravated unemployment, which has further destabilized men's roles as providers and led to a significant decrease in marriage rates in Sub-Saharan Africa. For young women, for whom reduced social spending has limited their prospects of education, employment and marriage, taking part in a sexual economy with men who support them with gifts and money outside of marriage, is one seen as one of their best options for meeting their subsistence needs and consumption desires (Epstein 2007; Hunter 2007).

Masquelier (2009)'s work in Niger clearly captures the contradictory influences of globalization on youth's conceptions and practices of love. Highlighting the influence of Latin American soap operas on Niger youth's perceptions of love, Masquelier (2009) describes how many Niger youth embrace these Western ideals of romantic love as an assertion of modern identity. Today, many youth aspire to marry for romance driven love, or what they refer to as *soyayya* from the word *so* which means "to want, to desire, to like, to love" (p. 209). Whereas in the past, marriage was motivated by factors related to survival and reproduction, today in Niger, like elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa, "love and pleasure have gained

increasing prominence as criteria for the evaluation of a successful marriage. (Padilla et al. 2007, p. xvii). But, as Masquelier (2009) emphasizes, while youth in Niger may use the modern language of love and view romantic love as the cornerstone of marriage, difficult economic circumstances, worsened by the 1985 collapse of the Uranium market and neoliberal reforms, force many to marry for strategy as opposed to romance.

2.4.5 Agentive Love

In these post-colonial, structurally adjusted economic contexts, many young women do not fall in love spontaneously and uncontrollably. Rather they “choose” who they love, a rational process that has serious material consequences. But while the love described by Brennan (2007), Cole (2009) and Hunter (2009), may appear calculated and manipulated, especially when compared to the way love is commonly understood and expressed in the West as being genuine only when it is spontaneous, this framework views “deliberation and requirement” as being “as much a part of emotion as spontaneity” (Rebhun, 1999, p. 30). It also roots the agency of sugar girls in their embrace of this type of rational, calculated love and views this type of love as an “empowering emotion” in that at its core, it allows young women to “imagine the possibility of a better future” (Masquelier, 2009, p. 207).

2.5 Sex, Affect and Vulnerability: The Limits to Sugar Girls’ Agency

This second framework emphasizes the agentive and affective dimensions of sugar daddy relationships, but it also recognizes that agency and love do not cancel out the risks that sugar daddy relationships pose for the young women involved. For each example of power exerted by sugar girls, the activity also involves a risk to their sexual health and personal safety (Reddy & Dunne 2007). The ability to delay sex in order to maximize the amount of money or worth of gift they receive (Komba-Malekela & Liljestrom 1994; Nyanzi et al. 2001; Stavrou and Kaufman 2002), for example, is also overshadowed by the possibility of rape (Nyanzi et al. 2001). In rural Uganda, teenage girls describe this process of eluding sex with their sugar daddies (who are often their teachers) in order to increase the size and frequency of gifts as “detoothing” which they liken to a dentist pulling teeth (Nyanzi et al. 2001, p. 88). But all agreed that “detoothing” can end violently with a girl being raped by her sugar daddy and that in such cases, this was an acceptable response and they would not report it to authorities (Nyanzi et al. 2001).

While buying into gendered views of love that hold that love is evidenced through gifts and money from men may advance the agendas of sugar girls, they are also buying into a

complimentary sexual economy that frequently affords men the ability to make all decisions regarding sexual intimacy. With the exception of one study of the phenomenon of one night stands between younger women and men known as *saca cena* in Mozambique, where girls are able to challenge hegemonic gender roles and insist on condom use (Karlyn 2005), the literature in this second framework echoes that of the first framework in arguing that the agency of young women ends once inside the bedroom, lodging, hotel or area where sexual interactions take place. In these spaces, the ability of sugar girls to negotiate condom use with their sugar daddies is greatly inhibited by the threat of violence and by age and economic asymmetries that greatly increase their risk of unwanted pregnancy, STIs and HIV/AIDS (Nyanzi et al. 2001; Silberschmidt & Rasch 2001; Luke 2003; Hawkins et al. 2009).

Words used by Igbo men in Nigeria to describe their younger girlfriends capture well the limits to the girls' agency, and also succinctly encapsulate the two different views of sugar girls portrayed in this literature review. Fitting best with first framework is the term "handbags" used by sugar daddies to imply not only the passiveness of sugar girls, but also their status as accessories in meeting hegemonic masculine ideals. Moreover, when sugar daddies refer to their girlfriends as their handbags, they are also implying that just like their households and their money, they view their sugar girls as "commodities for their own pleasure and control" (Brennan, 2002, p. 156). On the other hand, the metaphor of "razors" who bleed their sugar daddies of their money and their sexual energy, as is also used by Nigerian men to describe their sugar girls, emphasizes the girls' activeness, insatiable sexual appetites and power to seduce men (Smith, 2001, p. 142). It captures best the picture painted of sugar girls in the second framework.

The terms "handbags" and "razor blades" to refer to sugar girls imply powerful and contrasting notions of their femininities and of their agency. Like the two frameworks reviewed in this chapter, these terms also locate different sources of sugar girls' vulnerability. The first framework, which is best encapsulated by the view of sugar girls as handbags, locates the increased vulnerability of young women to HIV in unequal power relations that dominate sexual encounters. The second framework, however, which sees the girls as razors, locates their risk in their own agency to create and conform to femininities that are seen as simultaneously empowering and disempowering (Silberschmidt & Rasch 2001; Hunter 2002; Unterhalter et al. 2004). These femininities are viewed as empowering in the sense that the girls choose to transact their sexuality as a commodity with men they may or may not love in order to impress their peers, have fun, and meet the ideals of modernity and sophistication. But they are equally viewed as disempowering in the sense that in actively choosing to engage

in risky sexual economies, these young women are also compromising their safety and health in the long term (Smith 2001; Reddy & Dunne 2007; Leclerc-Madlala 2008a; Hawkins et al. 2009). Whether seen as handbags or as razor blades, as “passive and under control” or as “active and dangerous,” what both frameworks share in common is an agreement that the femininities and sexualities enacted by these young women are both equally as objectifying and dangerous (Smith, 2001, p. 142).

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Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains and describes the methodology used for this study. A qualitative inquiry approach was taken to explore the lived realities and sexual choices of teen sugar girls from Kibera. I begin by describing my research participants and my relationship with them, as well as the program through which this research was conducted. I then move on to show the feminist location of my methods. I explain how I employed a variety of qualitative research methods, borrowed from the disciplines but adapted to meet the goals of this study and the interests of the participants, to carry out feminist research. These methods included engaging the participants in writing about their lives, as well as in focus group discussions and individual interviews through a creative writing program that I created and delivered especially for them. I also discuss how I dealt with the methodological limitations of this inquiry and conclude by describing the ethical issues of this study and how these were handled.

3.2 Research Participants

The research engaged with six girls, aged 18 to 20, who participate in sugar daddy relationships. It sought to describe, in the words of the girls themselves, their lived realities in the slums of Kibera, Kenya. The participants were my former students. From March to November 2008, they had attended a weekly class called “Gender, Human Rights and HIV/AIDS” that I had facilitated, in partnership with a local youth empowerment group in Kibera, for young women. As a high school teacher with a background in social justice education, I facilitated this class using critical pedagogies rooted in feminist popular education. The goal was to stimulate within young women a critical consciousness and deeper understanding of the causes of injustice they experienced. The class paid particular attention to the concept of gender, its impact on our lives, and its links to violence, poverty and vulnerability to HIV. Working with these young women had a powerful impact on me, providing me with many new insights, but with equally as many new questions. This study builds on my learnings, questions, and relationships with young women in this class.

One theme that came up repeatedly in our class was the subject of “ATM cards,” the term used by young women in Kibera to refer to their sugar daddies. I remember initially feeling both surprised and disturbed upon learning about the high prevalence of cross-generational, transactional sexual relationships in Kibera. Of the fifteen girls who attended the class regularly, more than half had a sugar daddy at any given time (many had more than one)

and almost all girls stated having had a sugar daddy at one time or another. Moreover, my students made clear to me that in these types of relationship, sugar girls had very little power to negotiate condom use and consequently, they frequently engaged in unprotected sex. As an HIV/AIDS Prevention educator, I found this topic, of sugar daddies and transactional sex, the most difficult one to deal with. Over and over again, the girls' narratives made clear to me that as sugar girls, they enacted femininities, engaged in sexual economies, and embraced views of love that conflicted with the main the HIV prevention messages that I was trying to teach them. This challenge led me to want to learn more about the experiences of young women who have sugar daddies and is what eventually led me back to Kibera in June 2009, to work again with these young women.

After returning to Kibera, I was able to get in touch with two of my former students, who were then able to connect me to another six. In an initial meeting with them, in June 2009, I spoke to them of my research, explained my goals and asked if any would be interested in participating. All eight were interested in taking part. In the end, however, only six were selected to participate. This was due mainly to their ability to meet with me intensely over the next few weeks. Also, a social worker based in Kibera, who works closely with the girls, agreed that taking part would cause no emotional harm to the girls. I discuss the ethical issues I confronted in this project in more depth below.

Once my participants' participation was confirmed, we worked together to come up with a process that would allow me to accomplish my research goals while also benefiting them. Creating a process that would in some way benefit the participants of my research was of utmost importance to me from the moment I began to imagine this research project. Though I wasn't quite sure at first how I could help the six girls who would take part in my study, I knew that I had some academic knowledge and understanding of the causes of many of the inequalities and challenges that they faced daily in Kibera and that, when combined with their own intimate experiences, this would help to create a fuller picture for both myself as a researcher and for the girls as participants on issues related to poverty, violence, HIV/AIDS, and gender inequality. Also, knowing their love of creative writing and drama, as well as their interest in learning about issues related to human rights and sexual health, I proposed to them the option of conducting my research through a special Girls Empowerment/Creative Writing program that I would create with and facilitate especially for them. They were happy with the idea and immediately agreed. Our program took place for three weeks throughout the month of July 2009, in a private space located just outside of Kibera.

In a sense, our work simply picked up from where we had left off in 2008. The only differences were that we met daily for longer periods of time and focused more on their sexual relationships with men, especially with their sugar daddies. During our sessions together, I made use of many of the same pedagogical methods that I had used to facilitate our class, only this time I used them as methods for collecting data for my research. Just like our first class together, the creation and facilitation of this new program was strongly underpinned by my commitment to the principles of social justice and feminist popular education. It was participatory and critical, and infused arts-based methods including poetry and narrative writing with traditional qualitative methods of collecting data such as focus group discussions and individual interviews.

3.3 Feminist Research

With my previous experiences of feminist popular education work in Kibera, and given the nature of this study, it is not surprising that this research project was designed based on the principles and goals of feminist research. While there is widespread debate about what exactly constitutes feminist research (as well as feminism), feminist research is commonly described as research done by, for and about women (Madriz 2003). Feminist research is not limited to one specific method or discipline. What generally distinguishes it from traditional social science research is its grounding in the questions, values and insights of feminism (De Vault 1996). These include: its focus on the significance of gender in social life (Cook & Fonow 1986), its concern with exploring how patriarchal social dynamics play out in women's lives and relationships from the location and perspective of women themselves (Harding 1987), its seeking to abolish what feminists view as "the hierarchical, exploitative relations of conventional research" (Stacey, 1988, p. 22), its rejection of the distanced and purely objective procedures of social science research (De Vault 1996) and finally, its outright political motivation and commitment to improving the lives of women (Cook & Fonow 1986). In what follows, I describe how this study is grounded in these principles and goals.

First, this inquiry took the centrality of gender in the daily lives of young sugar girls as a starting point. It did so by focusing on the ways in which their femininities are constructed, performed, and experienced, and paid particular attention to the ways in which gender interacts with other factors such as age, and social class to produce hierarchical and asymmetrical relations in their sugar daddy relationships.

Second, in line with the assertion that feminist research seeks to "capture the realities of women's lives, from the standpoint of the women who live them, and in the social context

in which those lives are constructed and embedded” (Kasper, 1994, p. 266), this inquiry’s main focus was the lived realities and experiences of young women from Kibera and on attending to the meaning that these women give to their experiences (Cook & Fonow 1986; Stacey 1988).

Third, this research sought to equalize, as much as possible, the traditional power imbalance between researcher and subjects (Reinhartz 1983). This was accomplished by utilizing a participatory process that rejected the researcher/subject dichotomy and instead viewed and involved the girls as full subjects in the research process rather than as objects to be studied (Newman 2000). The young women were included as participants and partners in the generation of knowledge (Maguire 1987) and as experts and authors of their own experiences (Stacey 1988). Their inclusion was sought at all levels in the research process (Stacey 1988).

Fourth, following from the previous two points, this study rejected traditional positivist assumptions about the importance of neutrality and distance between researcher and researched and of the need for pure objectivity in research (Cook & Fonow 1986). Instead, it sought to break down the objective-subjective, rational-emotional, researcher-researched dichotomies inherent in positivist conceptions of reality, that feminists believe have generated patriarchal knowledge which has contributed to the oppression of women (Leavy 2007). It did so by making use of a more subjectivist approach to data collection which seeks to understand events and experiences from the point of view of those who live them, as opposed to those who observe them, and which also values connectedness between researcher and participant, and is value-laden as opposed to value-free (Kuntjara 2001).

Finally, what designated this research project as feminist was its emancipatory intent and its commitment to social change. This research was not only “about women but research for women to be used in transforming their sexist society” (Cook & Fonow, 1986, p. 13). Its outright goal was the production of knowledge that would be of value to women, leading not only to change in their lives, but in the “systems of social organization that control women” (De Vault, 1996, p. 34).

3.4 Data Collection Methods

This study used a multiplicity of qualitative research methods. When it comes to feminist methods of data collection, most feminist researchers agree that “there is no one particular method or methods that characterises a researcher or a project as feminist” (Letherby, 2003, p. 81) but rather a variety of questions and perspectives that feminists bring to the method (Reinhartz 1992; Letherby 2003). Reinhartz (1992) states that feminism itself does not

create research methods but rather that “feminist social research is research that requires a method supplied by the disciplines (eg. experimentation, ethnography, survey research, content analysis) or created by the researcher (e.g. drama, geneology, group diaries)” (p. 241-242). To Reinharz (1992) what characterises research methods as feminist is the fact that they are carried out by researchers who are actively involved in the generation of knowledge through direct participation and experience of the social realities that they seek to understand, and who continuously reflects on the significance of gender as a defining feature of social life (p. 46). To Montell (1999) what makes research uniquely feminine is the commitment on part of the researcher to be guided by specific principles of research, namely those mentioned in the previous section.

In line with Reinharz (1992)’s statement above, this inquiry made use of research methods supplied by the disciplines and created by myself to carry out feminist research. Qualitative research methods supplied by social science disciplines included focus groups discussions and individual interviews. Research methods supplied by myself included participant autobiographical poetry and narrative writing on themes relevant to this study that were generated through a creative writing program that I designed and facilitated for the six young women who took part. Before going into further detail about this creative writing program through which I collected my data, I would like to describe my three main methods of data collection, life writing, focus group discussions and individual interviews and explain how these share an affinity with the principles of feminist research.

3.4.1 Autobiographical Poetry and Narrative Writing

In this project, I invited the participants to write poetry and personal narratives about their lives. Participant writings, including life histories, autobiographies, personal narratives on selected themes and autobiographical poetry captured the subjectivities of the girls’ lives in a way that could not be fully attained through other methods alone. They formed the building blocks of this inquiry, serving as stimuli for subsequent focus group discussions. However, unlike other qualitative studies which make use of journals and diaries which participants have usually kept outside of the research process, this inquiry was conducted through a special creative writing program that provided each participant with a journal and engaged her in writing poetry and personal narratives about her life and on themes related to this study.

Finding information about the use of poetry and other forms of creative and life writing techniques used in this way was difficult. Many of my searches for the use of life writing and poetry in qualitative research yielded cases of researchers who used auto

ethnography to write about their own lives or others who had used poetry as a means of presenting their findings. Few studies highlighted researchers who engaged their participants in a process of writing autobiographical poetry and personal narratives in order to generate data. One exception was in the field of medical studies, where poetry and other forms of arts-based therapies have been found to be a useful vehicle for understanding patients' experiences of illness and patient doctor relationships, as well as effective interventions for trauma (Carr 2003; Shapiro 2004; Furman 2005). Consequently, this aspect of my study drew on the findings of medical researchers and therapists who have pioneered the field of using poetry and other art-based methodologies as methods for data collection.

Despite limited attention to or adoption of arts-based methodologies for feminist research, I found poetry and life writing in particular, to be congruent with the goals and principles of feminist qualitative research. The goal of feminist research, like other forms of qualitative research, is the in-depth exploration of human experience (Furman 2005). Where feminist research differs from other forms of research is in its focus on the lived experiences of women and of the role of gender in their daily lives. What also distinguishes feminist research is its valuing of multiple truths and subjectivities and its concern with generating knowledge that is situated and partial, as well as with "accessing subjugated voices and decentering authority" (Leavy, 2007, p. 8). Autobiographical poetry and narrative writing is well suited to these practices and principles of feminist research for four main reasons.

First, narrative writing allows participants to give voice to their own experiences (Carr 2003) and to become authors of their own truths (Norman 2005), allowing researchers to understand the lives of their participants from the standpoint of the participants themselves. Additionally, these methods allow for participants to express multiple, sometimes contradicting realities, as well as particularities of their lives. This in turn, enables researchers a deeper understanding of relationships and circumstances in which explanations of actions are the result of a variety of "interacting factors, events and processes" (Shapiro, 2004, p. 173).

Second, in taking us into the realm of the subjective and emotional, poetry "implicitly rejects the rational-emotional, objective-subjective dichotomies" (Leavy, 2007, p. 10) that underpin positivist research and fits with subjectivist assumptions held by many feminist and qualitative researchers that:

knowledge about the social world arises from many quarters; important understandings are evident in novels, the arts and the media, and in formal social science reports and articles. A poem or drawing is as legitimate a portrait of life experiences as a research report. (Rossman and Rallis, 2003, p. 40)

Moreover, the value of data obtained from poetry and personal narratives lies not in its ability to generate assumptions or make predictions but rather to “provide an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of individuals which can help sensitize practitioners in various fields to the realities of those with whom they work” (Furman, 2005, p. 163).

Third, writing poetry and sharing details of one’s life is a process in which the researcher can also engage. Such willingness on the part of the researcher to write about and share personal details about her own life can go a long way in equalizing the power imbalance between researcher and researched and foster a unique human connection between both parties.

Fourth, poetry and life writing can also provide a bridge to the participants’ day to day realities, worries, fantasies, hopes and aspirations, and yield data that is more raw and honest than data obtained in focus groups and interviews. Comparing poetry to instant anthropology, Shapiro (2004) describes how the language of poetry takes the researcher into “places we never thought we would be and into lives perhaps we initially did not wish to know” (p. 174). Certainly I found that the “power and immediacy” (Shapiro, 2004, p. 174) of language used in the girls’ poems to describe the loss of one’s mother to HIV/AIDS, regret over having an abortion, shame over hanging with sugar daddies, grinding poverty in the slums, trauma from rape and desire for an education, allowed me a “unique entry into the subjective experience and point of view” (Shapiro, 2004, p. 173) of young women whose lives were so different from my own. Their personal writings on a variety of topics including childhood, education, parents, relationships, choices, dreams, and thoughts on love, men and sex, resulted in rich texts or “grassroots literature” (Shor and Freire, 1987, p. 10) that exposed the material, social, and political circumstances of their lives and as well as the meanings they accorded to these circumstances. Common themes also served as valuable stimulus for focus group discussions, whose value for feminine research I describe next.

3.4.2 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions, defined by Barbour and Kitzinger (1999) as “group discussions exploring a specific set of issues” (p. 4) made up an important part of my data collection. I found focus groups to be an especially useful method for sharing and debriefing the girls’ writings and narratives and other stimulus material that I had prepared in advance of the discussions, as well as for encouraging the girls to share their experiences with one another, to ask questions of each other and “to comment on each other’s experiences and points of views”

(Barbour and Kitzinger, 1999, p. 4). I also found that focus group discussions offered two distinct advantages when it came to collecting data and meeting the goals of feminist research.

One of these advantages is that unlike individual interviews, focus groups yield rich data in the “form of collective testimony” (Madriz, 2003, p. 374) on the experiences and perspectives of women. According to Wilkinson (1999), the contextual and interactive nature of focus groups allows for participants to not only share and explore their opinions, concerns, experiences around specific themes, but also to be engaged “in the co-construction of meaning and the elaboration of identities” (Wilkinson, 1999, p. 69). Montell (1999) also agrees that focus group discussions enable the researcher to access knowledge that is situated, localized and collectively constructed by the participants as they listen to, questions, challenge, critique and learn from one another. In this way, “the explicit use of group interaction” produces “data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group” (Morgan, 1988, p. 12).

A second advantage of focus group discussions, especially when it comes to meeting feminist principles of research, is that they help to equalize the power relations between researchers and participants. As a method of data collection that encourages the participants to express their thoughts and feelings, determine what is most relevant to understand about their experiences and introduce their own themes, focus groups can shift the balance of power away from the researcher toward the research participants (Wilkinson 1999). Feminist researchers have found that compared to individual interviews, focus groups are less amenable to the influence of the researcher, especially to the researcher’s imposition of meaning. This is due to the fact that focus groups allow for the relatively wide flow and exchange of divergent ideas, experiences and views through an interaction that takes place mainly between participants, with the role of the researcher limited to that as the framer of issues and questions (Montell 1999; Wilkinson 1999). While some researchers see this as a disadvantage and argue that the method needs careful management, others see it an advantage in that it enables participants to have a greater role in setting the research agenda (Wilkinson 1999).

In total, I conducted eight separate focus group discussions on a variety of themes. Titles of these discussions included: life in Kibera, the challenges young women face in Kibera, men and women in Kibera, the men in my life, hanging with sugar daddies, sugar girls and prostitutes, condoms and family planning, my experiences of violence, HIV/AIDS in Kibera and what love means to me. Gender, as a core theme, was interwoven into each of these discussions. Early on in our program, I facilitated an activity designed to remind the girls of the difference between sex and gender, and reviewed concepts and activities that we had explored

in our previous class together. I also facilitated a few activities designed to allow them to see gender's impacts on their lives. Consequently, they had a strong understanding of the concepts of masculinity and femininity, which they described as "being a real man" or a "real woman" and were able to give a variety of examples of how prevalent ideas of what it means to be a real man or woman in Kibera impacted on their goals, behaviours and opportunities.

3.4.3: Individual Interviews

The final method of data collection consisted of two individual, open-ended interviews with each of the girls. These interviews took place in the afternoons throughout the last week of the program. In the first interview, I asked the girls questions that I had prepared in advance on themes related specifically to their sugar daddy relationships. Please refer to appendix A for a copy of these questions. The second interview was more fluid and the questions asked were specific to each girl, having been generated from her personal writings or contributions to our focus group discussions. The length of the individual interviews ranged from one to two hours.

Like the other methods of data collection utilized in this study, the manner in which the interviews were conducted was guided by the principles of feminist research. As opposed to traditional social science interviews which are frequently guided by principles of detachment and neutrality and are generally one-sided (Oakley 2003), feminist-based interviewing is more of a dialogue between mutually engaged researchers and participants. This dialogue is characterized by empathy, support, openness, and the development of a trusting and potentially long term relationship between researcher and participants (Oakley 2003).

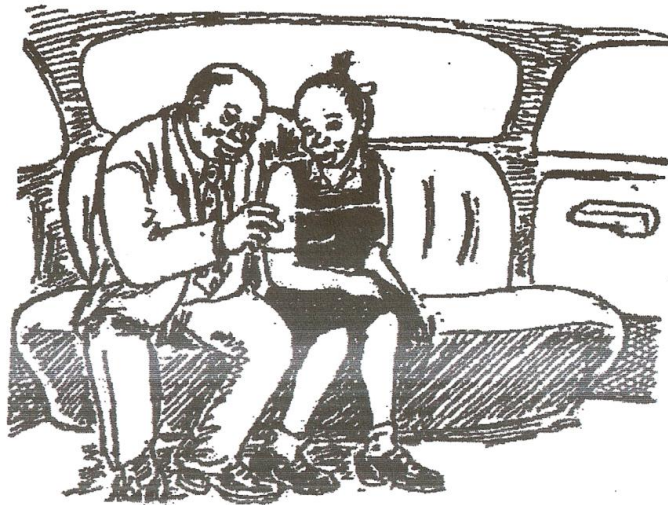
3.5 Life Writing, Focus Group Discussions and Individual Interviews through a Creative Writing Program

As mentioned previously, the research for this study was carried out, using the above methods, in a special creative writing program that I designed and facilitated especially for six young women from Kibera. This program took place in the first three weeks of July 2009. It was held in a private space in Kilimani, a neighbourhood located just outside of Kibera. Since the girls were not in school at the time, they were available to take part throughout the day. Our sessions began each morning around 9am and went on until 3 or 4pm in the afternoon. I provided the girls with pens, pencils, journals, and lunch and covered the cost of their public transportation from Kibera to our meeting space in Kilimani.

Generally, throughout the first two weeks of the program, the days were divided into two sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Each session included some journal writing, in the form of autobiographical poetry or narrative writing, on topics that I had prepared in advance and which then served as the basis for a focus group discussion. Many of these sessions were based on classes that I had facilitated for young women in my previous experiences as a teacher. Themes and questions emerging from the participants' writings and contributions to focus group discussions later served as stimuli for discussion during the individual interviews which took place throughout the third week of the program.

In order to provide a better understanding of this process of data collection, I detail one example of a session which makes use of both narrative writing and focus group discussions. This lesson, which was meant to initiate discussion on sugar daddies, was conducted in our third session. I began by distributing the following drawing to each of the girls.

Figure 1: Drawing from a ProLiteracy Manual on HIV Prevention by Jacob and Curtis (2002)



After much laughter and inquiries into where I had found such a drawing, I began the session by asking the girls to describe words that came to their minds when they looked at the drawing. I noted these words on a flip chart. The list included: *sukeni* which is Swahili for sugar or hotcakes, ATM, money, young woman, student, business man, car, and rich. They said that the man was using sweet words with the girl. When I asked what he was telling her,

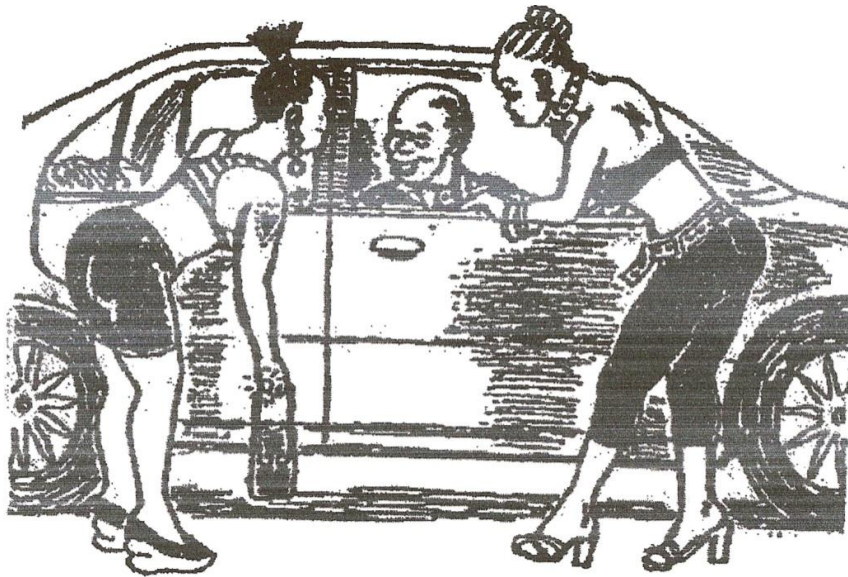
they volunteered the following: “I love you, I love your smile, you are sexy, you are beautiful, you have a figure 8, I love your small breasts.”

Next I asked the girls to describe how they thought the people in the drawing were feeling. They described the man as feeling happy, excited, and eager. They laughed saying that the man would probably be a “long ride” the term used to describe sexual intercourse which can last for “20 minutes or more.” When I asked how the girl was feeling, Marsha said “she is feeling good because she is seeing this man has money.” When I commented that I thought she looked shy, Natasha added, “She is shy but deep down in her heart she is happy.” My next question was “if you are that girl, how are you feeling?” To this question, Maureen replied “I will feel good because when that man is drunk I can take his money.” Sharon echoed Maureen’s thought, “I feel good because this man will give me money which I will use to buy food in school.”

The final question I asked was what memories or thoughts, related to their own personal experiences, arose in their minds when they looked at the drawing. The girls then spent several minutes writing about these thoughts in their journals, after which, we went around in a circle and each girl was invited to read or share what she had written with the group. For most of the girls, the drawing revived memories of their first sugar daddy experiences and most shared with the group how they met their first sugar daddy and how they felt during that encounter. This eventually led to a discussion about much they had learned and changed and how they knew much better now how to solicit sugar daddies.

After lunch, I showed them this next drawing which shows the same man now soliciting what could be described as more formal sex workers and I followed the same procedure, asking them to describe what they saw in the drawing and to associate it to their own experiences.

Figure 2: Drawing from a ProLiteracy Manual on HIV Prevention by Jacob and Curtis (2002)



This code first sparked a lively conversation on the ways in which girls solicit sugar daddies. Some described the way they also stood on the street like these ladies, others described how they solicited in bars and others described meeting their sugar daddies in their homes. My question as to whether or not they dressed like the women in the second drawing prompted the girls to share many thoughts related to the fact that their sugar daddies want to perceive them like the girl in the first drawing, a young, innocent school girl still dressed in her school uniform, but in reality, they said, their experiences were not unlike those of the ladies in the second drawing. The girls each agreed, to my surprise, that both drawings depicted prostitution. When I asked why the older men preferred to think of them more like the girl in the first drawing, they said that it was for three reasons: they could be paid less, more easily controlled and were seen as less likely to have HIV. These reasons then led us down a new path to discussions on the amount that the girls are paid by their sugar daddies and how they use this money, and to later discussions on the ways in which their customers use violence or the threat of it to get the girls to do what they want.

Sessions such as these took place throughout the first two weeks of the program, incorporating various stimuli which took the form of experiential activities, drawings, photos of Kibera, poems, short stories, role plays, a newspaper article about prostitution in Nairobi, a documentary about a teenage activist in the USA fighting for comprehensive sex education programs and biographies of women infected and affected by HIV. These codes were used in various ways to inspire writing and focus group discussions. I often selected specific poems

that I believed would have meaning for the girls and after reading them, we would re-write the poem, maintaining certain lines and themes but change the poem to make it about our own life. We would then share our poetry and I would facilitate a focused discussion on the prevalent themes. Throughout these discussions, I took detailed notes and several times, would pause the discussion to ask a girl to note down in her own journal a comment that she had made, so that I could refer to these later.

3.6 Working with Data

The data collection process generated three different data sources: the girls' journals, notes taken from our focus group discussions, and notes taken during the individual interviews. In processing the data, my first step was to analyze the girls' writings and my notes, searching for data on themes that corresponded with my three data chapters: the material conditions of the girls lives, the relational dynamics and gendered parameters within sugar daddy relationships, and the girls' gendered narratives in so far as their relationships with men, including sugar daddies, are concerned. This process consisted mainly of hours of typing data and grouping it into specific themes, which I then developed into my three data chapters. In attempting to make sense of the girls' sexual choices, I also searched for confirmation, qualification and inconsistency in their writings and in the information gathered through our discussions and interviews. Where I found contradictory statements, I pointed these out and sought to explain them within a gendered analysis of the self-narratives of the girls.

3.7 Methodological Limitations

As with all qualitative researchers seeking to reveal the emic view of their participants, it is impossible to divorce the researcher's etic view from that which is eventually presented (Rossman & Rallis 2003). My study was no exception in this regard. Despite all my efforts to address inequality in the research relations and include the girls as creators of knowledge and experts of their own experiences, the power to reconstitute their interviews, writings and comments, ultimately lay with me as the author of this research. However, two strategies to establish the truth from the standpoint of the participants of this qualitative inquiry were taken. The first was that I designed the study to be as inclusive as possible of the participants from the very beginning and the second was that before submitting this inquiry, I took the final version back to the girls for verification. In this process, we went through this thesis chapter by chapter in order to share my own interpretations of the data. This allowed the

girls who had taken part to verify that I had accurately represented their own personal truths and correctly captured the meanings in their statements. In this process, a few changes were made but these were very minor and focused mainly on dates, ages and sequencing of events.

3.8 Ethical Issues

In anticipation of this research project, four ethical issues were envisioned and actions were taken in order to deal with these.

3.8.1 Statutory Rape

The first ethical issue was the issue of statutory rape. According to Kenyan law, men engaging in sexual relations with girls younger than 16 years of age are guilty of statutory rape and youth workers who have knowledge of such instances are required to report them. In order to avoid problems with the law, I did not involve any girls below the age of 16 in this study (all were at least 18 years of age), nor did I ask the names or the specific details of their partners.

3.8.2 Risk of Trauma

The second possible dilemma related to a worry that such questions and reflections might provoke trauma in the participants. In order to avoid this instance, I sought the advice of a social worker based in Kibera, who works closely with each of the six girls. She agreed that each was emotionally stable and that participating in this study posed no more threat to their emotional wellbeing than daily life in Kibera.

3.8.3 Privacy and Confidentiality

The third issue was related to privacy and confidentiality. Initially, the girls were worried that other friends and colleagues from Kibera would want to know “what we are talking about with Abby.” In order to resolve this challenge, we opted not to meet at the Centre in Kibera where I normally conducted trainings and instead selected a location just outside of Kibera where we met for three weeks to conduct our special Girls Empowerment/Creative Writing program. The girls also selected a new name which I used to refer to them throughout this study.

3.8.4 Consent

Finally each of the girls who took part in this study was fully aware of the nature and goals of the study and gave both her verbal and written consent to participate. Before the girls signed their consent forms, we read through the form together, pausing at several points so that the girls could seek clarifications or ask questions. I also emphasized several times the measures taken to ensure confidentiality in this study and that the girls could withdraw their participation at any time. Since all participants were at least 18 years of age, consent from parents or guardians was not necessary. In Appendix B a copy is provided of the letter of consent which was signed by each of the girls.

University of Cape Town

Chapter 4: “You have a supermarket! Go and sell it!”: Sugar Girls, Poverty and Sexual Choices in Kibera, Kenya

4.1 Introduction

This first data chapter introduces each of the six girls who took part in my research. It does so in such a way as to foreground the structural constraints of their lives, and the threats associated with these. In order to glimpse some understanding of the girls’ lives as they themselves perceive them, I introduce each girl through her own words by sharing one of her poems. I then detail other crucial biographical details of the girls’ lives, including their ages, living circumstances, family, levels of education, employment status and hopes for the future. This biographical context is necessary for contextualizing the girls’ sexual choices and for understanding the circumstances that led to her engaging in cross-generational, transactional relationships. I also describe each girl’s first encounter with a sugar daddy, an experience that all can recall in great detail, before providing information on the frequency and transactional nature of these relationships. I then describe Kibera as it is perceived by the girls themselves by sharing photos they have taken and poetry they have written on Africa’s largest slum. I end this chapter by sharing portions of a focus group discussion with four of the sugar girls who took part in this study on their perceptions of the prevalence of sugar daddy relationships in Kibera and on the community’s views of these relationships. This discussion illustrates well the manner in which difficult material and economic circumstances give rise to views of femininity that serve to justify the commodification of female sexuality as a means of coping with poverty.

4.2 The Lives of Six Sugar Girls

Marsha, age 20

Where I am From

I am from my daughter Ashley
I love her. She is four years old.
I am from the chair I see my family sit on everyday
and the picture of my dad who left us
hoping he could come back
but never returned.

I am from working everyday selling fish,
vegetables, potatoes, cabbages, tomatoes
and my body to get money.
I am from a bad house, no good roof, bad smells,

sewage passing, no toilets,
train passing at the back of our home,
no good schools and harassment from boys and men.

I am from poverty but a lot of peer education.
I am from “boa kawangware,”
Pip, pip and voom voom,
a hustle between life and death.
I am from a life of hell but full of dreams and hope.

I am from “wacha umalaya ya pesa” and
“come I pay rent for your mom and you.”
I am from “you can make it, be strong” and
“God will help those who help themselves.”

I am from ugali, sukuma, fish and watery tea,
“mommy I want a bicycle, I want new clothes, I want meat”
and “mommy where were you last night?”
I am from not being afraid on my own.
I am from poverty, no money, but I can make it.
I am from a place of survivors
and I am proud to be who I am.

Marsha, who is 20 years old, is the oldest of the six girls who took part in this research and the most experienced sugar girl. She began having sugar daddies at the age of 15, when her father refused to continue paying her school fees because, in her words, “he did not see the point of educating a girl beyond primary school.” She says that she got the idea from a friend who told her to “try to find a big man to help pay your school fees.” But around this same time, two events forced her to use the money obtained from her sugar daddies to support her family instead of paying her school fees. The first is that her mother became sick with diabetes and the second, as she describes in her poem, is that her father left the family. The oldest of her five sisters, the responsibility then fell on Marsha to pay her family’s rent and her mother’s medication.

Marsha’s first experience with a sugar daddy was organized by a friend. She was invited to a birthday party and introduced to an older man, who said he was 33 years old, but Marsha believed he was much older, in his late forties. When she first met that man at the party, she overheard his friends telling him: “don’t ask her yet. Sweet talk her. Drug her with money.” So at that first encounter the man gave her 300 Kenyan shillings (\$ 3.75 US) but did not ask for sex. The second time she met this man, at a different party, she said that his friends tried to loosen her up by encouraging her to drink beer. They said to her “talk, talk, don’t be afraid” as they poured her drinks. That was the first time Marsha got drunk and she doesn’t remember much about what followed except that she ended up in a room alone with the

man and they had sex. She remembers that he used a condom. When she came home the next morning, she was caned by her mother for having stayed out all night.

But that friend soon came again looking for Marsha. As Marsha put it, “I didn’t realize that she was dragging my life into hell.” When I asked “Why do you think she was doing that?” Marsha explained that she was “acting as sort of a pimp.” The men would pay her a couple of hundred Kenyan shillings and she would set them up with a young teenage girl, whom she would pay between 100 and 150 Kenyan shillings (\$1.25 and \$1.87 US). Her house served as a brothel and she organized for Marsha to meet men there on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, or if she had found a client for Marsha at other times, she would send a young boy to fetch her. When I asked Marsha where that woman is today, she said that she had died of AIDS.

Two events forced Marsha to stop having sugar daddies at this point. A friend of Marsha’s mother saw her entering the brothel and told her mother, who confronted her, though Marsha denied prostituting. Around this same time, Marsha met “a nice young man” at a football match, who soon became her boyfriend. When they started going out, she said to herself “now let me stick to this boy, I don’t want those sugar daddies.” The boy was able to assist her financially. For the first two months of their relationship, they used condoms when they had sex, but after two months, he accused her of not trusting him and so they began having unprotected sex. Within weeks, she became pregnant but her boyfriend accused her of cheating on him and refused to believe that he was the father. Marsha considered having an abortion but her mother convinced her not to. When she had the baby, she forced herself back into her boyfriend’s home. When she did this, he packed up his things and left, but he continued paying the house rent. Then when her baby was a few months old, he came home one day while Marsha was out and cleared all of his furniture out of the shack and packed all of Marsha’s things in a bag. Marsha then moved back into her mother’s home and she said that this is “when the devil came again” and she went back to having sugar daddies in order to survive. Though this time, she did not go back to her friend’s brothel. She worked on her own, soliciting at bars on weekends. When I asked Marsha what she hoped to do in the future, she said she wanted to either become a hairdresser or open up her own cyber cafe.

Natasha, age 18

Kesho Yangu
(In my Tomorrow)

Kesho Yangu

I will become a woman who
doesn't have to struggle
with a life of prostitution.

Kesho Yangu
I dream of changing the lives of girls in Kibera
so that they can have a better future,
not like mine.
I feel so bad seeing girls drop out of school
because they are pregnant
and the father has kicked them out of the way.

Kesho Yangu
I dream of opening a big organization
which will deal with girls and women
who have passed through hard and rough lives
like I have been.

Natasha, age 18, is an orphan. She lost both of her parents when she was very young and moved in with her aunt. They lived in Kawangware, a different slum in Nairobi, but moved to Kibera when Natasha was 14 because it was cheaper. At this time, Natasha was forced to drop out of school in standard 8 because her aunt could not afford to take her to the secondary level.

Her aunt made a living by selling chang'aa, a traditional alcoholic drink, which meant that her home was often filled with men. As Natasha, put it, "my aunt was selling chang'aa but she selling more than that. She was also selling her body. That way she would have more customers." The men would often harass Natasha, touching her breasts and asking her aunt for her, while her aunt looked on and laughed. Because she hated this environment, Natasha moved out of her aunt's home at age 14 and into a small shack she shared with four other girls. But she soon had to resort to doing what her aunt did in order to survive. Two of the girls she lived with survived by trading sex with older men and Natasha says she learned from them how to seduce an older man. Here's how she describes the first time she had an "ATM."

Natasha: Okay, the first time, because I had (only had) one boyfriend, I didn't know how to deal with mens. Because at that time I was young, I was 15, so I was scared. So that time, we didn't go in Kibera, we went to another bar.

Abby: With your friend?

Natasha: Yes, and she introduced me to one man. And he was 38.

Abby: He was 38 and you were 15.

Natasha: And I was so scared cause I think that it was like my father. And I was so scared. But I remembered nothing I can do.

Since her friend first introduced her to cross-generational, transactional sex in 2008, Natasha saw on average about 3 or 4 men a night, usually on Friday and Saturday nights who paid her

between 50 and 100 Kenyan shillings (\$0.62 and \$1.25 US) and between 200 and 250 (\$2.50 and \$3.12) for the whole night. In response to the question of how she used that money, Natasha responded:

It depends. If it's on Friday, okay and God wishes, you can go with 2 mens or 3 or 4, it depends. If you go with one man, okay, they give you 50 shillings, that is nothing. You can't do anything with that money. You can just buy *githeri* (maize and beans). But if you have more, okay from 250, you will save 100 so that you can pay that rent. The rest you will use to buy food, clothes, Vaseline and sanitary towels.

Lady S., age 18

I remember

I remember
the day I decided to join this group of girls
who have sugar daddies
which is hell
and I am still doing it.
I regret making a wrong decision
due to lack of money
and no parents who can assist me.

I remember
how old are the men
that I am pushing with
just because of money.
I fail to understand
how I left school
because of this animal called money
and started disposing my body
with different people
whom I don't know their status.

I remember how painful
it is that all people know that
I am surviving through sugar daddies
and that without them
I cannot eat.

Lady S. lost both of her parents in a car accident in 2008 in Western Kenya when she was 17 years old. She has 7 younger siblings who are now being cared for by her father's second wife. In early 2009, Lady S. was sent to Nairobi by her step mother in order to find a job. She didn't know anybody in Nairobi but came to Kibera because she had heard that "most of Kibera members are Luo" which is her tribe. In Kibera, she met a woman, a mother, who allowed her to stay with her family for two weeks while she looked for a job. But Lady S. was unsuccessful in finding work as a house maid, as she had hoped. Within a week of

arriving in Kibera, she heard about the youth empowerment organization where I met these girls and came to meet its director. She said that she told him her situation and he agreed to help her. He set her up in a free tailoring class offered by his organization and helped her to find the place where she is currently living. When I asked her where she was able to get a bed or other furnishings for her place, she said “I don’t have a bed. I just spread some sheets that I took from home.”

Lady S. soon realized that while she was gaining a skill in tailoring, she still needed to satisfy her material needs. So in February, a few weeks after she had arrived in Kibera, she “decided to join that group of girls who have sugar daddies.” She said that before coming to Nairobi, it had never once crossed her mind that she would trade sex with older men in order to survive. The following conversation tells more about how she began having sugar daddies:

Abby: Tell me how you found your first sugar daddy.

Lady S: I used to see these ladies walking. I talked to them. They explained to me that they get money through an easy way... You know it is an easy way. So I joined them.

Abby: Where did you go?

Lady S: First to the bars but now the men come to me.

Abby: How many men do you see?

Lady S: It depends on the men that visit. Maybe you can get 2 a day. Maybe you can get 1 a week.

Abby: What do the men say to you?

Lady S: They just knock and I know what is their problem.

Abby: How much do they pay you?

Lady S: First I ask them for 500 but they say that it is too much because they have a family and somebody to take care of.

Abby: So usually how much do they end up paying?

Lady S: It depends with the kind of person. It could be 200, or 150, or it can even be just 100.

Abby: How long does it last?

Lady S: It can be 20 minutes or the whole night.

Abby: What happens if a customer wants to stay with you for the whole night?

Lady S: You know they can come, they can perform the first short, then they sleep for a bit, they rest. Then they wake up for the next short.

Abby: What do you do while they sleep?

Lady S: I also sleep.

Abby: Did you see men last night?

Lady S: No they didn’t come to me.

Abby: Should we stop talking about this for now. It looks like you don’t feel good talking.

Lady S: Yes, it feels painful.

Kim, age 18

Write that I...

When you tell the story of my life,

say that I was born in Kibera,
a big slum in Nairobi, Kenya.

Write that I come from a poor family
where my dad does not have money to meet our needs.
Say that I grew up in a home
which is made of iron sheets and mud,
with no running water and no electricity.
Say that I have four brothers and no sisters.

Write that I joined class 1 when I was seven years old,
But poverty forced me to drop out of school
when I was 15.

Say that when poverty forced me to drop out of school,
I decided to go and find sugar daddies
who would give me some money
to help me satisfy my needs.

Tell that I joined Kibera Youth Empowerment when I was 14 years old
and started showing my talents by dancing and acting
instead of idling.

Write that my mom died when I was still young,
but I still remember some of the things she used to tell me like
“When you become big, don’t joke with those boys outside.
Work hard in your education so that you can make your future.”
Say that I took her advice and that when my dad refused to educate me
I ran to a youth empowerment organization in Kibera
where they helped me to pay my school fees.

Write that I am going back to school
and that I am working hard in my subjects,
mostly in English,
because in my future
I am dreaming to become a Secondary School English Teacher.

Write that in my future, I will help my family to escape from poverty
and I will be a peer educator,
to educate girls about the dangers of life in the Kibera slums and
about girls’ empowerment and human rights.

Kim, age 18, is the only girl who, at the time of my research, was still in school. As she describes in the poem, her mother died when she was 14 and after she passed away, her father refused to pay her school fees. Kim’s school fees were being paid for by a sponsor that the director of a Kibera youth empowerment program had found for her. She began having sugar daddies at age 14 and in the following conversation, she explains why she needed sugar daddies:

Abby: Of all the girls, you are the only one in school. If your school fees are paid for by a sponsor, why do you need the money from sugar daddies?
Kim: I need the money for books, pens, uniforms, for buying clothes, and for food.
Abby: Even for food?
Kim: Yes because I am the one who finds what I will eat.
Abby: Does your father give you food?
Kim: No, he gives only my brothers.
Abby: When did you start having sugar daddies?
Kim: I started when I was in form 1. I was 14.
Abby: How did you start?
Kim: I met a man on the way somewhere and he said he would help me if I would be his girlfriend. I accepted because at that time I was just at home, not in school.
Abby: Then what happened?
Kim: Then we agreed to meet at a lodging. He gave me money in exchange for sex.
Abby: Do you still see him?
Kim: Yes, after school some days and on Saturdays.
Abby: So will you see him today?
Kim: Yes, this afternoon.
Abby: Where?
Kim: His house.
Abby: Is he married?
Kim: Yes his wife is up country.

Since that time she met her first sugar daddy, Kim developed relationships with three more. Though she has had more offers, she said that four is enough. She normally sees each of them on a different day of the week, though sometimes, if she needs money, she can see up to three of them in a day, normally between the time she leaves school and 9pm. She meets them in lodges close to where they live. Each lives in a different part of Nairobi, all outside of Kibera, and they give her between 100 and 150 Kenyan shillings (\$1.25 US and \$1.87) per week. Though, except for the first sugar daddy, who normally pays her every week, she said of the other three “they don’t give me every day, but sometimes.” Her first sugar daddy is around 30 years old and he works as the driver of a *matatu* (a public taxi). Her second sugar daddy is 24 years old and is a teacher, though not her teacher and not a teacher in her school. The third and fourth sugar daddies are both in their forties and work as small traders in town.

Maureen, age 18

What I Remember

I remember
the first day I slept with a sugar daddy
for 50 KS.

I remember
when my dad was in the hospital

calling out my name.

I remember
yesterday I slept with three sugar daddies
and I made only 200 KSh.

I remember
wearing black trousers and a white t-shirt
on the previous day.

I remember
seeing Rihanna and Chris Brown
in one of her videos.

I remember
eating lunch
with two muzungus,
Abby and Erica.

I remember
discussing my relationships with my ATM cards.

Maureen, who is 18 years old, made it as far as standard 8 in school. Her father, whom she refers to in her poem, died of TB when she was 16 and as she writes in her journal “after his death we faced so much problems that we could not afford to eat.” Her mother is sick and unable to work to support Maureen and her younger brother, so that responsibility has fallen to Maureen. Shortly after her father died, Maureen dropped out of school because she could no longer afford the fees and began engaging in cross-generational, transactional sex in order to support herself and her family. The day she had her first sugar daddy was the day her mother sent her to a friend’s house to get some money to buy food. The friend had no money. On her way home, Maureen met a friend of hers who was going to a bar. She knew that her friend made a living by selling her body to men whom she met at bars, and so she asked her if she could come along. This was the start of what Maureen described as “loving men because they give me money.” Here is how she describes this process: “ I start at 6pm and find an ATM so I can get supper. Then after him, I bring the money back to my mother. After supper, I go and find two more ATMs for breakfast and lunch the next day.”

On average, Maureen says she sees about 8 ATMs a week. They pay her between 50 to 80 Kenyan shillings (\$0.62 and \$1.00 US) which she spends on food for her family, helping her mother when she is sick, paying her little brother’s school fees, sanitary pads and clothing for herself. She says that most of the men are the age of her father (early forties) and her oldest client was close to 80 years old. Regarding her hopes for the future, Maureen is studying tailoring and would like one day to set up her own small business making school

uniforms. She also told me that she dreams of meeting a good husband who will be able to take care of her and her brother.

Sharon, age 18

Finding Her Here

I am becoming the woman I've wanted
tall, slender, shy
but full of dreams,
and making an effort to live a better life.

I am becoming the woman I've longed for
a good lady
strong and confident.

I find me becoming this woman I've wanted
a tailor of clothes,
an empowerer of women
with faith and hope
who remembers that what I do is not my fault
but the fault of poverty
who knows I will be respected and remembered
for being good and hardworking.

One day I know I will become who I am.

Sharon, age 18, is an orphan. She has never met her father and her mother was killed when she was nine years old. At this time Sharon was forced to drop out of school and move up country to live with her grandmother. There she spent her days working, fetching water from the river, digging in the garden and cooking. She said that there was no money for school fees and no time to play. Three years after her mother passed away, her grandmother also passed away. Sharon came back to Kibera when she was 13 years old to live with her aunt. Again, there was no money for school fees, and without a job Sharon spent her days sitting idle, cleaning her aunt's home and washing clothing. It was while washing clothing outside one day that she met her first sugar daddy. Here is how Sharon described it:

Sharon: I was wearing a miniskirt and this man was walking by and he noticed me.

Abby: What did he say?

Sharon: He said "you have sexy legs. I love your body. You have a nice brown skin. Can I join you?"

Abby: And what did you say?

Sharon: I was hungry, so I left the washing and accepted to join him at a hotel.

Abby: What happened at the hotel?

Sharon: He bought for me rice and meat for lunch and then we went to a lodging and I slept with him. When we were finished he gave me 50 bob.

Abby: When he asked you if he could join you, did you know he wanted to have sex with you?
Sharon: I knew.

When Sharon turned 15, her aunt told “now you are a big girl, you must go and look for your own house.” She went to stay with her friend and this is when she began seeing sugar daddies regularly. Sharon remembers her friend saying to her “life in Kibera is hard, we cannot survive because we don’t have education. The only thing we can do is sell our bodies so we can get our meals and pay the rent.” This friend introduced Sharon to some of her clients and they began to share customers. This continued for about one year until Sharon’s friend was killed by one or some of her customers. She was raped with a bottle and her body was thrown into the river. At this time, Sharon moved back into her aunt’s home but her aunt provides her with little more than a place to sleep. Sharon continues to see her sugar daddies, including her neighbours who call her into their houses when their wives are away up country or at work, or they pay for a lodging and she meets them there. Sharon normally sees three men a night, usually on weekends, and she said that her sugar daddies pay her between 30 and 50 shillings (\$0.37 US and \$0.62 US), less than the other girls, because they say to her “you don’t have a house or a kid to support.” Sharon has never been pregnant and has never had a boyfriend before. When I asked her how she imagined she would be able to support herself in the future, she told me that she would like to become a pilot.

4.3 Kibera as seen through the Eyes of Sugar Girls

In this section, I portray Kibera as it is seen by the six female residents who took part in this research. I begin with four photographs taken by the girls and their accompanying descriptions, which highlight much more powerfully than words, the material deprivation and deplorable living conditions in Kibera and the challenges that these create for young women. I then provide two poems, one written by Lady S. and another by Natasha, which also echo the girls’ thoughts and feelings on their home community.

Photo 1 taken by Sharon



This is Kibera, Kenya where I grew up. You can see that it is very crowded (1 million people) and the houses are not good. We live in shacks that leak when it rains. We also have no running water or electricity in our homes.

Photo 2 taken by Maureen



In this photo, you can see the little boy going to the bathroom in the open sewage running behind a person's home. You can also see, in the left corner of the photo, that somebody is growing vegetables from this sewage water.

Photo 3 taken by Kim



This photo shows what we have and what we don't have in Kibera. We have a lot of garbage everywhere because we don't have any garbage pick up. Sometimes I feel like I live in a big garbage dump.

University of

Photo 4 taken by Marsha



I took this photo to tell about the post-election violence. The men here were upset because Raila Odinga who represents Kibera lost. But it was the women who suffered during those weeks. The men burned houses, chased out the Kikuyus and raped women, and even children. It is a time I don't want to remember.

Poetry about Life in Kibera

I am from Kibera

By: Lady S.

I am from Kibera in KATWEKERA village,
where there is a lot of mud during the rainy season,
a place where people fall asleep worried due to the presence of robbers in the night.
Kibera. It is full of wonders and problems.

I am from a family of poverty and regrets,
where food and clothes are a major problem due to lack of money

and I have to sell my body in order to get food.
My life is in trouble because I have to sweat to succeed.
Kibera. A place of many challenges of life.

I am from a place which is full of bad smells,
of sewage, rotten cabbage and the carcass of dogs.
A place which is full of mud walls and muddy houses,
which are leaking during the rainy season.
Kibera. A place which needs perseverance and tolerance.

I am from a place where there is no security.
Women are being raped
and robbers are robbing people's property
without action being taken against them.
Some people
like my parents
are killed in road accidents
due to lack of seriousness among the drivers.

I am from a place where money talks most
and when there is no money,
then things turn to a mess.
Then money is the first priority
and then other things will follow
because you need to survive.

Where I am From

By: Natasha

I am from the ghetto, the Kibera slum
from my picture of my sweet, beloved parents,
who died when I was young.
I am from my watch where during the day time there is a chair
and at night, there is a bed.
I am from the two sofas
that I bought with the money I made
from my first performance with Kibera Youth Program
on a community outreach.

I am from a place where when two people start laughing
you may think that they are thousands
in that room laughing
hahahaha awwwww hahahahaha
and from sound of the train to Uganda
passing through Kibera every hour.

I come from the worst environment
which smells like dead bodies,
from where the garbage is thrown everywhere

and loud music is playing in every shop and salon nearby
and even on the side of the road.

I am from “hacuna cha bure” (nothing comes for free)
“money talks louder than words”
and living hand to mouth.

I come from a group
where my director John and Abby tell me
“you can change your life for a better life.”

4.4 Poverty and Transactional Sex in Kibera

The girls’ writings and photos of Kibera add detail to the material circumstances of their lives and shed further light on the manner in which their sexual choices and behaviours are shaped by the poverty and exclusion which denies them access to education and formal employment. In this next section, I show not only how political, social, and economic exclusion impacts on the girls’ decisions to have sugar daddies but also how it gives rise to ideas about femininity and transactional sex that serve to justify these types of risky relationships. As revealed in the focus group discussion below, these types of relationships are far from uncommon, begin early and are often condoned by both men and women in Kibera, including family members.

Abby: Girls, would you say that having sugar daddies is a common way that teenage girls cope with poverty in Kibera?

Maureen: Yes, very common.

Abby: If you were to guess what percentage of girls have traded sex in order to survive, what would you say?

Natasha: I think that probably all teenage girls in Kibera have traded sex for money.

Abby: All?

Maureen: Well I would say most do it at least one time.

Natasha: Abby, you know even girls in class 3 or 4 can start trading sex.

Abby: Class 3 and 4? How old are girls?

Natasha: 8 or 9.

Abby: 8 year olds are trading sex? With older men?

Maureen: No, not with older men, with older boys, like maybe boys that are 11. 12, 13.

Abby: What are they trading sex for?

Natasha: Pencils, sodas...

Abby: Sharon, Kim, what do you think?

Kim: It is true.

Abby: When do they start having older sugar daddies?

Kim: Maybe, when they are 14, 15

.....

Abby: I thought they taught you abstinence-only education in Kenya?

Natasha: That comes in one ear and out the other. They can’t live without doing sex.

.....

Abby: Is there peer pressure to have sugar daddies? When I was reading about girls who have sugar daddies in Africa, I found that in some parts, girls like to brag to their friends about the cell phones, or the clothes or the jewellery that their sugar daddies bought them and in order to be cool and fit in with their friends, many girls will try to find sugar daddies. Does this happen in Kibera?

Natasha: Okay, there is peer pressure, but not like that. In Kibera, when you ask young women and even young mothers for help, they say: "You have a supermarket like mine. Go and sell it."

Kim: Yes, and they say "It's not a soap that you will wash and it will finish. Go and use it."

Natasha: Meaning sleep with a man.

Abby: Yes. I got that. Thank you. Sharon, what about you? Has anyone ever told you to go and sell your supermarket?

Sharon: Yes, once I asked my aunt for 10 bob to go and buy water and she said 'go and sell your vagina for water.'

Abby: Do the men also say this?

Maureen: No! The men say "God gave you that thing for free. So should give it to us for free. Why do you want to sell it to us?"

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have used the words and photographs of my six informants to foreground their subjective experiences of structural constraint in Africa's largest slum and to provide insight into their sexual relationships with their sugar daddies. What emerges most clearly through this picture is the manner in which their material conditions and family circumstances frame their sexual choices. Though each girl has her own individual story, poverty and the loss of one or both parents are common themes that thread through each of the girls' lives, helping to explain the why and how of each girls' involvement in informal sex work. In this way, the knowledge generated in this chapter echoes research showing the manner in which economic vulnerability and material deprivation give rise to disempowered sexualities, enacted by young women who trade unprotected sex with older men, in order to survive. This chapter also provides the beginnings of a portrait of the femininities and sexualities of six sugar girls from Kibera, Kenya. It is a portrait of disempowered, emphasized and patriarchal femininities and sexualities, sculpted by poverty and patriarchy. In the next chapter, this portrait of the femininities and sexualities of six sugar girls from Kibera becomes more nuanced as I examine the levels of agency and risk that they experience in their relationships with sugar daddies and highlight the manner in which they enact femininities that allow them to negotiate the ruptures and instabilities of their lives.

Chapter 5: Femininities that Make and Break: Agency and Risk in Sugar Daddy Relationships

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I look at the trading of sex between sugar girls and sugar daddies, focusing specifically on how such transactions reveal both the agency of the girls, as well as the risks, as revealed to me in our interviews, focus group discussions, and in their written narratives and poetry. I begin by explaining what the girls describe as the main advantage of sugar daddy relationships, which is that they allow them to meet their basic needs while avoiding early marriage. Repeatedly, in conversations about the challenges faced by young women in Kibera, early child marriage was listed as number one.

Next, I examine examples of the girls' agency within sugar daddy relationships, locating these primarily in their abilities to portray the qualities of emphasized femininity in order to seduce older men. But I also show how for these young women, because their sexual identity and agency is mediated by gender inequality and ideologies of hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity that are contextualized within conditions of social exclusion and material deprivation, their ability to construct their own empowerment, simultaneously contributes to their own personal disempowerment. Indeed, the girls' experiences presented in this chapter testify to the simultaneous positions that they occupy as both "makers and breakers" of their lives and of society (De Boeck & Honwana, 2005, p. 2). As makers of their lives, they show incredible creativity and resiliency in their ability to meet their basic needs through the commodification of their sexualities. But at the same time, the girls themselves are also the first to admit their own active complicity in "constructing their own sexual disempowerment" (Reddy & Dunne, 2007, p. 165) through the adoption of unsafe sexualities that have the potential to shatter their lives. As I describe in the second section in this chapter which deals with the risks they face, the girls may be able to seduce men into private lodgings, but once inside those lodgings, the challenge of getting out with the amount of money promised by the customer, not pregnant, unhurt, and uninfected with an STI or HIV, was a fear they routinely confronted. In fact, in almost all cases, stories of seducing and blackmailing sugar daddies were followed by stories of gang rape and unsafe abortions.

Finally, I also discuss the manner in which the girls' strategies for seducing and maintaining sugar daddies, which frequently involve playing up the qualities of emphasized femininity, make them complicit in maintaining the very ideals of hegemonic masculinity, that when combined with age, and class asymmetries, deepen their vulnerability to violence and HIV.

5.2 The Advantage of Sugar Daddy Relationships

Despite the dangers associated with sugar daddy relationships, which I discuss in the second half of this chapter, sugar daddy relationships provide the participants of this study with a degree of agency, even if constrained, over their own lives. In the girls' opinions, there are four ways by which they should be able to meet their basic needs: through parents who can provide for them, through employment, or through transactional sex in the form of early marriage or sugar daddy relationships. However, because of their circumstances of poverty or as orphans, the girls feel that the only realistic ways of meeting their needs are through the last two options: through the commodified, heterosexualized use of their bodies in the form of early marriage or by what they term "hanging with sugar daddies." They prefer the latter option. Though each girl has been offered the opportunity to become a man's second or third wife, each refused, preferring instead to engage in sugar daddy relationships. The advantage of sugar daddy relationships, they say, is that the money provided to them in exchange for sex enables them to meet some of their basic needs, including shelter, food and clothing, while also enabling them to avoid early marriage. The girls each described early marriage as the number one challenge facing young women in Kibera, followed by prostitution, unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion and HIV/AIDS. They rooted the causes of these challenges in poverty, unemployment, lack of access to education and sexism which denies girls in Kibera equal opportunities with boys. Their response to the following question sheds light on their views of sugar daddies and early marriage:

Abby: What's worse early marriage or sugar daddies? Or is there any difference or are they the same thing?

Marsha: Okay, for me, I group them the same because with both you end up in a bad life or a bad future. Both sleeping with a man for money, men aren't faithful anyway because they have two wives, and even outside girls. And you can even see those young girls, they are not even faithful to those husbands.

Maureen: Yeah because when he leaves, they just go and search for another man. So you can see there is so much risk going around.

Abby: So where do you think the risk is more in sugar daddy relations or in marriages?

Marsha: Which risk?

Abby: Let's say HIV.

Maureen: It is the same.

Abby: So why do you always say that early marriage is worse? Doesn't it, in some way, solve the problem of having to worry everyday about meeting your basic needs?

Marsha: Somehow, maybe, but you see I have hope that one day this life of mine will come to an end when I can find a job. But when you get married then you can be stuck there.

Maureen: That man can beat you, he can treat you bad... he can think he owns you.

Marsha: Early marriage is for girls who have given up. They think they can never have a better life so they get married.

Abby: But you both still have dreams that you want to accomplish and hope that one day you can escape this life of hanging with sugar daddies?

Both girls: YES.

As the conversation above also reveals, the girls view sugar daddy relationships as a temporary solution to their problems. They dream of getting an education and learning skills which will eventually enable them to meet their needs in ways that are less exploitative and risky.

5.3 Agency Within Sugar Daddy Relationships

While sugar daddy relationships are frequently seen by these young women as a last resort strategy for meeting their needs, describing these sugar girls solely as victims of exploitation at the hands of older men, is too simplistic. In fact, as I show in this section, despite these relationships being characterised by gender, economic and age disparities, the girls often view their sugar daddies as “readily exploitable” (Brennan, 2002, p. 156) and are skilled in doing so. In fact, as this data chapter reveals, there are several ways in which the girls are able to take initiative and exert control in their relationships with sugar daddies. These examples included the ability: to identify, seduce and maintain relationships with sugar daddies, to negotiate the number of “shorts” (sex) and price, and finally, the capacity to blackmail a sugar daddy.

5.3.1 Emphasized Femininities and the Ability to Identify, Seduce and Maintain Relationships with Sugar Daddies

One of the first things that Lady S. told me on the subject of sugar daddy relationships was that getting money by hanging with sugar daddies is the easiest way to get money in Kibera. Each of the girls agreed but some also added that because the competition is so great in Kibera due to extreme levels of poverty, certain qualities had to be portrayed in order to be able “to hang with sugar daddies.” Their agency in getting and in some cases keeping a sugar daddy lay in their ability, in the words of Natasha “to act as lost and foolish” or what Kim described as “pretending to be innocent.” Most importantly, according to Marsha is the ability to simultaneously “look sharp but weak” in order to attract the attention and pity of men. For the girls, this requires shedding their true personalities and taking on the role of a character. Overwhelmingly, as our conversations below reveal, this character is one who plays up the qualities of emphasized femininity. As shown by the first three examples, the ability to identify, seduce and in some cases maintain a long term relationship with a sugar daddy, which I group in the same category, the girls were skilled in this regard, often “conniving at

their inferiority” by “playing the helpless female or pretending to be stupid” (Lees, 1993, p. 4) and thereby creating opportunities for older men to come to their rescue.

Acting Lost and Foolish

For Natasha and Maureen, part of their agency lay in their ability to “act lost and foolish” in order to pick up a sugar daddy. In the following conversation, Natasha tells the story of the game she plays in order to pick up men on the street. This game begins with pretending to be lost in order to grab the man’s attention and offers him the opportunity to help her. It also involves nurturing the man’s ego by calling him honey, smiling at him, flirting with him and making him feel desired.

Natasha: I saw this man on the street that I wanted to be my ATM.
Abby: So how did you get him to be your ATM?
Natasha: I passed that way hundreds of times looking side by side, pretending that I am lost. Then finally he called me over “skissss, skisss.”
Abby: And then what?
Natasha: Then you rush over, smiling, flirting touching him – “Hi honey, what’s up? Can you help me?”
Abby: And what does he say?
Natasha: You look beautiful, sexy. Then we talk for a bit, then he says “come we go.”
Abby: And where do you go?
Natasha: To a lodging usually. But this guy didn’t have enough money for a lodging, so we did it standing.
Abby: Where?
Natasha: In a corner nearby.
Abby: How many shorts?
Natasha: 1 short.
Abby: How much did he give you?
Natasha: 100 shillings.
Abby: Then when it was finished what did you do?
Natasha: Then I went to find another ATM because even 100 shillings can’t buy you anything. You need 300 Kenyan shillings.
Abby: Where did you go?
Natasha: To a bar?
Abby: And what about in a bar? Is the same thing?

In response to that question, Maureen recalled the first time she went to a bar to find a sugar daddy. She described walking in and standing by herself for less than five minutes before a man called her over. When she went over to him, he told her how cute she looked and invited her to sit beside him. He told her that he’d seen her before in the bar and Maureen played along despite the fact, as she described it “I knew he was cheating me. I knew he just wanted to use me. But I just pretended to be foolish.” The conversation that followed, as Maureen recollects, went something like this:

Man: Do you have a boyfriend?

Maureen: No. Do you have a girlfriend?
Man: No. I'm looking for a wife.
Maureen: Don't you have a wife?
Man: Maybe I can marry you.
Maureen: I'm too young.
Man: Come we go. (At this point he asked for sex, but Maureen can't remember his exact words)
Maureen: Can you help me with 50 bob?
Man: You help me. I help you.

Pretending Innocence

The ability to portray an appearance of innocence, to be seen “as a good girl who doesn't go with other boys” is what allowed Kim, the youngest of the six girls that I interviewed and the only one in school, to have four same and lasting sugar daddy relationships for the past two years. When I asked her how she portrays this innocence, she said “I just act like myself” (she is naturally petite, young-looking, quiet and polite) “but I am secretive about my life.” Along with Sharon, Kim is the only girl to see the same men weekly. Each of Kim's four sugar daddies, whom she sees after school on a different day of the week, lives in a different part of Nairobi, each thinks he is her only sugar daddy and none knows her real name or where she comes from. One of the men, who offered to marry her (she refused) and treats her more kindly than the others, even took her along with him to be tested for HIV before they began having unprotected sex together. He was, she said, completely unable to imagine that she is having unprotected sex with three other men regularly. When I asked her what would happen if he or any of the others found out that they were not her only sugar daddy, she said “they would be angry and they would leave me, so I am the one to be wise.” When I asked her to describe how she is wise with these men, she thought for a few seconds before responding: “I am wise because it is me who goes to them and finds them. If I don't go there, they don't know where to find me. They think I live in Kawangware (another slum in Nairobi) and that I am called Catherine.” And when I asked why she had no sugar daddies in Kibera, she replied that “that is not wise” because it would be too easy for them to find her and father might realize that she “hangs with sugar daddies” and beat her for this.

Marsha, who is known by the other girls for her ability to pick any man in the street or bar and make him her customer also describes the importance of acting innocent and helpless in order to pick up a sugar daddy. In the following lines, she reveals her agency through what she described as her ability to prepare herself emotionally and physically for this role as the helpless female.

Abby: I heard from some of the girls that you have the power to get any man. Could you really get any man?

Marsha: Yeah, any man.

Abby: How?

Marsha: Inside my heart. I just close my eyes and say I can do it, I can do it. And then it happens. I used to just concentrate and put my mind together, yeah... my mind together, so that I can get that money.

Abby: So the power comes from your mind?

Marsha: My mind and heart. And my acting abilities. Because I can even start crying, and then "oh what is wrong madam?" "Oh somebody has just grabbed my bag, I don't have fare." So he says, "oh take this." Then he says "can we go and take a drink?" I say "oh...." At first I refuse, I say "oh no, I've never gone to a bar, Oh I don't want to go there." So he says "oh a soda, a soda only." And I say okay.

Like Natasha, Maureen and Kim, Marsha also relies on her ability to act helpless, pretending that somebody has stolen her wallet by crying in order to get a man's attention and pity, and then feigning innocence by pretending that she has never been in a bar before. In the following conversation, Marsha also talks about the need to look attractive in order to seduce the man of her choosing and describes how she chooses, again emphasizing the ability to appear helpless in order to attract the man's attention.

Marsha: When I go to a bar, I put some sexy clothes. Because when you go there you must look very sharp. You have to get his attention so that his eyes keep looking at you. You know there are so many other girls.

Abby: How do you decide which man you want to seduce?

Marsha: Okay, I just look to see who has money.

Abby: How can you tell which one has the most money?

Marsha: Okay, I watch to see which one is buying drinks for his friends, which one is dressed a certain way. Maybe he is wearing a suit so I know that he has a job in town.

Abby: Okay, so you pick him and then you get his attention by looking sharp and sexy, then when you have that, what do you do?

Marsha: You go and sit beside him, and you talk, talk, talk. You pretend that you have lost something or that somebody has stolen your bag, you try just to lie, until you will get him attracted to you. I can start crying, then I can try to be close to him, very very close. Then I say I feel cold, then he tries to hold me tight. Then we can start talking. I say "I wish I had someone like you, you are so kind, so good."

Abby: And they believe you?

Marsha: Well you see with men, we can control them. You can get what you want.

This last example and the ones preceding it reveal how the girls' abilities to seduce and maintain relationships with sugar daddies are the result of their cleverly playing up the qualities of emphasized femininity, and in doing so, allowing older men to respond to their game by playing up their own qualities of hegemonic masculinity. In this sense, it is clear that the girls' strategies make them complicit in upholding patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity. In most cases though, from the perception of the girls' themselves, emphasized femininity does not accurately and fully describe their personalities. In fact, over and over again, Natasha, Maureen, Kim and Marsha referred to the importance of their acting abilities (not

surprisingly all of these girls are involved in a Kibera Youth Empowerment Theatre program) in portraying the type of girl most desired by their customers. Frequently, this desired girl was innocent, obliging, young, helpless, innocent, cheerful and inexperienced and was therefore perceived by sugar daddies to be more willing to accept little money. As revealed by Marsha in the remainder of the conversation started above, portraying any quality that contrasts with weakness gives the impression to older men that these girls are “rough and experienced” and risks them losing their customers.

Abby: What’s interesting to me is that when you lie to these men, you pretend to be weak. Tell me more about why do you do that?

Marsha: Okay, I do that to get my daily bread. That’s why I usually pretend that way that I am weak so that I can get that attention. When you pretend you are weak, he’ll just feel pity for you and it’s easier than just talking to somebody, like when you are so strong and straightforward, it’s so hard.

Abby: What happens when you do that?

Marsha: Do that?

Abby: When you talk to a man as you really are, you are strong, you are straight forward, you’re not shy, you’re very confident. How do they react?

Marsha: They see you as rough and you know so many things, so I pretend I don’t know anything in life.

Abby: So they don’t like women who are rough or who know so many things?

Marsha: No, or girls who hold confidence, they don’t like.

Abby: Why?

Marsha: They say that that means you have so many mens, or so many boyfriends, or you know so much about this world.

Abby: And do you think that your confidence and your knowing so much about the world comes from the fact that you’ve had so many boyfriends and so many men?”

Marsha: For me I think it’s true because I’ve learned so much through that life.

Lady S. is the only girl who refuses to play the role of innocent, lost and cheerful female. The least experienced of all the girls, having only begun having sugar daddies five months before I first met her, Lady S. always appeared depressed to me. She spoke about her life in a sombre, expressionless, hopeless tone. When I asked her how she got a customer, she replied “I go to a bar and sit beside them.” And when I asked her what she says to them, her reply was “they know.” Unlike all the other girls, Lady S. lives on her own in Kibera and sees her customers in her shack. Now rather than seeking out men in bars or on the street, her sugar daddies usually come to her. As she put it, “they knock and I know what is their problem.” Like the other girls, she stated that her power lay in her ability to decide whether to accept a client or not, and to negotiate the number of shorts and price.

5.3.2. The Power to Negotiate the Number of Shorts and Price

The second example of agency that I was able to identify was the girls' abilities to negotiate with their sugar daddies, in advance, the number of what they call a "short" which means the number of times they will have sex, and the price. Normally, the girls told me that a man will pay between 50 and 100 Kenyan shillings (\$0.62 US and \$1.25 US) per short, though sometimes they paid as little as 20 KS (\$0.25 US) and as high as 200 (\$ 2.50 US). When the girls begin the negotiations they normally start at around 400 or 500 KS (\$ 5.00 or \$6.23 US).

The girl also has the ability to decide whether she will accept to be with a man all night, in which case he would pay her between 150 and 250 KS (\$1.87 and \$3.12 US). According to Natasha, choosing to accept a sugar daddy for an entire night requires a certain type of inner strength on part of the sugar girl. Speaking about herself, she said "I have the power to do with that man sex all night. Even that is a power, because some girls do only one or two shorts, but I want the money, so I will be strong." When I asked where that strength came from, she said, "God. That strength comes from God. I might not have eaten lunch, I might not have had supper, so I need that money you see. So I pray to God to help me find a sugar daddy that night."

5.3.3 Power to Blackmail

The third, though less common example of agency held by the girls within their sugar daddies relationships, is the power to blackmail sugar daddies into giving more money than originally agreed. But this agency only existed for one girl, Marsha, who had been involved with sugar daddies for at least three years longer than the other girls. In describing this ability, Marsha referred to it as "the power to break other women's homes" by demanding money from the man that he would have spent on his wife and children. When I asked her to explain further, Marsha described to me how she could blackmail a man into giving her more money than they had agreed by threatening to tell the man's wife. As she put it:

Marsha: You say to that man, I want it, I want it, or I tell your wife. You better give me the money or I tell.

Abby: And what does the man say?

Marsha: He says that the money was to pay for his children's school fees but I say I don't care, I want that money.

Abby: How much could you get from him?

Marsha: I could ask for 1000 KS (\$12.47 US) and he could give to me because he doesn't want his family or wife to know.

Abby: Where did you learn to do that?

Marsha: From the other girls who first introduced me to this life. I used to see them do this.

5.4 Risks

Conversations about the advantages of hanging with sugar daddies and of exercising control in these types of relations were always followed by comments about risks and dangers. All girls agreed that once inside the lodging or area where sexual intimacy takes place, their bargaining power is severely limited. In these private spaces, it is the sugar daddy who is in complete control, dictating everything from how much clothing the girl should leave on, to what sexual acts he wants her to perform, to the number of shorts and the amount of money he will pay. According to the girls, many of the men lie, forcing them to do more shorts and paying less money than they agreed and threatening the girls with violence if they do not comply. Frequently the men say to the girls “go ahead, scream if you want to, let everybody know that you are a prostitute.”

These experiences fit with the findings of several studies throughout Sub-Saharan Africa showing that physical violence and rape are not uncommon responses of older men to younger partners who are seen to overstep the boundaries of their bargaining power, by, for example, attempting to negotiate condom use or refusing to perform certain sexual acts (Wood et al. 1998; Machel 2001; MacPhail & Campbell 2001; Luke 2003). Not surprisingly, the six girls who took part in my research cited violence as their number one worry, followed by unwanted pregnancy and lastly, HIV/AIDS. With the threat of violence in sugar daddy relationships being the most immediate and when combined with the girls’ urgent need for money to meet their basic needs, they rarely attempt to negotiate safer sex with their sugar daddies and consequently, are highly vulnerable to unwanted pregnancy and HIV. In what follows, I discuss the risks that these six girls face and have experienced as a consequence of their sugar daddy relationships. I do so in order of the greatest worry they pose to the girls themselves, beginning with violence, before moving on to the consequences of unwanted pregnancy and then to HIV/AIDS.

5.4.1 Violence

The threat of violence underpins the most intimate aspects of the girls’ relationships with sugar daddies. Each girl knows another girl who has been raped or even killed by a customer, each has experienced what they termed “minor” examples of violence such as slaps,

and three girls, Natasha, Maureen and Sharon, have experienced extreme examples of sexual violence.

Natasha, who above described her power to be with a man all night immediately followed that thought with the statement “but this is not a good life, it is between life and death.” Three months before our first interview, she had been gang raped by a customer and six of his friends. There are scars on her wrists from where they cut her and told her not to scream. She’s also been penetrated by a wooden dildo, after which she bled for two weeks until seeking treatment at a clinic in Kibera and a close friend of hers died after being raped with a bottle by one her customers. Since that incident Natasha has tried to hang with older sugar daddies, “grandpas” she called them, whom she feels are less likely to hurt her. She said that these old grandpas say to her “now don’t worry it will only hurt for a minute. They talk to me as if I am their grandchild – except that they are having sex with me.”

Maureen has also been raped by four men. She was tricked by a customer into believing he was her only customer, but when she entered the lodging there were four other men waiting for her. They pushed her down, covered her mouth with their hands and then put a little piece of cloth in her mouth to stop her from screaming. Her first screams were heard by the manager of the lodging but when he came, the men threatened to kill him and so he left, telling clients in the bar that the lady who had screamed had been bitten by an insect and there was nothing to worry about. Maureen was then forced to have sex with the five men. When finished, she said the first man, the one who had tricked her into the lodging, threw 100 Kenyan shillings at her and said “you are smelling, take this money and go buy new panties.”

Sharon was also a victim of rape. One night she met with a sugar daddy in a lodging and they had three shorts, as previously agreed. When he was finished, she said he went outside to make a phone call. Within minutes, three of his friends arrived and raped her. She said they put a piece of clothing in her mouth so that she could not scream. When they were finished, they locked her inside the lodging, took all of her clothing and left her there bleeding. Sharon says that she escaped the lodging by jumping out through the window and a man helped her by giving her his shirt. She then went to her friend’s house to get some more clothing and went immediately to the Doctors Without Borders clinic where she was treated for rape.

These incidents of violence, the most extreme that I encountered in this research, are not uncommon among women who transact sex in Kenya. A study on sex workers by Elmore-Meegan et al. in 2004 revealed that 35% of women who took part in their study reported

being raped or forced to have unpaid sex with a client in the last month and 17% reported experiencing physical violence.

5.4.2 Unwanted Pregnancy and Unsafe Abortions

The second worry most present on the minds of the sugar girls was the possibility of unwanted pregnancy and the financial, social and health burdens this brought about. Half of the girls who took part in this study had experienced unwanted pregnancy and between these three girls, a total of five unsafe abortions had been performed and one pregnancy had been carried to full term.

Maureen got pregnant when she was 16 years old and had an abortion a few months into her pregnancy. She paid 150 KS (\$1.87 US) to a lady in the community who put some herbs into her vagina which induced bleeding and a miscarriage. Speaking rather expressionlessly about this incident, Maureen described how “a small, dead baby came out” several hours after she started bleeding and she “threw it in the pit latrine.”

Natasha has been pregnant twice and has also had two backstreet abortions. Both times she took traditional medicine, obtained from a woman in Kibera, which caused bleeding and induced a miscarriage. But unlike Maureen, Natasha spoke with shame and regret about her abortions. In one of her poems she wrote “ I remember the first time I got pregnant and I didn’t know the father of my child so I decided to abort my child. It was a pain I carried and I cried all day and night.” After her last abortion, Natasha decided to give up sex work but after a few weeks, she had to resort to hanging with sugar daddies once again because she was unable to find another type of work. But this time, she found a clinic in Nairobi that was providing young women with free birth control injections and was injected to prevent further pregnancies.

Marsha has been pregnant three times, once by her first boyfriend and twice by sugar daddies. She carried through with her first pregnancy by her boyfriend (who left her soon after the baby was born) and is now a mother to a five year old daughter whom she supports through her sex work. Marsha later had two abortions. She had her first abortion when she was about one month pregnant. She paid 100 KS (\$1.25 US) for some traditional masai herbs. She boiled 8 cups of them and then drank the brew. Several hours later, she began bleeding profusely and she said that the bleeding continued for one week. She aborted her second pregnancy when she was four months along. This time she paid 500 KS (\$6.23 US) to a woman who performed the procedure with a pipe. The process left Marsha very fragile. She bled for almost two months before she was able to find the 700 KS (\$8.73 US) needed to see

a doctor who was able to give her some antibiotics to stop the bleeding. The doctor also gave her a book which enabled her to count her safe days, when she was less at risk of getting pregnant, and since her last abortion Marsha had tried to insist more on condom use with her customers when she felt safe enough to do so.

Lady S., Kim and Sharon have never been pregnant, though all stated that they would have an abortion if they did become pregnant. The fact that half of these three girls have never become pregnant is noteworthy and raises important questions that could require further research. Certainly, with the high amount of unprotected sex in which these young women have reportedly engaged, it seems difficult to believe that they have not fallen pregnant. Issues of whether or not they may have lied about this subject, or may have exaggerated the number of times they had unprotected sex remain unresolved in this research.

The girls' experiences of unwanted pregnancy and unsafe abortions are not uncommon throughout Kibera or Kenya. The Elmore et al. 2004 study of sex workers in Kenya, cited above, found that a large majority (86.1%) of sex workers reported having had an abortion while half of the women surveyed reported having two or more. Part of the reason for the high number of unwanted pregnancies lies in Kenya's lack of adolescent friendly sexual and reproductive health education and services. Overall the quantity and quality of sex education in Kenya is poor, leaving many youth, especially girls, uninformed on issues related to family planning (Center for Reproductive Rights 2010; Human Rights Watch 2010). A 2008 report by the Center for the Study of Adolescence found that of the 40% of sexually active young women and 50% of sexually active young men under the age of 19, most lacked vital information on reproductive health and safer sex (Child Rights Information Network 2009). Mbugua (2007) cites poor sexuality school programming and stiff resistance from churches, the Catholic Church in particular, to comprehensive sex education programs, as a major cause of youth being denied their right to comprehensive sex education. These findings fit with my own experiences. The majority of girls who took part in my study, for example, believed that by taking one birth control pill a few hours before having unprotected sex, they were free of the risk of pregnancy.

Also, accessing contraceptives is often difficult for young women. At public health clinics where birth control is cheapest, they frequently encounter negative and judgemental attitudes from health care workers (Child Rights Information Network 2009). Moreover, except for male condoms which are widely available for free, more practical contraceptives for these women are also largely unaffordable. The female condom, for example, costs approximately 300 KSh (\$ 3.75 US), more than a girl makes in one encounter with a sugar

daddy. The birth control pill is also out of reach for most girls and as described above, when it is available, many girls are ignorant about how to use it effectively.

Moreover, abortions are illegal in Kenya, except in cases where the mother's life is in danger (International Planned Parenthood Federation 2010). There is one NGO in Kibera known by the girls that unofficially provides safe abortions but according to the girls, the cost is around 11,500 KS (equivalent to \$143 US) which is completely unaffordable to most residents of Kibera. The high cost of safe abortions in the slums is partly due to what is widely known as the global gag rule, which, in 2001, cut off USAID funding to international NGOs that perform abortions in cases other than rape or life endangerment of the mother or that use funds to provide abortion counselling, referral or lobbying. As a result of this policy, many clinics in Kenya's most vulnerable communities that had been the only source of comprehensive family planning and reproductive health services for young women, were forced to close their doors or to increase their prices (Population Services International 2006).

The illegality and unaffordability of safe abortions in Kenya forces many young women, like half of the participants of this study, to have abortions in the backstreets, resulting in the deaths of thousands of women every year. The International Planned Parenthood Federation (2006) estimates that between 30 and 50% of maternal deaths in Kenya are related to complications from illegal abortions. Moreover, according to a report by the Center for Reproductive Rights (2010), at least 2600 women die annually from abortion-related complications in Kenya. Since these figures reflect only the reported cases, the actual number is much higher. The report further states that up to sixty per cent of the resources of the maternity ward of Kenyatta National Hospital, the country's national public hospital, are taken up by post-(backstreet) abortion care. Again, these figures reflect only those who can afford post-abortion care, leaving us to imagine the huge number of women who die as a result of being unable to afford such care.

5.4.3 HIV/AIDS

Though the girls recognised HIV as a constant risk, it was not something they obsessed over. Much more present on their minds were worries of getting their next meal and when with sugar daddies, thoughts of avoiding violence. Like other sugar girls throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, the girls in Kibera see HIV as one more "concern they must navigate through sex work" (Trotter, 2008, p. 185) and like other young women in Kenya (Nzioka 2001) and Tanzania (Dilger 2003) who engage in unprotected sex, they were much more concerned about pregnancy whose burden and shame was much more immediate than a virus

that could sit undetected in their bodies for up to five years. Yet despite their placing HIV at the bottom of their list of worries, their vulnerability to becoming infected is greater than other young women in Kenya for two reasons. The first is that their sexual transactions are with men who reside in a part of Kenya where the incidence of HIV is among the highest. As mentioned earlier, the estimated HIV prevalence rate in Kibera is around 14%, more than double the rate of Kenya as a whole and 20% of Kenyans living with HIV/AIDS are estimated to live in Kibera (Amani Communities Africa 2009). Second, the agency of these women to protect themselves from HIV with their sugar daddies is very low. Most of the men refuse to use condoms and the girls fear physical violence if they suggest condom use. Moreover, when the girls are not pressured into high-risk sex through violence, their sugar daddies' willingness to pay more money for flesh to flesh sex is often enough for these young women, even if they have the option of protecting themselves, to forego condom use.

At the end of my research with the girls, four of them decided to go and be tested for HIV. Of these four, one tested positive and the other three tested negative. The girl who tested positive was already aware of her status. She asked me not to identify her, even by her fake name, in this research. Of the two girls who did not test, one refused and another was up country at the time. Again, just like the fact that half of my participants reported never being pregnant despite their engaging in such risky sexual behaviour, the low incidence of HIV among these young women also does not mesh with the picture they have painted of their lives, or with the statistics in Kibera. Either some of the girls do not feel comfortable revealing their status to me, or they are miraculously lucky. This issue also remains unresolved in my research.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have described the simultaneous position that six sugar girls in Kibera, Kenya occupy as both makers and breakers of their lives as they enact femininities and sexualities that are both “independent and dependent, resourceful and exploited” (Brennan, 2002, p. 156), empowering and disempowering. I began by describing the ways in which the girls revealed agency by creatively playing up and exaggerating certain qualities of emphasized femininity including innocence, passiveness, politeness, cheerfulness, and weakness. Enacting emphasized femininities is instrumental in allowing the girls to initiate and maintain sugar daddy relationships as a means of getting their daily bread. I also emphasized that these assertions mainly take place in public spaces and before the actual transaction of sex. I then detailed the limitations to the girls' agency in sugar daddy relationships where their intents are

mediated by gender, age and economic power dynamics that put the girls at risk of violence, unwanted pregnancy, and STIs including HIV. These limitations become obvious the moment the girls enter a private space with their sugar daddy, where they have little control over their sexualities. Here hegemonic masculinity, with its decision-making authority, negative views of condoms and viewing violence as an acceptable expression of masculinity, is often at its strongest leaving the girls with very little ability to negotiate intimacy with their sugar daddies and increasing their risk of being beaten or raped if they challenge the bounds of their disempowered sexualities.

The impact of poverty on the creation of disempowered or emphasized sexualities is again obvious in this chapter and like gender inequality, serves as one of the greatest obstacles to risk-reducing behaviours on the part of these young women in sugar daddy relationships. As the girls' stories make clear, when the urgent need for food and shelter is what pushes young women into sugar daddy relationships in the first place and when "getting that money" according to Natasha is the most important priority, the girls are highly unlikely to risk suggesting condom use. In this regard, sex for survival combines with the threat of violence to consistently overpower the girls' imperatives for HIV risk reduction.

Finally, I have also painted a picture of the manner in which the girls enact emphasized femininities that make them complicit in sustaining the very ideals of hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy, that when combined with their economic and social exclusion, can lead to their premature death from abortion, violence and AIDS. This portrait of the girls' femininities is further deepened in the next chapter, as is their complicity in maintaining hegemonic masculinity, where I explore how the girls also manipulate hegemonic ideals that link masculinity to a man's ability to provide financially for a woman and blur the line between love and money, to get as much as they can financially from their sugar daddies.

Chapter 6: “Hakuna Cha Bure” (Nothing is Free): Sugar Girls and Commodified Love

6.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the affective dimensions of transactional relationships and considers the connections between the material, emotional and romantic limits of the relationships that sugar girls have with their sexual partners. It asks: do sugar girls love their sugar daddies? Part of the complexity of answering this question is to define love. This was attempted in chapter 2 where I drew on an anthropological framework which views love in Africa as fusing affect and exchange to varying degrees (Poulin 2007; Hunter 2009; Cole & Thomas 2009).

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section looks at the girls’ gendered understandings and experiences of love within transactional sexual relationships. It shows how they make a clear distinction between boyfriends and sugar daddies and how their experiences and conceptions of love differ according to these categories, with sugar daddy relationships being the most strategy-driven and performative. It also shows the extent to which the material parameters of transactional sexual relationships dictate the emotional and romantic limits to these relationships. For sugar girls to love their boyfriends and sugar daddies, they need, in the first instance, to receive or be assured of receiving money. As one of the girls makes clear, “in Kibera, money comes first and love comes second and when there is no money, there is no love.”

The second section of this chapter seeks to make sense of the girls’ views and experiences of love for their boyfriends and sugar daddies by considering how their conceptions of love are influenced by both their material circumstances and by gendered ideas of how love is and should be demonstrated. Drawing on a political economy of love approach, which considers the impact of material conditions on emotions and love, it makes clear the role of poverty in giving rise to commodified sexualities and strategy-driven love. This section also roots the girls’ gendered conceptions and expectations of love in pre-colonial and shifting kinship practices and their resulting ideologies of hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity. It shows that the girls’ emphasis on hegemonic provider masculinity (where men prove love through providing gifts and money) is a key strategy in their “simulation of sexual and romantic love” (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2002, p. 4) for their sugar daddies.

The chapter concludes by considering how the girls’ gendered understandings and experiences of love impact on their femininities and sexualities, and ultimately on their

vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. It emphasizes that while strategy-driven love that manipulates ideals of hegemonic masculinity, where a man is expected to demonstrate love through money and gifts, is agentive in the sense that it allows poor young women to meet their daily needs, it is equally as dangerous. By capitalizing on the very gendered views of sex and love that are used to exploit them, this chapter concludes that the girls are also complicit in maintaining the very ideals hegemonic ideals of masculinity and emphasized ideals of femininity that lead to their marginalization and that make them most vulnerable to HIV.

6.2 Transactional Sex and Love

In the second chapter of this thesis, I reviewed literature which conceives of the love that underpins transactional sexual relationships as fusing affect and exchange to varying degrees. At its most extreme, is what Brennan (2007) refers to as “strategy-driven love” (p. 204) which is motivated almost entirely by money or some other type of material exchange. While in Western romantic traditions this type of love is generally not viewed as true love (Zelizer 2005), a political economy of love approach, which considers the manner in which material circumstances impact on emotions, regards this type of calculated, rational sentiment as an emotion (Jackson 1999; Rebhun 1999). At the other end of the spectrum, fitting best with Western understandings of love, is what Brennan (2007) refers to as “emotion driven love” (p. 204) or what Cole (2009) calls “clean love” (p. 129) where affect is less dependent on material exchange. This love is driven more by romance, satisfaction of emotional needs and attraction and is felt as a more spontaneous and uncontrolled emotion (hooks 2000). Grounded in this framework, this section details my findings on the nature and role of affect and love in the girls’ relationships with men with whom they transact sex. Specifically, it addresses the following questions: How do these six sugar girls perceive love? How do they experience and show love in their transactional sexual relationships? To what extent do they view love as fusing affect and exchange? Do their views and experiences of love involve physical attraction and sexual pleasure? And finally, do their experiences of love vary in different types of transactional relationships?

6.2.1 Girls Understandings and Experiences of Love

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the girls’ conceptions and experiences of love, I engaged them in several creative writing exercises and group discussions that focused on this topic. In their journals, I asked them to write down how they define romantic love. I also asked them to think of sexual partners whom they loved, if any. This was followed by a

discussion about why they loved these men and how they experienced love in these particular relationships.

In response to my question of what is love, Maureen wrote, “love is a friendship that has no end.” Kim wrote that “love is the act of giving someone your heart.” Marsha described love as “a positive feeling for the opposite sex.” Natasha said it was “giving someone your heart, someone you trust.” Sharon echoed these sentiments, describing love as “a warm feeling in your heart.”

The girls also listed men they loved. While Sharon and Kim named their best sugar daddies, Maureen, Marsha and Natasha named an ex-boyfriend whom they had loved in the past. They also agreed that they loved their sugar daddies, but that “this is a different kind of love” than the one they felt for their boyfriends. What emerged clearly from this discussion was the fact that love was experienced differently with sexual partners that the girls considered boyfriends, as opposed to sexual partners they called their sugar daddies. In what follows, I compare the ways in which the girls described loving their sugar daddies and their boyfriends and describe how these differing experiences of love help to distinguish boyfriends from sugar daddies.

6.2.2 Loving Boyfriends

Of the six girls who took part in this study, four girls, Natasha, Maureen, Lady S. and Marsha have had boyfriends, as well as sugar daddies. Kim and Sharon have never had a boyfriend, only sugar daddies. For the girls who have had boyfriends, the love they describe for them fits best into the framework described by Hunter (2009) and Cole (2009) in that it blurs affect and exchange but has deep meaning for the girls. As the narratives below illustrate, love for their boyfriends, unlike with their sugar daddies, involves physical attraction, sexual pleasure, loyalty and ended in great heart ache.

Natasha had her first boyfriend when she was 16 years old. He was older than her by six years. She met him at a football match and they began to see each other regularly. She describes him as a kind young man, who treated her well and took care of her by buying her things she needed. She also found him physically attractive and “liked having sex with him.” Unlike sugar daddies, with whom Natasha is embarrassed to be seen in public, she spent almost all of her free time with her boyfriend. Her loyalty to him is most evident in the fact that when they began a relationship, she stopped seeing other men and “only concentrated on him.” His death, at age 22, of what she believes was food poisoning, caused her great pain. She described in great detail all of the tears that she cried for him.

Like Natasha, Marsha also stopped having sugar daddies when she entered into a relationship with her first boyfriend when she was 16. Her boyfriend was also older than her and had a casual job, so he was able to assist her financially. He also caused her great heart break. Several months after she had his daughter, he left her. Since then Marsha has had only one other boyfriend whom she later discovered was married. She no longer sees him. She said that after that incident she lost hope of finding a good man. The last time I spoke to Marsha, she told me, “for now I don’t see a man who can make me feel good or feel happy in life because all have disappointed me. I want to study and see what life can be for me without mens.”

Boyfriends have also been a cause of both pleasure and pain for Maureen. She remembers very vividly the day a boy that she “talked to” in Kibera asked her to be his girlfriend. She also described lucidly the happiness she felt whenever he would call her to join him and his friends when they were hanging out in Kibera. She also explained how “sex ever only felt good with him” but only when her father was alive because she knew that he could protect her if a boyfriend hurt her or help her take care of a baby if she got pregnant. After Maureen fell pregnant, her boyfriend left her and this had a powerful effect on her. Speaking about him, Maureen told me, “it’s just that I’ll never love another boy. It’s like he just went with my heart.”

The narratives that these girls shared with me about their boyfriends were very much like the stories, recounted in great detail by young women in the West. They involve romance, drama, attraction, pleasure, excitement and great heartache (Lees 1993; Bachen & Illouz 1996). In these relationships, the girls demonstrated their love for their boyfriends through kindness, loyalty and acts of physical intimacy in which they themselves experienced pleasure, including orgasms. In return, their boyfriends demonstrated their love through kind and caring behaviour, and through gifts and money. Here gifts and money received from their boyfriends were seen as symbols of their boyfriends’ love and affection, not as payment for sex. As the next section makes clear, love with their sugar daddies is experienced differently and is much more dependent on material exchange.

6.2.3 Loving Sugar Daddies

On the subject of loving sugar daddies, Sharon and Kim, the two girls to have long term relationships with sugar daddies and to never have had boyfriends, were the first to name a sugar daddy as a man that they loved. Sharon told our group that she loved her 30 year old neighbour, whom she saw daily and with whom she transacted sex several times a

week when his wife was away. When I asked why she loved him, she replied “his behaviours, he doesn’t sleep with so many girls, just me and the wife.” In response to the question of how she knew she loved him, she said “when I ask him for something, he gives it.” But despite feeling love for this neighbour, who keeps his promises to her and whom she perceives as being faithful to her in a way that her other sugar daddies are not, Sharon said that she does not enjoy sex with him. When I asked why, she said it was because he was older than her and she was only doing it for food. When I asked her if she would like to marry him, she replied with a loud “NO!”

Like Sharon, Kim also described loving her first sugar daddy because he was always kind to her telling her “you are a good girl, you don’t go with other boys” and because when she asks him for something, he gives it to her, unlike her other three sugar daddies who only sometimes give her money and chase her away after they have finished having sex with her. This man, whom she calls her first sugar daddy, because she met him first and has been with him the longest, has proposed marriage to her but she refused. But despite her statement that she loves him, she said that she never enjoys having sex with him, she just pretends that she does and she does not refer to him as her boyfriend, but as her sugar daddy or ATM, because she only sees him because she needs money. In fact, Kim made very clear in one of our focus group discussions that money comes first and love comes second. In her own words, “You have to love somebody if he has money because he will give you that money and you will use it to buy things you need. And if he doesn’t give you money, there is no love.”

Kim also explained that she knows that her favourite sugar daddy has other girlfriends but she is not jealous. Again, she emphasized “it does not bother me because I just want the money.” And despite her saying that she loves this one sugar daddy, Kim emphasized several times that she is not happy having sugar daddies and that if she could get the things she needs to continue going to school such as a uniform, nylons, pens, notebooks, and food, she would “stop loving them” immediately. In response to the question of whether or not she liked any of the boys her own age in her school, she replied “no, because they don’t have money.”

Marsha described loving two of her sugar daddies, the two who kept their promises regarding money. Both are married. She was also the only girl to state that she didn’t mind sex with sugar daddies who respected her body. When pressed to describe how these men respected her body, she responded “you know there are some mens who only think about themselves, but some also think about me and want sex to feel good for me too.” Marsha also stated having no interest in boys her own age. She said that that she had “tried with them” but they had no money, so she decided to stick to older men.

Natasha's statements on love and sugar daddies were often contradictory. In one of her written narratives on the topic of ATMs, she wrote "my first ATM was 38 years old. I loved her (Natasha mixes up her hims and hers) because he gave me money and was mature." In one of our focus group discussions, she also described loving one of her clients, a *musungu* (a white man), that she picked up once outside an upscale shopping complex in Nairobi, not far from Kibera. She said that she had liked this man, an American student, because he was nice to her, used a condom without her asking and gave her a lot of money, 1500 KS (\$18.70 US) as opposed to the usual 100-150 KS that she would get for one short. She ended this thought by saying that her perfect future husband would be a *musungu*.

But it is statements by Maureen and Lady S. that speak most powerfully to the topic of love and sugar daddies. Maureen described loving her sugar daddies much the way her first boyfriend loved her which is best summed up by her asking him "did you love me just to use me?" after they first had sex. Lady S. said that she loved her sugar daddies "in order to eat." In her journal, she wrote, "the ATMs only give me money and their sperms and I give them my body, but not my love." This last statement captures well the paradoxical way that these young women speak about love with their sugar daddies, and to the ways in which they do and do not love them. When they speak about loving their sugar daddies, love is spoken of as a gendered and instrumental action; loving their sugar daddies is something that they do by having sex in order to get money from them. It is not felt as the "warm feeling in their hearts" which they described as love in their journals. In fact, when I asked the girls if they ever felt that warm feeling in their hearts (as Sharon defined love in her journal) for their sugar daddies, Natasha responded "yes, when you are broke."

Much like the experiences of resort and sex workers in the Dominican Republic, who, according to Brennan (2007) engage in a performance of love with the hope of securing a visa or a marriage certificate, the love these girls describe for their sugar daddies is mainly strategy-driven and is skilfully performed (see the previous chapter) in order to get money. Sex with their sugar daddies is treated very much like a job for them and a key strategy for getting money in this job is to manipulate gendered expectations of love to their advantage. In Kibera, it is commonly accepted that women perform love through sex while men demonstrate love by providing money or gifts in exchange for sex. This is best exemplified in the following discussion on the subject of how love is shown and experienced in relationships.

Abby: How does he know that you love him?

Natasha: They say that if we love them, we will have sex with them.

Abby: How do you know you love him?"

Sharon: Because he gives me money.

Abby: How do you know he loves you?

Natasha: Because he gives me money!

Part of the girls' strategy for getting money from their sugar daddies relies on questioning their manhood when they do not reciprocate sex with enough money. This is evident from the following portion of a focus group discussion on love and money.

Abby: What do you do if your ATM doesn't give you any money?

Kim: I tell him, "you cheat me you love me and you are not giving me some money."

Natasha: Yes, I say "what kind of a man are you? You can't even give me 500 bob."

In response to my question of whether or not they could love a man who has no money, the girls were unanimous in agreeing that they could not. They also agreed that they could love just about any sugar daddy who was prepared to give them money. Here, physical attraction, sexual pleasure, loyalty and emotional connection, all details that featured in their narratives with their boyfriends, mattered very little.

Abby: Can you love a sugar daddy who has no money?

Natasha: No. Money is the first thing, then love is the second thing in Kibera. You can't hang out with a man who cannot provide you with anything. If you want to eat chips and he says "no today I have no money," now that is nonsense, leave him and go and look for another one.

Abby: What happens if you have a boyfriend but he can no longer provide you with money?

Maureen: When your boyfriend doesn't have money, you may find that his friend has more money, so you will leave that boy and go to his friend.

Abby: Sharon, what do you think?

Sharon: If my boyfriend doesn't have money, I will go to another boy and if he doesn't have money, I will go to another, until I find a sugar daddy.

Abby: So you can never "give your heart" as you girls defined love, to a man who has no money?

Kim: Me I can't give my heart to someone who can't support me.

Maureen: No, you are supposed to love someone who can help you if you are in trouble.

Abby: Can you love any man who has money? What if you are not physically attracted to him?

Natasha: I don't care what he looks like. He can be old as my grandfather or as big as this table. If he gives me money, I will appreciate. I will just pretend... "Oh come here my sweetheart, I love the way you are." I will massage him. And he will give me the money. yeah – you sweet talk him.

Abby: Do you know some people who love men, but it doesn't matter if they have money?

Kim: There are some.

Maureen: But they already have what they need. Or they pity the man, or they say the man knows how to treat them in bed.

.....

Abby: Girls, would you say that your love is for sale? That it can be bought for a certain amount of money?

(a few seconds of silence)

Natasha: I think it is true because for us we depend on this money to survive.
Maureen: It is true.

In these circumstances, where love is experienced as money, both love and money become intertwined with sex and pleasure, such that it is almost impossible to separate one from the other. According to Steinberg (2007), the “blurring of the line between love and financial transaction” becomes so deeply chiselled into the structure of young women’s lives that it “becomes endemic” (Steinberg, 2007, p. 290). Unlike in the West, where love is used by women who fear being seen as promiscuous to rationalize sex and render it a legitimate activity (Lees 1993), for the sugar girls who took part in my study, loving a man is not used as a rationalization for sex, it is synonymous with sex and it is used as a rationalization for money. As Kim made very clear in one of our focus group discussions, “You have to love somebody if he has money because he will give you that money and you will use it to buy things you need. And if he doesn’t give you money, there is no love.” Moreover, where love becomes blurred with money, sex and pleasure, it is also controlled emotion. It is a choice. Loving their sugar daddies is instrumental in order to get money and if there is no possibility of money, then is no possibility of love. The instrumentality of this love for their sugar daddies is perhaps best summed up in their referring to their sugar daddies as their “ATM cards.”

6.2.4 Sugar Daddies and Shame

Alongside the strategy-driven love that these girls feel for their sugar daddies are also deep feelings of shame. In fact, despite the practice of having sugar daddies being quite prevalent among teenage girls in Kibera, shame, much more than love was the emotion most strongly associated to these types of relationships. To much laughter, Marsha described to our group how she will only go out with her sugar daddies “at night, wearing a big jacket a black one and a hat” so that she will not be easily recognized. This is contrary to many studies highlighted in my literature review which show that loving sugar daddies enables sugar girls to create what they perceived to be an empowered femininity, as well as an increase in feelings of self-worth, and greater standing in the eyes of their peers (Nyanzi et al. 2001; Silberschmidt & Rasch 2001; Longfield et al. 2004; Nkosana & Rosenthal 2007).

For the girls who took part in my study, hanging with sugar daddies is not a lifestyle that they will honestly admit to their families, or even to their peers. Maureen believes that her mother knows how she gets money, but never asks because they need the money to survive. Marsha also thinks that her mother suspects but never asks. Her daughter sometimes

asks why she doesn't sleep at home, but Marsha tells her that she works late at a bar. Kim's father has no idea about her sugar daddies. She said that if he were to find out, he would beat her. For Natasha, it is only her roommates who also survive as informal sex workers and the girls in this study group who know about her sugar daddies and for Sharon, it is only the other five girls in this group who know. Lady S. said that her neighbours must know that she sells sex to make a living for they see men coming to her shack at all hours of the night but they say nothing of it. Her step mother up country, to whom she sends small amounts of money periodically to help support her seven younger siblings, believes that Lady S. works as a tailor Nairobi.

The source of this shame lies not only in their trading sex for money and in their knowing full well the dangers of their risky behaviour. It is also related to their fear of being thought of as "husband snatchers" which in Kibera, can result in violence from other women. Mainly, however, the source of this shame lies in the fact that the girls do not feel that they are engaging in respectable sex. In Kibera, as in many other parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, sex is deemed respectable only when it is sufficiently transactional. Since poverty pushes these girls to transact sex for whatever they can get from their sugar daddies, sometimes as little as 30 Kenyan Shillings (\$0.37 US), they often feel that the sex in which they engage is not respectable and that if others were aware of how little money they received, they would become targets of gossip. As Maureen put it "you feel ashamed because your friend got 500 from her sugar daddy but you only got 100 and you don't want her to know because she will think you are a fool." For this reason, it is not common for these girls to brag to each other about having sugar daddies and gain prestige among their peers for doing so, as has been reported by other sugar girls throughout Kenya and Sub-Saharan Africa.

6.3 Poverty, Tradition, Gender and Love

A consideration of the sexual economies in which these young women engage, and of the political economies of love that shape the contours of these sexual economies is useful here for making sense of the girls' understandings and expressions of love for their sexual partners. As emphasized in chapter 2 of this thesis, this study's understanding of the girls' behaviours and emotions is grounded in anthropological scholarship which considers the impact of gendered pre-colonial and shifting kinship arrangements in which love is a fusion of affect and exchange. It is also grounded primarily in a materialist framework which holds that the material conditions of the girls' lives have the strongest impact on their behaviours and emotions. Moreover, it views the relationship between the girls' sexualities and experiences of

love as a two way relationship, where the intense interweaving of sex and material exchange shapes how the girls imagine and negotiate love, and such conceptions of love determine, to some extent, the nature of their sexual exchanges.

Based on the girls' narratives, it is clear that poverty has the strongest influence on the girls' conceptions and experiences of love. While chapter 4 revealed the way in which poverty gives rise to commodified sexualities, this chapter reveals its influence on conceptions of love that complement and justify the commodification of the girls' sexualities. As the girls' narratives have made clear, when transacting money in exchange for sex with a young woman, a sugar daddy is also not only paying for sex, he is also purchasing a gendered performance of love that serves not only to justify the transaction (to the sugar girl and to others) but also to increase the sugar girls' profits from the sexual encounter.

While an exploration of the social, economic, and political causes of poverty in the girls' lives is well beyond the scope of this study, the gendered effects of globalization are worthy of mention here since they impact directly on the girls' sexualities. Reduced social spending in Kenya, imposed through structural adjustment policies in the early 1980's has drastically reduced young women's prospects of education, employment and marriage. Like sugar girls cited in other studies throughout Sub-Saharan Africa (Silberschmidt and Rasch 2001; Hunter 2002; Cole 2004; Karlyn 2005; Jones 2006; Leclerc-Madlala 2008a; Hawkins et al. 2009) these girls are well aware of their limited opportunities and of the unlikelihood of their needs being met through education or employment. In describing her five years of informal sex work, Marsha wrote "for that time, I don't think there is another way that I could survive. Because there is no jobs here in Kenya as you can see. And if you are not educated well enough you can't get a job."

Other than its impact on the material conditions from which the girls' commodified sexualities and strategy-driven love arise, globalization in Sub-Saharan Africa has also given rise to views of love that place it at the other end of the spectrum, where it is less dependent on material exchange. The determination to hold onto ideas of romantic love and marriage is evident in their narratives of love for their boyfriends, though these relationships, to a lesser degree than sugar daddy relationships, also depend on provider conceptions of masculinity. Their holding of these views of love as the cornerstone for marriage is also obvious and is the main reason why they have no desire to marry their sugar daddies. Similar to the youth in Niger described in Masquelier (2009)'s study, these girls also experience the contradictory influences of globalization on their conceptions and practices of love. Like youth in Niger, ideas about romantic love as being the corner stone of marriage prevent them from marrying

their sugar daddies, but economic circumstances caused by globalization make entering into relationships based on “pure” love or clean love almost impossible. However, unlike other sugar girls throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, who trade sex in order to be able to acquire the goods of modernity such as cell phones, clothing and jewellery, these girls transact sex in order simply to survive the economic consequences of globalization.

The two way relationship between the girls’ sexualities and conceptions of love is not only influenced by poverty. Ideologies of gender, rooted in pre-colonial traditions of bridewealth, also continue to impact on the girls’ sexualities and conceptions of love. As emphasized in chapter 2, from the tradition of men transacting cattle in exchange for a woman’s sexuality and offspring arose ideologies of masculinity that see men as providers, and male love as evidenced through material goods (Hunter 2007). This tradition also gave rise to feminine views of sexuality which on the one hand, view women’s transacting sex as a demonstration of love, and on the other hand, see women’s bodies as commodities to be transacted for money (Jones 2006). With modernity and globalization and the massive urbanization, exacerbation of poverty and social dislocation that these have brought about, these same gendered ideologies of love and sexuality continue to play out, albeit in modified versions. Men continue to have multiple partnerships, but rather than taking wives, they engage in less formal and shorter relationships with girlfriends and prostitutes (Ulin 1992). Often these relationships continue to be characterized by age, economic and gender disparities and the transactional element remains with cattle or bridewealth being replaced with cash or gifts in exchange for sex (Hunter 2002; Luke & Kurz 2002; Jones 2006; Wight et al. 2006).

In sexual relationships with older men (sugar daddies), poor young women use their sexuality as a currency in order to meet their basic needs. In doing so, they draw on longstanding cultural ideals that legitimate cross-generational, transactional sex and its complementary narratives of love and gender to legitimize their actions and to get as much money as they can from their sugar daddies. This is evidenced in the girls telling their sugar daddies “what kind of a man are you? You can’t even give me 500 bob” or “you cheat me that you love me but you don’t give me any money” and in their honestly admitting that if their boyfriend cannot provide for them financially, they would begin to look at his friend as a possible sexual partner and provider. It is also evidenced in the shame they feel when they believe they have engaged in sex that is deemed to be non-respectable since it was not sufficiently transactional.

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have added to the picture of the femininities and sexualities of six sugar girls from Africa's largest slum by shedding light on the affective dimensions of their relationships with men with whom they transact sex. What emerges more clearly in this chapter is the manner in which the girls' material circumstances, along with existing gendered perceptions of love, impact on their feelings for men, most notably by giving rise to notions of love whose function is to allow these girls to negotiate their material deprivation. For these girls, loving a sugar daddy has little to do with how he makes her feel emotionally or sexually. Rather, it is a choice that is entirely dependent on his ability to provide for her financially, to be her ATM card. His financial circumstances determine the romantic and emotional parameters of the relationship and when there is no possibility of money, there is no possibility of love.

Finally, once again what emerges from this picture is the manner in which the affective dimensions of sugar daddy relationships are influenced by gender norms that have the potential to simultaneously make and break the girls' lives. Since ideals of hegemonic masculinity dictate that men show love by providing money and gifts in exchange for sex, loving a man by offering him her body offers young women the pleasure of being rewarded financially. But in buying into the belief that men must reciprocate sex with money, the girls are buying into ideals of emphasized femininity, and more specifically into the belief that men have the right to make all decisions regarding sexual intimacy, including whether or not to use condoms. Again, while doing so reveals the girls' agency in coping with poverty, it also makes them complicit in upholding the very patterns of sexual networking that create "wide-open channels for the spread of HIV" (Epstein, 2007, p. 67).

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter, I summarize the main findings of this inquiry. I then share my own conclusions on how best to describe and analyse the femininities of the six sugar girls who participated in this study. I conclude that while on the one hand, their femininities are agentive, the material and gendered context in which they are performed is such as to ensure their structural subordination, which in virtually all cases is likely to lead to a lifelong struggle with material insecurity, a lack of relational stability and the absence of emotional fulfillment. I also discuss what my findings might suggest for future HIV/AIDS prevention programs targeted at teen girls in Sub-Saharan Africa and end by sharing the impacts of this research on the lives of the six young women who took part.

7.2 Summary

In this thesis, I draw broadly from two different frameworks on cross-generational, transactional relationships in Sub-Saharan Africa. At the risk of over-stating their respective positions, one views transactional relationships as purely exploitative and another sees them as beneficial and agentive for both parties involved. This study provides a platform for the girls' voices and allows the reader to consider their perspectives on the sexual choices they make and the meanings they accord to their sugar daddy relationships. Specifically, this qualitative inquiry generates a deeper understanding of the girls' motives and perspectives by analysing their narratives on 1) the material circumstances of their lives and how these impact on their sexual choices and constructions of femininity 2) their levels of agency and risk in sugar daddy relationships and 3) the romantic, material and emotional limits to these relationships. Not surprisingly, what this study finds is that the girls' experiences and choices lie somewhere in between the extremes of both frameworks presented in my literature review, as do the femininities that they enact and live.

Key to understanding the sugar girls' gendered identities and corresponding sexualities and views of love, is their economic disadvantage. Indeed, what emerges overwhelmingly in this study, is poverty's pervading reach and intimate impact on the lives of young women in Kibera and its sculpting of femininities that are simultaneously agentive and dangerous, allowing young women to negotiate the immediate instabilities and ruptures of their lives, but at the same time, threatening to destroy their lives in the long term. Also, while this study makes clear that the girls do have agency, it also reveals the extent to which material survival

and shocking levels of poverty and bodily and relational insecurity (where they live, what they eat, who they have to depend on) over determine their choices and hence the self-narratives which are recorded here. This sheds important light on the difficulty of conducting effective and transformative gender work in the context of such acute poverty.

In the first data chapter of this thesis, detailing the girls' biographical details and their narratives of life in Africa's largest slum, what becomes immediately evident is the manner in which the girls' circumstances of extreme material deprivation make trading sex an easy strategy, according to the girls, to satisfy basic needs that are not being fulfilled by parents, education, employment or their community. Furthermore, my data reveals how poverty contributes to views of femininity that justify the commodification of female sexuality as a means of meeting one's basic needs and that endorse transactional sex. This is most evident in the girls recounting how neighbours, friends and even family members view young women's bodies as resources to be exploited and encourage them to go out and "sell their supermarkets." It is also evident in the girls insisting that transacting sex in the slums is far from uncommon and begins at a very early age.

In these regards, my data echoes data presented in the first framework in my literature review which views sugar daddy relationships as primarily pinioned by poverty. Information presented in the second data chapter, which looks at the levels of risk and agency experienced by these six girls in their sugar daddy relationships, further supports these views. By emphasizing the manner in which their cross-generational, transactional relationships are underpinned by high levels of coercion and gender inequality, chapter 5 illuminates how the girls are denied their rights to reproductive and sexual health. This is obvious in the high levels of physical and sexual violence that they have experienced, as well as by their unwanted pregnancies resulting in unsafe abortions, and in the fact that one of the girls is HIV positive. Taken together, information about the girls' experiences of poverty in Kibera and of the risks they face in their sugar daddy relationships, sheds important light on their femininities and sexualities, revealing them as risky, emphasized and disempowered.

However, as I clarify in this study, these six girls are not only victims of impoverishment, inequality and injustice. They are also makers of their own lives, and in line with data presented in the second framework in my literature review, these sugar girls can also be seen as creative, resilient, and active young women whose agency resides in the commodification of their sexualities and love in order to ameliorate their precarious conditions. This is most evident in the last two data chapters where I examine the girls' perceptions of agency in their relationships with sugar daddies and the meaning and feelings

that they attribute to their romantic relationships with men. Here a more nuanced and richer picture of the girls' femininities and sexualities emerges. In these chapters, it becomes clear that these girls know how to initiate relationships with older men (often by portraying the qualities of emphasized femininity) and are skilled in exploiting longstanding hegemonic cultural expectations that men must reciprocate sex and demonstrate love with money, in order to maximize the amount they can get from their sugar daddies.

This study also sheds important light on where the girls' views of love fit into their narratives of femininity and masculinity. Love, as described by these six sugar girls, is not the romantic, spontaneous, and self-fulfilling emotion described and sought after by so many young women in the West. Rather, loving a man is a calculated action that is instrumental in allowing them at best to reduce and at worst simply to survive their material deprivation. Love is blurred with the pleasure they gain from obtaining money from their sugar daddies, and as they make clear, when there is no money, there is no love. In this way, this study also reveals the extent to which a sugar daddy's financial circumstances determine the romantic and emotional parameters of the relationship. His agency resides in his wallet. But, as this study has shown, the girls' views of love, while they do provide them with a certain degree of agency, are equally dangerous. The danger lies in the fact that their views of love fit best into hegemonic narratives of heterosexual masculinity and emphasized narratives of femininity which entail the belief that a man's proving his love by purchasing a woman's sexuality, also affords him the ability to make all decisions regarding sexual intimacy, including whether or not to use condoms.

Though they did not word it as such, the girls are well aware of the extent to which the risks they encounter in their sugar daddy relationships outweigh the benefits. This is most evident in the girls themselves following up any comments about their perceived levels of agency in their sugar daddy relationships with comments about the dangers they face, and the stress and worry that these bring. The girls worry most about violence and pregnancy. Initially, they also worried that others in Kibera would learn about the topic of my research and then discover their clandestine lives as sugar girls. Interestingly though, their shame is associated not only to the fact that they have sugar daddies, but also to the little amount of money that they received from their sugar daddies. As such, this sense of shame prevents them from bragging to their friends about their sugar daddy relationships, as has been reported by many other sugar girls throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. This shame also further sheds light on the girls' perceptions of masculinity and femininity, for it shows their embrace of the

commonly held view that a respectable woman benefits financially from sex, while a respectable man is able to reward his woman partner financially.

Like other sugar girls throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, HIV/AIDS, while a major threat to these girls, is frequently regarded as the least of their worries. Similar to other African men and women that I described in my literature review, whose precarious lives and fatalistic outlooks frequently prevent them from engaging in health promoting behaviours, the girls' urgent need for money, along with their fear of violence, frequently overpower their imperative to protect their health. Consequently, condom use is rare with their sugar daddies. Undeniably, despite the agency exhibited by the young women, this study elucidates the extent to which their choices are contextualized within a context of extreme gender and material inequalities. Corresponding to literature highlighting the link between gender, age, and economic asymmetries and risky sexual behaviour, as well as studies relating cross-generational, transactional relationships to the feminization of HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa, this study echoes the hyper-vulnerability of these young women.

Finally, in line with these views on risk, this research also makes clear that the girls' agentive femininities and commodified sexualities come with a high cost, not only to sugar girls themselves in terms of their health and safety, but to all women. By conforming to ideals of emphasized femininity and exploiting hegemonic ideals of masculinity that blur the line between love and money and link masculinity to a man's ability to provide financially for a woman, these sugar girls are also complicit in upholding the very gendered ideologies and behaviours that are at the root of women's oppression and vulnerability.

7.3 Implications for HIV/AIDS Education Programs

This study paints a picture of young women in Kibera, Kenya who are highly vulnerable to contracting and spreading HIV. It roots their vulnerability in interlocking gender and class inequalities that give rise to emphasized femininities and hegemonic masculinities, which then result in women being both subjects and objects of risky sexual behaviour. I believe that this study's portrait of the agentive and equally dangerous femininities of six young sugar girls from Kibera has important implications for the creation of more effective HIV/AIDS intervention programs. By providing a clearer picture of the femininities of young African women, and specifically of the ways in which these are formed and performed, this study can assist in the creation of much-needed intervention programs that start from the lived realities of young women. Above all, this study makes obvious that in order for intervention programs to be successful in stopping the feminization of HIV, they must work at transforming

the risky femininities and hegemonic masculinities that are at the heart of vulnerability, while also building on the existing aspects of girls' agency.

Challenging the dangerous aspects of the girls' femininities requires addressing the economic and sociocultural context that gives rise to these gendered identities in the first place. The reality of the girls' socioeconomic disadvantage and experiences of gender inequality points to the need for long-term, expanded and transformational strategies that see fighting poverty and patriarchy together as key to reducing the spread of HIV. As the girls' testimonies in the preceding pages reveal, the femininities and sexualities that they enact conflict with the most common preventative messages imparted to them, making it highly unlikely that they will abstain, be faithful to their partners, or be able to negotiate condom use with their sugar daddies. Poverty and patriarchy's role in giving rise to these risky femininities and commodified sexualities cannot be overstated and until intervention programs can more effectively tackle these, any preaching of risk reducing behaviours, including abstinence, partner reduction, delay of age of sexual debut and use of condoms, will continue, in the words of Natasha, to "come in one ear and out the other." While addressing these complex issues will not be easy, doing so will also go a long way in reducing the fatalism that prevents many of the poor from taking measures to protect their health.

This research also sheds light on those aspects of young women's agency on which effective interventions can build. By pointing to the fact that these girls are not simply victims of their difficult circumstances, but active producers of their femininities and sexualities, it points to the power of these young women to redefine and renegotiate new gender identities that are self-preserving and truly empowered. Education clearly has an important role to play in this area, but, unfortunately, many schools, are in fact, complicit in teaching the very gendered behaviours that increase vulnerability to HIV (Kenway & Fitzclarence 1997; Kent 2004; Aikman et al. 2008; Morrell et al. 2009).

As stressed above, in order for educational interventions to be successful, they must provide youth not only with the crucial reproductive health information that can allow them to adopt risk prevention behaviours, they must also challenge the gender ideologies and hierarchical relations that inform such risky behaviours. Doing so requires engaging youth in the process of rethinking and reconstructing their dichotomous gender identities. In essence, this struggle to halt the feminization of HIV/AIDS requires nothing less than the creation of new social identities. In this process, both young men and women must be seen as allies, rather than obstacles whose risky behaviours should not be condemned in isolation but rather

looked at in relation to the social, political, economic and cultural constructions of masculinity and femininity that underlie their behaviour.

This is of course much easier said than done. Many studies show that comprehensive sex education programs that start from the experiences and needs of the student and focus on the role of gender equality in relationships are still lacking (Mac and Ghail 1994; Morrell et al. 2009). Where sex education is provided, it is often overshadowed by cultural taboos around issues of teachers speaking openly about sexuality with their students. This is especially the case in Kenya, where despite the fact that the Kenyan Ministry of Education mandates sex education, many teachers either ignore this requirement completely, or when they do teach about sex, their curriculum concentrates largely on the biological functions of sex but neglects themes such as sexual health, reproductive rights, healthy relationships, love and intimacy and cross-generational, transactional relationships (Mbugua 2007). A recent report by Human Rights Watch (2010) found that consequently, young women in Kenya are not suitably educated on issues relating to reproductive health and safe sex.

Moreover, my own experiences of teaching in Kenya have also revealed a deep resistance among both men and women, teachers and students, to internalizing the ideals of gender equality. In fact, several studies on the African continent have revealed the manner in which gender equality and empowerment of women threaten men and have led many “to call for a return to their perceived gender roles of the pre-colonial past” (Dilger, 2003, p. 33) and to respond with increased violence (Morrell et al. 2009).

Regarding pedagogy, the process used for conducting this study points to the potential of critical pedagogy and feminist popular education as tools for the creation of newly and truly empowered gender identities. While it is beyond the scope of this study to measure the impacts of my research and its attempt at girls empowerment via working with girls to build new femininities, it is worth pointing out that in the process of delivering this special creative writing program for these six girls, I saw how critical pedagogy (which focuses on enabling one to understand the root causes of oppression) can be a powerful tool for stimulating gender conscientisation of the causes and risks of one’s risky feminine and sexual behaviour. I’ve also seen how this new awareness of one’s vulnerability can lead to the desire to reject traditional notions of femininity and masculinity and develop new gender norms that are based on the ideals of self-efficacy, equality and justice. Crucial in this pedagogy is the viewing of participants as self-reflective actors, as well as the creation of a space and facilitation of a process that brings young people together to “express and develop their voices of resistance” (Unterhalter et al., 2008, p. 158). The goal is nothing less than to

reconstruct identities “that challenge the ways in which traditional gender relations place their sexual health at risk” (Campbell & MacPhail, 2002, p. 6).

7.4 Empowering Research

As I stressed in chapter 3, of equal importance to me in researching this topic was not only the production of new knowledge, but also the facilitation of a process of knowledge generation that would in some way benefit the participants. As a researcher, I wanted to generate knowledge that would serve as a “tool for the education and development of consciousness” (Gaventa, 1991, p. 121-222) and as a basis for inspiring social action. This goal was partially achieved by both the girls who took part in the research and by myself.

The girls were inspired to share the knowledge that they had gained during our sessions on issues related to gender, reproductive rights, sexual health, HIV prevention, family planning, and violence against women with other girls in Kibera, and in the weeks after the program/research had come to an end, as I sat at home trying to make sense of the data and write this thesis, the girls were busy conducting community outreaches and trainings for other girls on these topics throughout Kibera.

I myself was also able to find an emancipatory use for the knowledge generated for this study. Knowing the girls’ dreams of going back to school, I worked with them to put together a small booklet of their poetry and biographies, along with photos that they had taken of Kibera, which I sent via email to family, friends and fellow teachers back in Canada and the USA. Many were inspired to help and at the time of submission of this thesis, I have raised a substantial amount of money to support the girls in their schooling and living expenses. The ultimate goal is to enable them to obtain the skills and qualifications needed to get jobs that will not exploit them and to allow them to leave behind their lives as sugar girls.

With the money I raised from family and friends, I was able to assist each of the girls except for one, return to school. Unfortunately, Lady S. went back up country to visit her family shortly after I completed my research and has not yet returned to Kibera. My attempts to get in touch with her have not been successful. However I am hopeful that she will return to Nairobi, and when she does, I am prepared to assist her with her education if she so desires. She has only one year left before she can graduate.

Natasha and Kim are in a boarding school in Nairobi. Kim is in her final year and working hard to graduate this year so that she can then apply for a government loan to enable her to go on to University. Natasha is in form two and I have secured her sponsorship for the next three years to allow her to complete her studies.

Marsha also attends the same school, but as a day student. She continues to live with her daughter and friend in Kibera, but attends school during the day and has less than a year left before graduation.

Maureen and Sharon chose to pursue trades in tailoring. Maureen still lives and studies in Kibera where she cares for her mother and younger brother. Sharon boards at her tailoring school outside of Kibera, where she also attends lessons in literacy, English, Math and basic business skills. Both she and Maureen hope to set up their own small tailoring businesses once they complete their courses at the end of 2010.

“Hanging with sugar daddies” is a way of life that four of girls say that they have now put behind them. Though these scholarships were not at all conditional upon whether or not they continued to see sugar daddies, Kim and Natasha named to me the exact date when they had seen their last sugar daddies and expressed feelings of relief and happiness at being able to put that life behind them and get an education. When I asked them if they missed any of their sugar daddies, they responded to me as if I was foolish. Even Kim, one of the only two girls to express feelings of love for her first sugar daddy, replied with a quick and confident ‘no’ when I asked if she missed him. She told me that when she remembers that life she feels stress and she cries, so she tries not to remember.

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Appendix A: Individual Interview Questions

Relationships:

1. How many relationships have you had? When?
2. How many relationships do you currently have?
3. Focusing on your current one(s). Describe how the relationship began with your sugar daddy. Who initiated it? How?
4. How old were you when the relationship first began? How old was he?
5. What do you call him? sugar daddy? boyfriend?
6. Where do you meet?
7. Do you do any social activities together? If yes, which ones?

About him:

8. What is his job?
9. Is he married?
10. Does he have children?
11. Where does he live?
12. Is he from the same tribe as you?

Feelings and Expectation:

13. How do you feel about him? Do you love him?
14. Is there the promise of marriage or some form of stable union?
15. Would you want that?
16. What do you expect from him?
17. Do you feel jealous of his wife and/or other lovers?
18. How do you think he feels about you?
19. What do you think he expects from you?
20. Would you continue the relationship if there were no material or financial benefits?

Transactions:

21. What do you provide him?
22. What do you receive from him in exchange?
23. Show the continuum of volition, ask her where she would place herself.

Protection from Pregnancy and STIs:

24. Do you know how to protect yourself from pregnancy and STI's including HIV?
25. Do you use any form of birth control or protection from STIs?
26. Do you worry about pregnancy or STIs?
27. Have you ever had an STI?
28. Have you ever been pregnant?
29. If yes, to either or the above, what did you do?

Negotiating Intimacy:

30. Have you ever asked him to wear a condom?
31. What would happen if you asked him to wear a condom?
32. What happens if you don't feel like having sex but he does?
33. Has he ever hit you or used violence?
34. If you became dissatisfied with this relationship, do you think you have the power to walk away without being harmed?
35. In what way do you shape the relationship? (Which of your desires are expressed and met?)

Opinion of Family and Peers:

36. Do your friends or family members know about this relationship?
37. If yes, what do they think?
38. Do/did any of your peers engage in similar types of relationships?
39. Does/did your mother or another significant female adult in your life engage in a similar type of relationship?
40. Does/did your father or another significant male adult in your life engage in a sugar daddy type of relationship?

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

August 15th, 2010.

Dear Girls from Kibera Youth Empowerment Program,

I am now pursuing a Master degree in Education and Gender at the University of Cape Town, in South Africa. My main study interests, as you know from the classes we did together last year, are related to education and gender. In order to graduate, I must conduct a research study on a subject related to education and gender, which is why I would like to come back to Kibera to work with you again.

Some of the things that I remember us talking a lot about last year through the girls' empowerment and creative writing programs were themes related to your lives, to the challenges you face in Kibera and to your worries about your sexual health, including HIV/AIDS, abortion and relationships. In our program last year, many of you also talked quite openly in this group and to me about your relationships with older men (you called them your 'sugar daddies' and your 'ATMs') who pay your school fees or your rent, or help you out financially, and in exchange, you become their girlfriend. It is on your lives and on your relationships with these men that I would like to conduct research. The title of my research project is: Trading Sugar: Teenage Girls, Older Men, Sexual Choice and Gender Inequality in the Slums of Kibera, Kenya.

Basically, I'd like to do what we did last year, sit in a circle and have some discussions and do more poetry and creative writing on subjects related to your lives and experiences, but this time I'd like to focus a little more on your relationships with men. This program will last for two weeks for a few hours each day at a location in Kilimani. I will provide all the pens, pencils and paper necessary, new journals to write in, as well as matatu fair to the location in Kilimani and lunch. Then in the week after the creative writing program has finished, I would like to do an individual interview with each of you where we can talk privately about some of the things you wrote about, your life and your relationships with men.

The information that you give me will be used in the research project that I am writing and I hope that it will be useful for people like myself and for others who design and deliver HIV Prevention, Sexual Health and Girls Empowerment programs.

Let me stress that your participation in this program/study is entirely voluntary. If you decide not to participate, that is absolutely fine and if you decide to withdraw at any time, there will be no problem at all. If you withdraw from the program/study before the end, I will not use your writings in my research.

If you do participate, your identity will be kept anonymous. You will pick a different name, which I will call you throughout my written report. And all of the information that you provide to me will be kept confidential – unless, as I stressed last year when we worked together, you present me with information that I feel is life threatening for you, in which case, I would have to report it to John, the director of the Youth Empowerment program, so that we could take the necessary steps to help and protect you.

There are no risks to your participation in this study. You will not benefit financially, but I think you will enjoy the conversations and writing and will benefit emotionally from the experience of

writing and sharing of your life, and of being able to discuss subjects that are of urgent personal concern to you.

If you have any questions about the research, you can speak to me privately any time, or you can call me at 0726 832 526. My supervisor at the University of Cape Town in South Africa is called Robert Morrell and his contact information is Robert.Morrell@uct.ac.za

I..... (full names of participant)
hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

.....
SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

.....
DATE

University of Cape Town