Children's constructions of gender: A participatory project

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ABSTRACT

Studies on the construction of gender have largely focussed on adolescents and young adults in South Africa. This leaves a significant gap in understanding the ways in which gender is constructed and negotiated by younger children. This study, therefore, investigated how younger children narrate and experience their gendered lives, and whether these stories resisted or maintained dominant narratives of gender. Twelve participants between the ages of eight and fourteen participated. The research used participatory action research (PAR) methods. Specifically, Photovoice, journaling, collages and drawing were used to represent the stories and narratives that the participants chose to share. The Photovoice component culminated in a community exhibition which showcased the participants' photos. In addition, the participants took part in focus groups and individual interviews. The focus group transcripts, individual interview transcripts, collages, photographs, drawings and journal entries were analysed using thematic narrative analysis. The study showed that children construct gender based on contradictory messaging, and exercise defiance of normative gendered constructs within the limits of heteronormative gender identity. Four main narrative themes emerged: *Negotiating gendered expression; Normalisation of gendered violence; Subjugating female bodies; Narratives of conformity and resistance*. Based on the findings, the recommendation was made to use play as both a means of exploration and education in children's understanding of gender.

Keywords: children, gender, Photovoice, gender development

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Human differentiation based on gender invariably impacts society and individuals on multiple levels. Despite efforts towards gender equality society is still largely gendered with accompanying inequities (Palermo, Bleck, & Peterman, 2014; World Health Organization, 2013). High levels of gender and sexual violence and discrimination, as well as hate crimes against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Intersex (LGBTQI) communities, remain prevalent – particularly in South Africa (Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Brown, 2011; Msibi, 2012). Despite the large body of research on the social construction of gender, stereotypically gendered constructs of masculinity and femininity still dictate the ways in which people behave, at a global level. Moreover, adherence to hegemonic constructs of gender are shown to be correlated with higher levels of physical, emotional and sexual violence (Jewkes, Levin, & Penn-Kekana, 2002; Mayeza, 2015; Msibi, 2012; Swart, Seedat, Stevens, & Ricardo, 2002). Although the negative impact of hegemonic gendered behaviour is most apparent in adolescent and adult years, the learning and internalisation of gendered constructs occur first throughout childhood (Bhana & Mayeza, 2016; Halim, Ruble, Tamis-LeMonda, Shrout, & Amodio, 2017). It is, thus, important to explore constructions of gender within a younger age-group of children, in order to better understand how children negotiate expectations and stereotypes. This will inform more effective intervention methods for gendered violence and discrimination at an early age. With this in mind, I give a brief overview of research on the social construction of gender, as well as the impact of hegemonic gendered identity on children, adolescents and adults.

Normative constructs of gender

In this thesis, gender is defined as the socially constructed characteristics of men and women – referring to normative behaviours, roles and performances that are considered appropriate for each gender (Lorber & Farrell, 1991). One of the most historically and culturally prominent constructs of gender centres on ideas of a strict biological basis for gendered expression. The essentialist view that sex and gender (and by proxy, sexuality) are synonymous is still prevalent today, giving rise to the validation of hegemonic gendered practices – many of which have been shown to be sites of violence (Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Bhana & Mayeza, 2016; Brown, 2011; De Vries et al., 2014; Msibi, 2012). Within this framework, children's experiences and negotiation of gendered practice are not taken into account, thus rendering hegemonic practice as normative and intuitive (Kray, Howland, Russell, & Jackman, 2017).

Impact of hegemonic gendered constructs

Hegemonic constructs of gender, imbued by society and culture in unique ways, have been shown to impact youth and children in negative ways (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; De Vries et al., 2014; Teitelman et al., 2016). Although heteronormative practices have been shown to be sites of physical, psychological and sexual violence, non-conformity to normative gendered practices have also been shown to result in violence and discrimination. Overwhelming research in both global and national spheres show that children whose gendered behaviour do not correlate with their perceived sex are more likely to be victims of verbal and/or physical violence (Bhana & Mayeza, 2016; Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network & Harris Interactive, 2012; Lippa, 2008). In addition, more positive attitudes toward flexible gendered behaviour was exhibited by children who had been exposed to stereotype flexibility (Halim et al., 2017). The regulation of gender among peers, and in communities, thus plays a crucial role in the ways in which children construct gender

in their specific contexts, as well as the ways in which they experience or commit regulation of others' constructions.

The social construction of hegemonic gendered practice in South Africa

Hegemonic gendered practices are dictated by the social and political climate in which they occur. Connell's theory of hegemonic gendered constructs take into account the existence of multiple masculinities, with hegemonic masculinity being the dominant and aspirational version (Connell, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). In South Africa, gendered practices are also impacted by the racially and politically oppressive legacy of apartheid (Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Everitt-Penhale & Ratele, 2015). The township in which this study takes place, Manenberg, is considered a site of economic disenfranchisement and gang violence (Mullagee & Bruce, 2015). Manenberg is one of the many housing projects created during apartheid, demarcated for the 'coloured' population, as per apartheid racial classification (Mullagee & Bruce, 2015; Salo, 2003). The social construction of gender here is subject to the dynamic interaction between children and the nuanced context in which they exist. Specifically, political and contextual factors inform the type of messaging and stereotypes of gender to which children are exposed. Moreover, the ways in which children engage with, negotiate and ultimately construct their gendered expressions may be impacted by the messaging and experiences of their context. It is, thus, crucial to look at children's daily lived experiences of gender, as a whole, in order to accurately explore the role of gender in their lives.

Marginilisation in a historical context

Hegemonic gendered practices are contextually understood and performed by children in the home, school and community (Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Brook et al., 2006; Msibi, 2012). Compounded by the intersections of race, class and culture, children's navigation of hegemonic constructions will be unique to each context and child. Though it is important to

approach children as agentic in their constructions of gender, they are also impacted by the constructs of gender within their society. South Africa's socio-political history has created a fragmented and deeply unequal society, in which economic disenfranchisement and social marginalisation reinforces a culture in which hegemonic masculine violence is used to reclaim and maintain power (Budgeon, 2014; Morrell, Jewkes, & Lindegger, 2012). Ratele (2014) speaks of marginal hegemonies, or 'hegemony within marginality', which refers to traditional hegemonic masculine practices which are complicated by the economic and racial marginalisation of the majority of men and boys in South Africa. Compounded marginality faced by women and girls can also be relocated in this intersectional focus. Thus, considering effects of apartheid, and its associated violence and attacks on identity as a whole, is important in the contextualisation of the construction of gendered identity in children.

Exploring children's agency

A large majority of global studies regarding gendered behaviour among youth focus on adolescents and young adults (World Health Organisation, 2007; Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Chaux & León, 2016; Msibi, 2012; Wood, Maforah, & Jewkes, 1998). The existing research on young children (under the age of 13) construct them predominantly as subjects who simply learn and reproduce gendered behaviour (Warin, 2000). There is, thus, little exploration in the nuanced ways in which constructions of gender are actively co-constructed and negotiated by children (Eagly & Wood, 2013). Moreover, there is little investigation of *how* children affirm or resist constructs of gender in light of the unique gendered messaging and modelling to which they are exposed in their communities in South Africa. With the above in mind, there is need for research that explores how nuanced constructions of gender are perceived and actively co-created by children.

This study aims to explore children's narratives of their own gendered (or non-gendered) behaviour, by focusing on how they socially and culturally understand themselves as gendered beings.

Structure of the thesis

In Chapter Two, I review the literature on theories of gender development in children as well as existing research on children and youth's constructions of gender. Chapter Three focuses on the methodology used to explore gender constructions among children. The analysis and discussion of the emerging themes in the study is explored in Chapter Four. The discussion keeps in mind how narrative themes intersect with the children's constructions of their own gender identity, and that of others. I conclude the thesis in Chapter Five, in which in which recommendations, limitations and future directions for research are discussed.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW OF GENDER DEVELOPMENT AND CHILDREN'S GENDERED CONSTRUCTIONS

Introduction

In this chapter, I review the literature that explores the social construction of gender among children and youth. I first explore the different understandings of gender development, and converge on the relevance of social constructionism in explaining children's gendered experiences. I then expand on the role of hegemonic practices, taking into consideration contextual and societal factors, to locate children's construction of gender within an intersectional paradigm. Next, national and global literature on the impact of hegemonic constructs of gender on adolescents and young people is explored. This is then related to the impact of the regulation of gendered behaviour on the physical, psychological and sexual well-being of youth. In doing so, the chapter highlights the gap in the literature that explores the process by which younger children construct gendered behaviours, which later informs adolescent and adult behaviour. The chapter ends with a rationale and motivation for the study, concluding with aims and research questions which explores younger children as agentic social actors in the construction of gender.

Understanding childhood gender development

> "Deviant gender-role behaviour is not uncommon in children. The deviation merits the interest of the paediatrician since the risk of homosexuality in adult life is high. Early recognition of deviant gender-role behaviour offers the opportunity to institute preventive measures." (Bawkin, 1968, p. 628)

The above is a quote taken from an article published by the Paediatric Department of the New York University for medicine in 1968. The view expressed above not only pathologises

all exceptions in what is deemed gender-appropriate behaviour for children (and also pathologises homosexuality) but asserts that gender expression and sexuality are always connected. This overall perception of gender prescribes to the heteropatriarchal view that behaviour which does not correlate with universal ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’ traits are considered socially (and sexually) deviant – even forming the foundation for ‘disorders’ in earlier versions of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders, DSM (Kamens, 2011). The above views are indeed an academic reflection of the political and social prejudices held during that time, as well as common rhetoric among researchers who had both reinforced and maintained the tone against varied gender expression and sexuality (Davy, 2015; Kamens, 2011; Mayes & Horwitz, 2005). The relevance of the quote lies not only in its unidimensional understanding of gender and sex, but that such views are still deeply entrenched in society today. Academic understandings of gender however, have expanded to the articulation of more diverse models of gender development. There are four primary models of understanding children’s gender development that feature frequently in both academic and social contexts, namely essentialist, developmental, socialisation and social constructionist approaches. Each approach is situated in unique political and social contexts. In this chapter, I explore the different approaches and converge on the social constructionist approach as an appropriate lens for the framing of gender in this research.

Models of gender development. The essentialist model, or biology-based determination of gender, asserts that gender is something that is linked to the biological definition of sex. This model pruports that gender is predetermined and falls exclusively within the two categories of male and female (Kray, Howland, Russell, & Jackman, 2017; Delphy, 1993). The essentialist model is not necessarily biologically sound, as it does not account for the biological variations within intersex individuals (Schweizer, Brunner, Handford, & Richter-Appelt, 2014). An example of how the essentialist model is used to

construct gender identity is the case of Christie Lee Cavazos - a transgender woman, who filed a medical malpractice lawsuit against her late husband's doctor, who had misdiagnosed him (Westbrook & Schilt, 2014). The court assessed the legitimacy of her marriage as a transgender woman before the case had been officially considered. Though she had legally changed her name and gender, and undergone sex reassignment surgery, the court ruled that she would always be male which meant that she would not be allowed to file the case as a spouse (Westbrook & Schilt, 2014). Instead of viewing gender as a dynamic process of development, it was seen as something rigid that simply unfolds over time. Behaviours that encompass femininity and masculinity are therefore seen as inherent and inevitably reveal themselves as children grow older, linked invariably to their assigned sex at birth. Explorations of LGBTQI research are generally overlooked in this conceptualisation of gender. It is therefore easy to argue, within this frame of thought, that behaviours that are not stereotypically linked to one's sex are deviant and problematic.

Second, the developmental model defines the cognitive development of gender as something that is gradually normalised and learned (Kohlberg, 1966; Piaget, 1939; Warin, 2000). Though contested, this theory has formed the foundation upon which children are perceived to accept and perform their gender roles after categorising themselves into gender based on their sex, and after realising that this categorisation is constant and stable. Some cognitive development studies on gender have suggested that children, once becoming aware of their gender, are motivated to actively search for information related to their specific gender category, which is correlated with greater commitment to stereotypical behaviour in that category (Halim et al., 2017; Martin & Ruble, 2004). Though this model is useful in analysing the ways in which cognitive development of gender may unfold, a large focus of this theory assumes that the developmental path to understanding gender is largely linear and normative for children. This often leaves little room to critically explore the nuances of

gendered behaviour and children's agency within it.

The third prominent theory in gender development is based on socialisation, which is understood as an acquiring of social skills and characteristics that are necessary to function in society or specific communities (Hlalele & Brexa, 2015). Children, from birth, are given direct messages about what is appropriate for each gender. This includes clothing, hairstyles, mannerisms and toys. In addition to these every-day cues, children also pick up on the more indirect real-world modeling of gender roles. In seeing how other boys and girls, parents, caregivers, teachers and other adults conduct themselves on a daily basis, children begin to internalise and reproduce 'appropriate' behaviour (Eagly & Wood, 2013). Founded on much of Albert Bandura's work, this theory asserts that children engage in substantial self-regulatory gender-linked behaviour, affected first by peer reinforcement and punishment and (later) by stable internalized standards (Bussey & Bandura, 2016; Martin & Fabes, 2001). Though the model of socialisation takes into account societal factors in gender development and, in some cases, children's individuality, it predominantly situates children as blank slates on which socialisation occurs. A major critique of this model asserts that children are not simply passive objects through which socialisation plays itself out, but active agents in their own gendered development. The critiques of the socialisation model precipitated growing interest in the social construction of gender. The model of the social construction of gender takes into account children's agency in their own gendered behaviour and identity, adding another dimension in understanding gender as a layered process of development (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Brook, Morojele, Zhang, & Brook, 2006; Halim et al., 2017; Martin & Ruble, 2004).

The social construction of gender. Social constructionism suggests that how we understand the world is rooted in historical and cultural context, and that this knowledge is constructed and sustained by everyday social processes (Burr, 1995). This theory asserts that

the construction of gender identity is a dynamic process, in which individuals and society actively define and perform ‘appropriate’ gender behaviour in specific cultural and political contexts (Budgeon, 2014; Risman, 2004). The social constructionist approach places importance on both the actions of the individual, as well as the external context (which includes the political and social climate) to understand the construction of identity as an ongoing process, which is assumed to be neither linear nor necessarily normative. Though gendered interaction is embedded in every aspect of children’s life as the socialisation theory describes – home, schools, government and institutions - the layers of gendered interaction and learning are not one-sided. In the social construction of gender, members of a social group neither simply replicate what they have learnt in society nor do they only make up gendered behaviour as they go along. Rather, gender is considered to be a process, in which there is room to both maintain *and* modify or variate existing patterns in each interaction (Burr, 1995; Lorber, 1994). As such, studies that explore the social construction of gender examine the differences and variability of heteronormative interaction, and provide a critical lens through which to analyse the ways that gender non-conforming and LGBTQI individuals construct and negotiate gendered interaction in society as well (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Kyratzis, 2004; Murnen & College, 2015; Risman, 2004; Zway & Boonzaier, 2015). This model foregrounds the ways in which society as a whole interacts with, and responds to, individuals’ gendered behaviour, and vice versa – creating a dynamic process.

Out of the four prominent models of understanding, the social construction of gender acknowledges gender within a socially established system in which gendered expression and identity is co-constructed. Children, much like adults, are influenced by the social and political expectations and constructs linked to their perceived gender, and could have agency to, in turn, negotiate those expectations in unique ways (Freeman & Mathison, 2009). Thus, exploring children’s role and agency within the prevailing dominant, or hegemonic, ideas and

expectations of gender is key in understanding how gender is co-constructed and perceived by children.

Hegemonic practices in gendered expression

Individuals' gender behaviour is encouraged or dictated to fall within traditionally binary (male or female) characteristics. Feminist theorists over the years have found that in every culture, there are normalised hegemonic gendered and sexual norms and practices – which are practices of identity that are considered 'right' for men and women (Connell, 2005; Huysamen & Boonzaier, 2015; Morrell et al., 2012).

Based on Connell's theories of masculinity, 'hegemonic masculinity' is dominant in society, and is a form of masculinity which validates and perpetuates men's domination over women (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Connell's theory does not refer to a 'hegemonic femininity', but refers to 'emphasized femininity' –which "is defined around compliance with this subordination and is oriented to accommodating the interests and desires of men. Other [forms of femininity] are centred by strategies of resistance or forms of non-compliance" (Connell, 1987, p.185-187). The different constructions of femininity occur in relation to the subordination of women by men in society. However, it is not only emphasised femininity that is central to patriarchal dominance. Hegemonic masculinity is considered the culturally and politically dominant expression of masculinity that not only subjugates femininity, but also subjugates other forms of masculinity - endowing more privilege and power to those men and boys who embody this specific expression of masculinity (Connell, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Hegemonic constructions of gender are learned and performed by children from a young age (Davy, 2015; Lippa, 2008). Importantly, the global use of the term 'gendered hegemony' does not encompass how hegemonic practice exists and takes form in an intersectional space - the effects of which impact institutional structures, relationships, individuality, and collective identity (Everitt-Penhale & Ratele, 2015;

Schippers, 2007). In South Africa, society and politics become the points from which hegemonic masculinities diverge.

Hegemony within marginilisation. In understandings of hegemonic or gendered practices, intersectional issues of race and culture have been neglected as a large part of how gender is performed and gender roles are perceived (Morrell et al., 2012; Pattman & Bhana, 2005; Ratele, 2014a). In South Africa, the violent and unequal society instigated through the apartheid regime has both created and exacerbated inequities, which have left a lasting impact on communities across South Africa. Though issues of gender in South Africa are not simple – steeped in racial disparity and historical segregation – its consequences are wide-reaching and often violent (Brown, 2011; Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, & Rose-Junius, 2005; Morrell et al., 2012; Msibi, 2012; Shefer et al., 2008). Much of these consequences become apparent in adolescence, when sexual behaviour becomes linked to or affected by patriarchal ideologies. Though children in South Africa are indeed active agents in creating their identity, they are also constrained by cultural resources (Bhana & Pattman, 2011). Negotiation and experimentation of gendered behaviour is defined by context and societal practice (Colclough, Rose, & Tembon, 2000; Roberts, Rosario, Corliss, Koenen, & Austin, 2012). Although there are children who indeed overtly defy social expectations, structural and social context strongly impacts, and often limits, different gendered behaviour (Jewkes & Morrell, 2012; Jewkes & Morrell, 2010; Morrell et al., 2012). Even when economic growth proceeds - leading to increased access to information and education - beliefs tied to gender continue to dictate the ways in which children are raised. International studies conducted in Ethiopia and Guinea – in which enrolments in school and economic growth has increased since 1990 – has shown increasing gender inequality instead of the reverse (Colclough et al., 2000). Economically developing countries such as India still show huge gender inequity in school enrolment and households, which was correlated with unchanging

normative ideas of gender roles in that context (Pal, 2004). Similarly, in a study on peer education as a strategy for HIV prevention, cultural norms that dictate gendered expression proved to be a significant barrier in South Africa (Campbell & MacPhail, 2002). Ideologies around sexuality, pregnancy and marriage are also embedded in complex societal practices that stipulate different expectations for men and women (Francis & DePalma, 2014; Jewkes & Morrell, 2012; Macleod & Durrheim, 2002; Macleod & Tracey, 2010).

In addition to normative ideas around gender that is embedded in daily culture, oppression and marginalisation has a profound impact on identity and behaviour (Brown, 2011; Jewkes et al., 2005). Mirroring Ratele's intersectional basis for analysis of 'hegemony within marginilisation', as mentioned in Chapter 1, Bhana and Mayeza (2016) showed that multi-faceted structures of gender difference and accompanying inequality inform how young school boys constructed violent hegemonic masculinities. A South African study, conducted by Msibi (2012), explored the ways in which queer youth in township schools experience homophobia in their daily lives. Religion and societal expectations of masculinity were shown to add to misinformation about sexual orientation and gender identity, which often resulted in violence and discrimination against LGBTQI youths. The complex factors of race, class, and location in South Africa is crucial in understanding the ways children learn and navigate normative gendered expression. Very little research has been done to explore just how young South African children, particularly in areas of economic and social deprivation, are made to perceive concepts of gender, and even less exploration of the ways in which their constructions of gender are located within their specific context.

The effects of gender hegemony on youth

Research on gender identity and construction in children in South Africa are rare, however, there has been a wealth of studies on the effects of hegemonic gendered expectations on adolescent behaviour (Bhana & Pattman, 2010; Msibi, 2012; Pattman &

Bhana, 2005; Russell et al., 2014). Although hegemonic masculinity and femininity is nuanced and context-specific, studies show that contextually normative understandings of gender affect relationships, sexual behaviour, and self-image among adolescents. Versions of masculinity and femininity that are not aligned with normative gendered constructs are othered, resulting in violence and discrimination against individuals who perform them. Thus, hegemonic constructs of gender have been shown to impact the overall well-being of youths in South Africa and globally.

Adolescent sexual and gendered encounters. Research has shown that preconceived constructions of masculinity and femininity in South Africa compromise sexual well-being for girls, acceptance of different sexualities and gender identities, as well as tolerance of different versions of masculinity in adolescents (Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Bhana & Mayeza, 2016; Bhana, Morrell, Shefer, & Ngabaza, 2010; Everitt-Penhale & Ratele, 2015). Mkhwanazi (2014) used case studies to illustrate the influence of societal and cultural norms in reproducing gendered behaviour – which includes ideas of men as sexually assertive and women as passive objects of male desire. The performance of masculinity requires exertion of power, which impacts the adolescents' understanding of sexual violence and is, thus, played out their sexual behaviour. A study conducted in nine public schools in Cape Town (Western Cape) showed the prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) among adolescents, with 39% of girls who reported being subjected to IPV by male partners, while 10% of boys reported forcing their female partners to have sex (Russell et al., 2014). Girls' disempowerment in heterosexual relationships has been shown to increase the risk for HIV infection and IPV among adolescents in the Eastern Cape, while a study in Kwazulu-Natal showed that boys tended to construct sexual coercion and rape as a sign of love, a transaction, or punishment (De Vries et al., 2014; Teitelman et al., 2016). These studies, including a multitude of others, have shown that gender identity and its associated power difference in

heterosexual adolescent relationships and interactions in South Africa are correlated with violence, rape and sexual coercion among teenagers (De Vries et al., 2014; Jewkes, Vundule, Maforah, & Jordaan, 2001; Russell et al., 2014; Swart, Seedat, Stevens, & Ricardo, 2002; Teitelman et al., 2016; Wood, Maforah, & Jewkes, 1998). Gendered violence is a consequence of beliefs and ideologies that are linked to internalised gender identities that have been constructed during childhood (Blaise, 2005; Mayeza, 2015, 2017; Prout, 2002; Roberts et al., 2012). Research conducted by Bhana and Mayeza (2016) showed the performance of violent masculinity in the playground in which boys (in Kwazulu-Natal) use homophobic violence to construct gender relations of power and regulate male peers' behaviour – focusing on the impact of community-level factors in these boys' violent behaviour at school, as well as family and peer influence. Though it sheds light on the ways in which hegemonic masculinity is learned and enacted by boys to gain and maintain power, there still remains a gap in exploring the ways in which those behaviours could be negotiated by both boys and girls. Research that explores the narratives of how and why young South African boys and girls accept or transgress different types of masculinity and femininity have also been scarce. Overall, there has been limited research on South African primary school children's narratives of hegemonic gendered practices and other gendered expectations, as well as the ways in which children interact with those expectations.

The effects of asserting that gender is not a relative or negotiable factor in a child's development have been shown to impact violence against, and marginalisation of, not only LGBTQ persons, but has also solidified traditional views of heteronormative practice among heterosexual and cisgender individuals – including male and female roles in a family setting, sexual roles and obligations in relationships, gender roles in the workforce, community, as well as a foundational (and even legal) impact on gender-based violence and sexual violence among both children and adults (Abramsky et al., 2011; GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2012;

Morrell et al., 2012; Palermo et al., 2014). Discrimination and violence are thus correlated with hegemonic gendered behaviours among youths. Sexual and gendered non-conformity is often met with discrimination as well – leading to peer-regulation of behaviour among youths. These regulatory responses to non-conforming gendered behaviour moulds younger children's constructs of gender.

Global regulation of gendered expression among children. The consistency of gendered behaviour is largely contested in social constructionist and feminist theory. Some studies have indicated that normative gendered behaviour is positively correlated with age – suggesting the significant impact of conformity and learned behaviour (Blaise, 2005; Cherney & London, 2006; Messner, 2000). Recent findings also suggest that children's behaviour becomes increasingly congruent with same-sex peers after interacting with them over-time (Martin et al., 2013). In addition, more *salient* gendered behaviour is exhibited by children when they are in groups of their own gender, particularly boys, than in mixed groups (Messner, 2000). Moreover, different types of authoritative behaviour associated with power-play emerge in mixed groups of children. This suggests that gender behaviour can be malleable and negotiable. Thus, by defining gendered expression in a contextual sense, we can foreground the fluidity of gender – which is negotiated by children, who are indeed 'social actors' in these situations (Brook et al., 2006). In spite of research that refutes the long-held belief that gendered behaviour is predetermined and constant, as well as the above-mentioned research on the fluidity and salience of gendered behaviour, the costs of gender non-conformity remain high. In the United States, it was shown that 56% of children in school who expressed 'inappropriate' gender behaviour reported being verbally and/or physically bullied (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2012). A UNESCO (2012) worldwide report on students in schools who are seen to display gendered behaviours that deviate from their perceived sex illustrate that they are more likely to be bullied. Importantly, a two-year

United Nations study, focussing on gender-based violence in schools, showed that there is a correlation between hegemonic male/female behaviour and gender and sexual violence, with violence committed mostly by boys (Abramsky et al., 2011). In South Africa, Empowerment Studies (which form part of a range of studies that measure the level of victimisation in schools) aimed to show levels of LGBTQI victimisation in schools across multiple provinces. Out of 925 students, 45% of respondents suffer verbal abuse, 67% reported negative jokes, 21% reported physical abuse and 8% reported sexual abuse (Rich, 2006). Sixty one percent of the abuse was reported to be perpetrated by peers, and 17% was reported to be perpetrated by teachers. Though this study is not exhaustive, it shows a significant slant toward ideas of gendered behaviour as a determinant of violence. The responses in the study were also reflected by Msibi (2012), showing that verbal harassment is the most common form of abuse experienced by gender non-conforming school-going children, perpetrated mainly by peers.

The violent and negative regulation of gender is informed by constructs of gender that have long preceded adolescence. In a study conducted in Australia, Blaise (2005) showed that kindergarten children are already able to “do gender”, by exhibiting heteronormative behaviour including gendered clothing, feminised mannerisms among girls, preferred topics of conversation, as well as use of gendered phrases such as “girly girl”. A study in the United States investigated the impact of body stigma on very young girls (aged three to five), and showed that children assigned negative traits to an overweight doll, while positive attributes were assigned to the thin doll – suggesting that young children have already internalised stereotypical ideas on female body image (Worobey & Worobey, 2014). Another study in the United States showed that children (ages four to five) showed more positive same-gender attitudes when exposed to heteronormative gender stereotypes, and showed more positive different-gender attitudes when they were exposed to more stereotype flexibility - suggesting that early learning about gender binaries inform very young children’s own gendered

constructs and intergroup behaviour (Halim et al., 2017). Normative constructions of gender are thus observed by children, who negotiate and regulate their gendered expression based on context. Most of these studies are based overseas (largely in the United States and England), with very little exploration in the way that South African children construct gender. As shown, the majority of South African studies focus on gender and sexuality among adolescents, as well as the ways in which dominant gendered expression impacts them in their specific contexts (Bhana & Mayeza, 2016; Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Chaux & León, 2016; Macleod & Tracey, 2010; Russell et al., 2014). There is, however, a dearth of literature that explores the ways in which gender is socially constructed by younger children in an intersectional, South African context.

Summary of the literature

The wealth of literature on the effects of gender inequality and gendered violence and discrimination among youth and adolescents serves to highlight the need to explore how gender is constructed and negotiated by younger children. Global studies note that gendered constructs foreground how children's behaviour and expression are regulated based on normative ideas of what it means to be a 'boy' or 'girl'. Though external factors may impact or even dictate the ways in which children regulate their behaviour, it is important to acknowledge children's agency in this context. This may include children's internalised hegemonic practices of gender, which is compounded by marginilsation. Importantly, there is a dearth of South African literature exploring the unique, agentic ways that children construct their own, and others', gendered behaviour. As shown above, children are active participants in the gendering process, thus by analysing children's understanding of, and agency in, gendered expression, we can start to explore how they negotiate their own gender identities in relation to those around them.

Rationale and motivation

Research has shown how gender discrimination and violence affects youths both globally and in South Africa. However, the majority of South African studies on this topic focus on young adults and adolescents, which means that there has been limited examination of how younger children engage with issues of gender. External influences and consequences to gender non-conformity have been shown to be relatively uniform in their punitive or restrictive nature, but the agency of children in the negotiation and regulation of the constructions of gender is mostly unexplored. Specifically, there is a gap in research that investigates the qualitative ways in which children construct and narrate their compliance and their resistance to hegemonic practices and expectations, in an intersectional context. It is thus important to investigate how young children in South Africa perceive their own gendered behaviour, as a precursor and/or predictor for future adolescent behaviour.

Aims and objectives

The overall objective of this research is to add a more holistic understanding of how gender identity is constructed and negotiated by children. More specifically, this research looks at the unique ways in which children narrate and experience gender in their lives. The questions this project aims to answer are:

- What stories of gender do children tell about gendered behaviour through photographic and other written and visual representations?
- How do children understand and conceptualise constructs of gender through these stories?
- How do the stories that the children tell through these representations of their experiences reinforce or resist prevailing narratives of gender identity development/construction?

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This chapter outlines the research design and methods used in the study. I first discuss the theoretical framework in which the study is located, as well as the sample and the community in which the research took place. Data collection and data analysis are then outlined, followed by the ethical considerations of the study. I end off with a discussion of reflexivity, which outlines my reflections of the process of the research as well as considerations of my position in it.

Theoretical framework

This study employs a feminist perspective as its theoretical framework, taking an intersectional stance. The study is additionally located within a narrative theoretical approach, as it explored the narratives and stories of gender that the participants chose to share.

Feminist intersectional theory. Feminist theory asserts that gender inequalities and violence against women are caused by a patriarchal climate (DeVoe, 1990; Herman, 2001). Feminist theory is concerned with gender as a primary lens of understanding and analysing social phenomenon (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). Feminist theory can also adopt an intersectional frame of thought to assume gender is indissoluble from social and political factors, including race, sexuality, and class (Shields, 2008). Intersectionality emerged from black feminist critiques against Western feminism, bringing to the fore the layers of inequality and oppression that have been historically overlooked. Intersecting identities are not viewed to ‘compound’ an experience of oppression, but intersect to create unique identities which are experienced differently by individuals based on social, political and cultural contexts (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Therefore, children’s experiences of gender in South Africa cannot be seen to exist independently from these interacting schemas.

In summary, feminist theory creates a critical lens through which children's constructions of and agency around gender can be explored, while taking account of relevant intersecting contexts.

Narrative approach. Data was collected and analysed using narrative research, within a social constructionist framework. Narrative research, which is based on a qualitative research design, is located within the social constructionist paradigm which suggests that identity is continually constructed between society and the individual in a dynamic process (Budgeon, 2014; Burr, 1995; Riessman, 2008). There has been no single definition for the term 'narrative', as it has been defined in numerous ways across research (Riessman, 2002, 2008). Narratives can be defined as a set of events recounted by a particular speaker to a particular audience, with the intention to convey a specific meaning. Though the arc of a narrative can be defined as linear, temporal and episodic, this may not be the case for all narratives (Riessman, 2008; Smith, 2000). Narratives have also been described as "a performance of the self as a story of identity", and can indeed be chaotic or non-linear (Parker, 2005, p.71). Regardless of the type of narrative, all understandings of it centre on the idea that the creation of narratives aims to give meaning and order to events. The speaker's narrative is a story that is part of the construction and performance of identity - in which both the speaker and audience co-creates meaning (Parker, 2005; Riessman, 2002, 2008).

The basis of narratives is its storytelling nature. Personal narratives, as with stories of any kind, are neither neutral nor objective. They serve a strategic purpose in creating an understanding of the self and others, with importance given to the relation between self and other (Riessman, 2002). Selfhood and identity thus become the subject of the individual's personal story. These stories are not just ordered accounts of individuals' viewpoints of their lives, but are the *preferred* version/s that they choose to tell about themselves and others (Parker, 2005; Riessman, 2002). Therefore, narratives can be fluid, changeable, and

audience-specific. Narrative research does not focus on the objective accuracy of the narrated events, but rather focuses on the types of stories individuals choose to tell, how they place themselves within it, and what the *intended* meaning may be (Parker, 2005; Riessman, 2002).

Narrative research is useful for studies with children. Children, from a very young age, are told stories (folktales, family stories, or fairy tales) in order to entertain them, and also help them to understand abstract concepts. The most common type of story or storytelling narrative across many cultures are those that aim to construct the concept of morality for children (Bloch, 1999, 2000; Clark, Lennon, & Morris, 1993). This kind of narrative is a more direct approach that parents and educators use to school children on behaviour (‘good’ and ‘bad’) and its link to moral identity (‘good child’ and ‘bad child’). Similarly, the indirect co-constructed stories and narratives that are performed within home, school and community form the basis of how children assimilate culture and internalise identity (Brook et al., 2006). Children’s narratives of identity are steeped in constructions of gender, race, sexuality and class. Narrative research is interested in how children construct and *retell* these narratives – which stories they choose, which stories they omit, how they tell them, what meaning they intend to convey, and how those narratives make sense or don’t make sense to them (Riessman, 2008). This approach is guided by feminist research principles, which places the individual as the subject or expert of their own stories (DeVoe, 1990). A feminist narrative approach adopts the ontological view that there are multiple realities to be explored. Thus the various identities, experiences and perceptions of children within gendered hegemonic practice can be acknowledged and investigated through this feminist intersectional theoretical lens. The value in this research approach lies in restoring agency to participants – particularly in research with children and/or marginalised groups. Moreover, a feminist narrative approach in the South African context must lend itself to an

intersectional approach in understanding how race, gender, class, sexuality and other identities are constructed and narrated by the individual (Shields, 2008; Yuval-Davis, 2006).

In summary, the narrative research approach, in conjunction with feminist intersectional theory, was used explore children's narratives to better understand how they construct gender and gendered experiences, and how it is located within the broader social and political context.

Research design

This study approaches its research questions using a qualitative design. Qualitative research is useful in exploring the subjective, nuanced experiences of individuals' lives, within the broader societal setting. In doing so, it aims to create a comprehensive picture based on the participants' actions and words (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). Specifically, this study uses participatory action research (PAR) – a participatory method of data-collection which requires that the researchers hold a reflexive stance in which they are aware that those being researched are indeed 'experts' in their own experiences (Strack, Magill, & McDonagh, 2004; Suleiman, Soleimanpour, & London, 2006). This is important in conducting research with children, as it situates them at the centre of the study and ensures that they are key in providing guidance on the direction of the research – thus prioritising their agency in the research process. This method is intended to ensure that what emerges from the study is informed authentically by participants' contributions, while taking into account the larger societal factors at play during the research process.

The mosaic approach. The social constructionist approach underpinning this study challenges the researcher to consider innovative methods to prioritise, hear and value the voices of children (Moss & Clark, 2011). Interview-only methods of data collection tend to be daunting and often prescriptive for them. Therefore, I used the Mosaic Approach, which is a participatory research method that combines a range of different tools to paint a descriptive

picture of children's views of the world (Moss & Clark, 2005; Mukherji & Albon, 2015). This multi-method framework of research allows researchers to tune into the creative and, at times, non-verbal ways that children show their views and experiences (Clark, 2001). This approach is ideal for younger children, as it allows them different avenues in which to fully express their ideas. In order to authentically listen to children, the Mosaic Approach is built on three foundational principles. The first principle is the understanding that children have a multitude of experiences that are worth listening to (Mukherji & Albon, 2015). Research with children must be situated in belief that children look to understand and make meaning of their world. The second principle focuses on ensuring that the researcher maintains a positive professional relationship with the children and adults involved. This requires researchers to be mindful while engaging with children and entering into their environment. It also requires that the research process, including all publications and public content from the study, cause no harm to the participants. The third principle is that the research endeavour should be reasonably flexible and not tightly constrained, in order to advance authenticity of the findings and to ensure that participants are not subjected to stress (Clark, 2001; Greenfield, 2011; Moss & Clark, 2011). Though the Mosaic Approach was initially developed to research very young children (under five years old) it has been useful for research with older children as well. Using the Mosiac Approach, I employed drawing, collages, journaling and Photovoice as the different methods to centre the children's voices. In each of these activities, children were asked to describe or draw what it means to be a boy or a girl in their lives.

Drawing and collages. Drawing has been shown to be a powerful tool through which children explore ideas and feelings (Roberts-Holmes, 2011). Participatory communications that are visually centred, such as collage creation and drawing, empower participants by providing them with agency of expression to allow for a potentially more detailed representation of their experiences (Phelan & Kinsella, 2013). Its limited dependence on

language offers an effective method of research young children's lived realities across many cultural contexts (Literat, 2013). Similarly, collages using pictures from magazines allow a very similar creative exercise for children to express opinions and views. The participants were asked to draw or create a collage of what comes to mind when they hear the words 'boy' and 'girl'. By keeping the topic of their drawings open-ended, it allowed more space for the children to represent what matters to them. It was ideal for this specific age group, and in this specific context, as the children in this reading club regularly engage in visually creative exercises, including both drawing and collage creation– making it a familiar activity. It is crucial that the researcher encourages the children to discuss their drawings or collages in the session. Without the children's own narrative, the drawings/collages would be subject to the researcher's perceptions and biases, which is likely to be problematic (Greene & Hogan, 2005). Thus, I ensured that the children were given opportunities to discuss their drawings and collages in focus groups and individual interviews.

Journaling. Second, the journaling aspect of this approach allowed children time and privacy to reflect on the questions and discussions – as well as the space to foreground any thoughts that they may have chosen to omit in the group sessions (Mukherji & Albon, 2015). In addition to the captions and narratives that accompany their drawings and other visual depictions, journaling also provided some of the older children an opportunity to express themselves through writing (Greene & Hogan, 2005; Moss & Clark, 2011). The study took place in a reading club in which the children use journaling and writing every week as a take-home activity, or during the session, which is used as a medium of communication and sharing between them and the reading club facilitator. Journaling is thus a comfortable medium of expression for them, which is why it was chosen as an additional research tool for the participants to explore and share their experiences. Although many of the participants chose not to take part in the journaling aspect, due to their preference for the visual methods,

those who did take part brought their entries to individual interviews where the written content was also discussed between the researcher and the child.

Photovoice. Finally, I used Photovoice to engage participants in visual storytelling. Photovoice combines photography with narrative by allowing participants to visually represent specific stories or experiences that they choose to share about their lives (Wang & Burris, 1997). It is an example of participatory action research, which is useful in giving voice to marginalised groups by placing them at the centre of the research process (Suffla, Seedat, & Bawa, 2015). Sudies have shown Photovoice to be an effective research tool among diverse groups (Strack et al., 2004; Wang, Cash, & Powers, 2000). In this study, the participants were trained to use digital cameras to provide photographic representations of their experiences and ideas of gender. Photovoice also employs interviews and/or focus groups in which the participants analyse and explain their photos to surface meanings and narratives. It is an also ideal method of data collection for children, as it allows them the agency to represent that which appears important to them. Moreover, it gives them an avenue to visually represent stories or ideas that they may find difficult to verbalise initially. By allowing children the freedom to present their own visual depictions of the topic, we are better able to explore the nuances of their narrative and how those narratives are located in their lives and communities (Kessi, 2011; Wang, 2006). Although the photovoice method employs specific steps during data collection, it also lends itself to adjustment and flexibility, which is important for participants who are younger.

The various methods of data collection (drawing/collages, journaling, Photovoice and accompanying interviews) allowed the participants the freedom to choose the option/s of communication that was most comfortable to them. Regardless of the chosen method, each child received an opportunity in which to discuss their drawings, journal entries or photos in a focus group, and individual interviews.

Methods

Sample. This research used purposive sampling, i.e. the sample is chosen based on the needs of the research topic (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). This sample was acquired through the researcher's own network. The research took place in collaboration with *The Nal'ibali Trust*, a multilingual reading-for-enjoyment campaign that is active in communities across seven provinces in South Africa (http://nalibali.org). The organisation promotes the use of mother tongue languages in literacy development and creates safe spaces for reading and storytelling with children, called 'reading clubs'. Children attend the reading club voluntarily, with written parental consent, and are guided by a 'Literacy Mentor' (reading club facilitator) who helps them engage with literacy material. The sample was recruited based on the Literacy Mentor's interest and capacity to engage in the research and, importantly, the consent and interest of the children (and their parents) in the reading club. The reading club in which the sample was recruited is located in a church in the Manenburg community.

Manenberg is situated approximately 20kms outside the Cape Town central business district, in the Western Cape. It has a population of more than 60 000 people and was initially established as a township in 1966 during the apartheid forced relocation system, The Group Areas Act (Kinnes, 2014). Manenberg was one of the many housing projects undertaken between the 1960s and 1970s, for people who were categorised as 'coloured' under apartheid terminology. The 'coloured' racial category was gendered through the allocation of state welfare, which placed women as the recipients of grants under the assumption that all households conformed to the two-parent norm. Economic and social responsibility thus fell on women, while young men solidified boundaries of the community through gang activity, reclaiming their gendered agency within this restricted context (Salo, 2003; Salo & Davids, 2009). The socio-spacial legacies of apartheid have resulted in the continued economic and

racial marginalisation of Manenberg, where the prevalence of gang violence, unemployment and crime remain high (Mullagee & Bruce, 2015). It is a predominantly Afrikaans and isiXhosa speaking community.

The sample comprised of 12 children, with an average age of 11 years, who all reside in Manenberg. The size of the sample was relatively small based on the elaborate nature of the data, as well as to ensure that each child was given ample attention throughout the data collection process. Some participants chose to partake in certain research activities and not others, based on their personal preference. Altogether, 10 participants took part in all the stages of the study. The group was predominantly isiXhosa and Afrikaans speaking. The group comprised of four boys and eight girls, as the reading club had more girls than boys overall. Using pseudonyms, demographic summary of all 12 participants is reflected below in Table 1:

Participant	Age	Gender
Sihle	11	Male
Katlego	8	Male
Takatso	13	Female
Mayi	9	Male
Nosi	14	Female
Nomfundo	12	Female
Sharon	13	Female
Liya	10	Female
Nokhu	12	Female
Bonga	10	Female
Naledi	12	Female
Mlu	11	Male

Data collection process. A summary of the data collection process is detailed in Table 2 below, and later expanded upon.

Table 2.

Data collection process:
1. Meeting with Nal'ibali Managing director.
2. Meeting with Literacy Mentor and reading group. Consent forms/assent forms handed-out.
3. Collection of consent/assent forms. Reiteration of voluntary participation.
4. First semi-structured interview, with drawing/collage-making.
5. Photography training session.
6. Children's photography session, with drawing/collage-making.
7. Second focus group.
8. Individual interviews.
9. Photovoice exhibition.

The data collection process took place in several stages. First, I spoke with the managing director of Nal'ibali to introduce the project and its aims, and to discuss whether the organisation would be interested in a collaboration. Once Nal'ibali confirmed interest in collaborating with the study, I met with the Nal'ibali Literacy Mentor of this specific reading club to discuss the project, and its timeline and stages. The Literacy Mentor explained the project and my involvement to the children prior to my arrival so that my presence would not be too startling for them. In the first two visits to the reading club, I simply introduced myself to the children, engaged with them and took part in the clubs' activities (songs, dances, storytelling and reading) in order to establish familiarity. In my third visit, with the assistance

of the Literacy Mentor, I explained the project and its activities at length to the children. We then handed out consent forms to the children who showed interest in the study, ensuring that they understood that their participation was not compulsory and would have no impact on their reading club participation. In the third visit, I discussed the full assent form with the participants – again, ensuring that they understood that their participation is entirely voluntary. Emphasis was placed on ensuring that the children understood that they have the freedom to withdraw from participation in the research at any time. The participants were informed that they could partake in the study in a language of their choice, as the Literacy Mentor would help to translate. However, all of the participants chose to speak in English. In the fourth meeting, I conducted a semi-structured focus group to introduce the children to the topic of gender, which lasted 45 minutes. This session started with children drawing pictures and making collages of what they thought girls and boys do, followed by open questions on what they thought it means to be a boy or girl (see Appendix A). In this way, I aimed to familiarise the children with concepts of gender.

The fifth meeting was a photography training session for the children, which I conducted with the assistance of the Nal'ibali facilitator. As many of the participants were younger children, the photovoice aspect of the study was used simply as an additional tool in which to express themselves and tell their stories. In many photovoice studies, a professional photographer is used to conduct the training. However, in this case, I conducted the photography training myself as the younger participants' level of comfort with the adult conducting the training was prioritised. The authenticity of their representations (be it drawings, photos or writing) relies on children's feelings of safety and comfort (Clark, 2001; Greenfield, 2011). This impacts the validity of the research, as it directly affects the nature of participant interaction and thus the narratives they choose to share (Moss & Clark, 2005; Mukherji & Albon, 2015) As I had already spent time building rapport and engaging with the

participants for a month, I conducted the photography training myself based on written photographer training methods used in previous Photovoice studies (Malherbe, Cornell, & Suffla, 2015). Usually, the cameras would be taken home for one or two weeks by the participants to plan and take photos. However, given the number of cameras (seven) and the timeframe of the study, this was not feasible. In addition, based on the younger age of many of the children, it was likely (and advised by the Literacy Mentor) that they may not be able to complete the photography within the timeframe and would require strict reminders and regular follow ups. I did not want this activity to be approached as extra 'homework' for the children, which is often perceived as punitive in nature and would have impacted the way in which they engaged with the process. Initially, as an alternative, a photography excursion was considered, but this was decided against based on the potential lack of safety within the suburb. Instead, the cameras were used within the reading club location in the church, which comprised two floors, over five rooms, an auditorium and a small compound. In the sixth meeting, I bought a range of props to supplement the photography activity. The participants used these props as objects or inspiration for photos on gendered experiences. These included: masks, small rubber toys, dresses, skirts, hats, swords, scarves, toy guns, a stethoscope, face paint, a bow tie, a microphone, and necklaces. In addition, toys and items from the reading club were also used by the children, which included soccer balls, dolls, drums, traffic cones, and helmets. The participants were asked to take photos that show what it means to them to be a boy or a girl, as well as what they think girls and boys do. Some of the participants used these props for photos of stand-alone experiences or perceptions, while others used them in a storytelling format. They were also given the option to write or draw what they think girls and boys do. When the session ended, the children were encouraged to journal their experiences at home should they wish to do so.

During the seventh meeting, I conducted a second focus group in which the participants spoke about the photos they had taken (see interview schedule in Appendix B). The photos were printed and brought to the session. The participants were asked open-ended questions such as “what’s happening in that picture/photo? Why did you decide to draw that?”. In the weeks following this, I conducted individual interviews with 10 participants, which ranged from 20 minutes to over an hour (see interview schedule in Appendix C). The participant was first asked to speak more about their photo/drawing/journal entry, and why they chose the themes or topics relative to it. The interview was guided by the participants’ narrative. Of the remaining two participants, one chose not to be interviewed and the other had left the reading club for an extended period of time. During these interviews, the participants were initially asked about their photos and/or drawings and collages, as well as how they experienced the focus groups and the process. Thereafter, I aimed for the interview to be largely unstructured and led by the participant. However, when it came to participants who were shy or reserved, more guided questions were used. It was useful to have photos and drawings/collages and journal entries present, as it provided the participants with a range of their own topics or opinions about which to speak. It would have been unrealistic to assume all participants would feel comfortable with all/any of the research tools. It was thus evident during the process that some children chose to engage in some activities, and not others (Malet, 2010; Mukherji & Albon, 2015; Prout, 2002). This is why the Mosaic Approach was ideal, as it allowed flexibility to shift focus to different research tools based on the participant’s level of engagement. Both the focus group and individual interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

The research process culmintated in a community exhibition, where the children’s photographs were printed out and displayed. The exhibition took place on 9 December 2017, in collaboration with Nal’ibali, at Khanyisa Community Church in Manenberg. In addition,

the drawings were featured in the reading club space, along with the children's stories or narratives about them.

Data analysis. This research used thematic narrative analysis as its method to analyse data. In narrative analysis, storytelling is considered crucial to creating meaning. All human beings are innate storytellers, including children, with meaning-making arising from narrating particular experiences in storied form (Parker, 2005; Riessman, 2008). The richness and authenticity of children's meaning-making is thus dependant on allowing them to construct their own narrative of events and experiences (Malet, 2010; Mukherji & Albon, 2015). According to Riessman (2002), the value in narrative analysis does not lie in its accurate representation of events, but rather its refractive interpretation thereof. Events are thus selected, prioritised and narrated as meaningful for specific individuals, to a specific audience. Moreover, narrative analysis lends itself to topics of identity and the self (Riessman, 2008). As this research focuses on gender construction in the context of identity, the photographed stories, drawings and interviews (both one-on-one and focus group) highlighted various influences at play in understandings of gender. It was crucial that researcher approach children as subjective participants (experts and social actors) and not simply passive subjects (Prout, 2002). By situating them as central to their story, it was possible to analyse the narratives by taking into account both the agency of the child and her interpretations, as well as her environmental and societal influencers.

In particular, I used thematic narrative analysis to analyse the data as I was focused on the thematic content of the experiences and stories that the participants relayed (Riessman, 2008). Thematic narrative analysis is concerned with the themes and topics that emerge from the data, but most importantly, *how* those themes are situated in the wider narrative context. Thus, the participants' visual elements (photos, collages and drawings) as well as their written ideas were analysed in conjunction with their narratives and explanations thereof.

This is an effective way to situate visual representations within the participants' intended stories.

Analysis of the data took place in four stages. First, I listened to all the audio recordings in conjunction with the written transcripts to familiarise myself with the topics and narratives that emerged in each interview. Second, I identified common themes that emerged from the participants' narratives from the individual interviews. As thematic narrative analysis prioritises the full narratives of stories being told, rather than stand-alone themes, I ensured to code the individual interviews as connected, extended narratives. Third, I cross-referenced the visual and written materials (drawings, collages, photos, and journal entries) to the narratives that arose from the focus groups and individual interviews in order to find the most salient themes. I also explored how narratives of gender were collectively constructed by participants in the focus groups, compared to narratives that emerged in the individual interviews. The themes were then revised and refined by focussing on the commonalities and contradictions within the narratives. Finally, I located the narrative themes within my chosen theoretical framework. The integrity of the data was ensured via triangulation of interpretation – the data was collected using multiple methods, all the visual and verbal data were considered and compared and the interpretation was analysed and critiqued by two researchers (student and supervisor).

Ethical considerations

This study falls under a larger project, titled "The gendered and sexual lives and identifications of South African youth: A participatory project" (PSY2014-002). This project has been granted ethical clearance (see Appendix D).

Informed consent

Participants' parents were requested to sign a consent form, and assent forms were also provided to the participants as they were underage. Assent forms were discussed with the

participants, in both English and isiXhosa, to ensure that they understood the process and their agency within it. During this discussion, participants were told and reminded that they could withdraw from the research at any point, with no consequences to their participation in the Nal'ibali reading club (see Appendix E and Appendix F). Consent was obtained for audio-recordings of the interviews as well.

Confidentiality and privacy

The researcher used only pseudonyms in the write-ups to ensure anonymity of the participants. However, the law requires that researchers break confidentiality should they become aware of sexual abuse that has not been reported. During an individual interview, one of the participants brought up that another participant had been sexually abused by a family member. This participant stated that the abuse had been reported to police, and that the case had gone to trial. However, the participant to whom the abuse was said to have happened did not bring up abuse in her own interview, even when indirectly prompted. In order to respect her privacy, I did not directly bring up the allegation made by the previous participant. The previous participant also brought up gender-based violence in her home, directed by her mother's boyfriend towards her mother. The Literacy Mentor was notified about both statements, as well as the Human Resources manager at Nal'ibali, to suggest counselling for both participants, as well as others in the reading club who showed interest in counselling. Contacts for the provincial Childline branch, as well as the relevant contacts for the Department of Social Development's social workers were provided (see Appendix G). Verbal reminders were provided and at the date of thesis submission, a reminder for counselling services was submitted via email communication advising Nal'ibali to ensure counselling services were provided for those who were interested, with verbal confirmation of communication.

Secondary participants. Permission to conduct the study during the reading club time at Khanyisa Church Centre was granted by Nal'ibali. This meant that children who were not necessarily a part of the research may still have been present for the reading club activities. During many photovoice studies, secondary participants often feature in the photos. In order to respect the privacy of secondary participants, the primary participants were told to receive verbal consent from subjects whom they wish to photograph, as well as verbal consent from guardians of minors whom they wish to photograph. However, as all photos were taken within the reading club location, only participants appeared in the photos. Moreover, the participants' faces were also blurred in order to protect their confidentiality in light of sensitive topics that were explored in the photos.

Benefits and risks

There were several benefits to the participants. They were given the space and opportunity to discuss and talk about their ideas of gender and its place in their lives and identity in ways that were meaningful to them. They were able to be trained in photography skills and engage in the process of photography using digital cameras. They were also able to present their favourite photos in an exhibition at the community church, which was attended by their peers and grandparents. The Nal'ibali Trust is a growing organisation with considerable national reach, and has not yet explored their reading club approach from a gendered perspective. This study would be a useful tool for Nal'ibali in investigating how gender is experienced by the children in their daily lives, which could provide guidance in creating activities and stories that tackle gendered issues and discrimination highlighted in the study.

The proposed methods, including photovoice, are inobtrusive research approaches, as it allows participants to remain in control of what is shared, and explore only subjects that they bring to the forefront (Kessi, 2011; Wang & Burris, 1997). However, there was a

possibility that the participants could have become distressed while talking about issues of gender. During the surfacing of traumatic events in the research process (as mentioned in the ethics section) the researcher connected with relevant Nal'ibali employees to provide contacts for the provincial Childline branch, as well as the relevant contacts for the Department of Social Development's social workers. I discussed trauma and risk with the Literacy Mentor regarding the content of the conversation with the participant (with the participants' permission). An email was then sent to the Nal'ibali Human Resources Manager in order to organise counselling for participants who requested it.

Reflexivity

Narrative analysis emphasises the researcher's role as the 'audience'. The nature and content of narratives can change considerably based on how the speaker perceives the audience (Riessman, 2002). Moreover, feminist research foregrounds the awareness of the researcher of her position throughout the research process – which is inextricably linked to political and social factors including race, age, gender and privilege. My race (as an Indian woman) and class (middle class) locate me within privilege, which positions me apart from the community in which the children live. This affects their experience of me. One of the participants was confused by my race, and asked me 'what' I am. Another participant attempted to emulate my accent, while others asked questions about Indians after the first focus group ended. Their curiosity stemmed from their locating my racial identity as 'outside' of their community. Other factors, such as language, also had an effect on the interview process. The children in this study are not first language English speakers, which had likely impacted how they choose to represent certain experiences - as language, and comfort with spoken language, is in and of itself a meaning-maker (Bloch, 1999, 2000). Though the participants were informed during each stage that they could communicate with me in a language of their choice, they all chose to speak in English. The participants were

also reminded of the freedom to choose their language of communication during interviews, when some of them struggled to find an appropriate word to describe their experience. Yet all participants, whether in focus groups or individual interviews, chose to communicate in English. Although the reading club is run using multilingual content and books, the historically oppressive perceptions of language still hold sway in contemporary South Africa. English is often perceived as the 'aspirational' language of education and privilege (Alexander, 2002; Mckinney, 2007). Their knowledge of my studying at the University of Cape Town may have impacted how they wanted me to perceive them. Their choice to communicate in English may have been to either impress or accommodate me, as many of the participants viewed me as an authority figure akin to the Literacy Mentor. This is tied strongly with my position as an adult, which would have had an effect on the power dynamic and impacted the ways in which children represent their experiences to me, i.e. children may have provided information that they believed I wanted to hear. Adults perceive children to be different to them as well, and children are not used to expressing themselves freely and honestly in an adult-dominated society (Prout, 2002). The participants' status as children, within a reading club run by adults, may have created an atmosphere in which they felt compelled to 'show' me (a visiting adult) their communicative and literacy skills.

Finally, the researcher's own experiences, biases and understanding of the research can affect the way the data and results are interpreted (Riessman, 2008). Even though PAR is useful in placing the narratives and experiences of the participants at centre stage, the ways in which those experiences are understood, analysed and written into a coherent story is done through the researcher's own social constructions. I attempted to remain un-intrusive in the children's photo-taking process, drawings and collages, as well their focus groups - only verbally intervening in interviews when participants spoke over each other or to clarify points. Moreover, I strived to ensure that the narratives were always analysed from a

contextual, intersectional perspective – taking into account not just the overarching context of community and politics, but the microcosm of the reading club and the ways in which topics were addressed and argued by children within that space. This included my presence as the 'audience' and the 'outsider'. Although these efforts aim to emphasise the participants' agency in each of their interactions and activities, my role in the construction of their narrative situates this study within the inevitable slant of the researcher's gaze.

Summary of chapter

This chapter outlined the research design and methods component of the research. The chosen method for data analysis was outlined, which centred on a thematic narrative analysis within an intersectional feminist paradigm. The sample was discussed, as well the data collection method for this specific sample – The Mosaic Approach. The ethical considerations of the entirety of the research was considered, followed by a discussion on reflexivity and the positionality of the researcher.

The next chapter is a discussion on the findings from the data. Emergent themes from the thematic narrative analysis are outlined and explored in conjunction with evidence from the data as well as the literature.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHILDREN'S CONSTRUCTIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS OF GENDER

In this chapter, the themes relating to the constructions of gender that emerged from participants' narratives are discussed. The research questions explored what kinds of stories children told about gendered behaviour and how they understood and conceptualised constructs of gender through these stories. Moreover, it explored how the stories they told (through visual and written representations) reinforce or resist prevailing narratives of gender identity construction. The first narrative, *Negotiating gendered expression*, explores the ways in which gendered expression is understood, performed and negotiated by participants – focussing on the differences between normative gendered constructs that are maintained and those that are rejected. This leads to a narrative which emerged on the *Normalisation of gendered violence*, in which gendered constructions of victims and perpetrators of violence are discussed. A third narrative that emerged, *Subjugating female bodies*, related to the ways in which the negotiation of gender and violence create the framework for how female bodies and sexuality are viewed and experienced by participants. The overall narratives are then explored in the final theme, *Narratives of conformity and resistance*, where I discuss the ways in which participants narrate a resistance to specific gendered roles, and as well as the contradictions therein.

Negotiating Gendered Expression

Based on the social construction of gender, gender is not a static 'thing', but a performance that is constantly negotiated and adjusted (Budgeon, 2014; Burr, 1995). This was evident in many of the interviews and interactions, as well as the overall narrative, with participants. The concept of 'right and wrong' for girls and boys was one in which much of the conversation leaned. This often pointed to how hegemonic masculinity and femininity are

internalised by the participants. There is not one type of masculinity or femininity, but several forms that are expressed in different ways across cultural and political lines (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Based on Connell's theories of masculinity, 'hegemonic masculinity' is the dominant form of masculinity in society, while 'emphasised femininity' centres on feminine gendered expression that submits to the control of men (Connell, 2005). In South Africa, expressions of gender – particularly masculinity - is heavily embedded in discourses of race and class, with the performance of multiple and often contradictory forms of masculinity (Everitt-Penhale & Ratele, 2015; Ratele, 2014a, 2014b). These masculinities, and by proxy femininities, are understood and performed by children at a young age, often through play. This section explores the ways in which these gendered identities are experienced and negotiated by the participants.

"He's a moffie". The term "moffie" featured frequently within most of the interviews and narratives. For the participants, it did not have a singular meaning, but encompassed varied meanings and was used in many different contexts. The word 'moffie' is an originally Afrikaans slang term used to refer to gay or transgender men, usually in a derogatory way (Henderson, 2017). In response to being questioned about what the term means, many of the participants defined it almost exclusively as feminised behaviour among boys and men. However, the more that the participants were questioned about behaviours associated with the word, the more their use of the word deviated from their initial definition. Their uses of the word included behaviour that showed lack of aggression, studiousness, child-like behaviour and anti-femininity. In this section, I explore the varied definitions and contexts in which the term 'moffie' was used in constructions of both masculinity and femininity.

The first definition of the term 'moffie' was brought up in the first focus group, and was used to describe non-aggressive behaviour in boys as immature or child-like. Upon being

asked to unpack and define the word, the following conversation occurred between Takatso (13), Sihle (11), and Bonga (10):

***Takatso**:* *You can also be called a moffie when someone hits you, and you don't fight back. You say "I'm going to tell you for my mother and my father" and they say "No you're a moffie, you're not a boy, you can't even fight back, mama's boy" and stuff like that.*

***Sihle**:* *They making you to not tell your parents.*

***Bonga**:* *They make you to do the wrong stuff.*

Above, the word was used to describe non-violent behaviour as child-like - "mama's boy". Typically aggressive behaviour associated with masculinity is already seen amongst preadolescents, and even younger children, as the measuring stick of behaviour that is considered authentically male or 'manly' (Bhana & Mayeza, 2016; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Using "mama's boy" to describe boys infantilises their identity by creating a distinction between a child-like 'boy', and a 'grown man' who has established an identity separate from his mother. A lack of aggressive response in boys is thus painted as somehow immature in the eyes of peers. Similarly, Sihle (11) and Bonga (10) also identified that the word was used to control behaviour – by infantilising them, the word was used to shame and prevent boys from telling teachers about the violent interaction and to "make you do the wrong thing". During the first focus group, the awareness of the term being used to control boys' unwanted behaviour was also reflected by Nosi (14):

> *Maybe when you're focusing on your work, and you avoid your friends. You don't want to, like, you want to pass, your goal is to pass, you don't want to focus on any other things, then they'll say "oh, look there, he's boring, always studying, doesn't even go out, he's a moffie.*

Here, being studious is considered another behaviour that is not masculine. Studiousness is seen to prevent boys from taking part in their male friend groups, and the word 'moffie' is used as a social tool to control boys' behaviour to align with expectations in those friend groups. In the above instances, the use of the word 'moffie' was not necessarily used to shame feminised behaviour, as its original definition suggests; reporting peer aggression and exhibiting studiousness is not overtly or stereotypically feminine, in and of itself. Instead, it was used predominantly as a tool by boys to exercise control over other boys' behaviour within peer circles. According to Bhana and Mayeza (2016), children's play gives rise to constructed gendered performances. In the context of gender, play can often be violent, or discriminatory against non gender-conforming behaviours, particularly among boys. Derogatory words such as "moffie" during play and peer interaction are often used as a means to replicate what children know about the world and each other (Martin et al., 2013; Mayeza, 2017).

Similarly, Nomfundo (12), who had brought up the word 'moffie' in both the focus groups and her individual interview provided this explanation when asked what the term meant:

> *We had two friends who was a boy and we were eight girls and two boys, so we were ten. Now the one boy like do the stuff like a boy, he get angry quickly, he hit the girls, now the girls know him that he can't control his anger, so we don't mind him. He do everything like a boy. And so the other one, who will laugh like a girl, do stuff like a girl, clap his hands, so when the girls tell him no man, we're going somewhere, you must wear this skirt and then he could say no, I have clothes by my house. And then like when there's boys around him, he don't like the boys, he goes to the girls.*

Nomfundo's description of a 'moffie' also centres on ideas of aggressive behaviour, but touches on aspects of anti-femininity as well. Inherent and important in her depiction of a boy

who is a ‘moffie’ is the latter part of her statement in which she describes the other boy. In her description, the boy who was not considered a ‘moffie’ gets angry quickly, hits girls and is unable to control his temper. For Nomfundo, ‘like a boy’ refers directly to typically masculine behaviour, which include aggression, anger, and physical violence during play. Nomfundo and her girl friends wanted to dress this boy friend in skirts during play, because his version of masculinity fit their definition of ‘moffie’ at that instance. In their eyes, he was not ‘like a boy’ and, in their binary construction of gender, would thus be more of a girl. This prompted them to ask him to wear a skirt, even though he did not want to. Despite their awareness of the ways in which ‘moffie’ was used to judge or regulate boys’ behaviour, it was also seen as something that held social validity in terms of judging the authenticity of male behaviour. As with Nomfundo’s story above, it became apparent in the interviews that the word ‘moffie’, used in both jest and hostility in classrooms and the playground, is used to disassociate ‘inauthentic’ boyhood from hegemonic versions of it.

In contrast, challenging the female construction of gender is something that Nomfundo (12) described as an advantage. She was the most overt about the possibility of defying gender expectations, and set herself apart from other girls by saying that “I don’t keep myself like a girl. I keep myself like a boy”. However, her construction of what it means to be a girl, much like narratives of many of the other female participants, centred on sentiments of anti-femininity. The role of anti-femininity in childhood gendered interaction has been recorded throughout literature and was salient throughout the interactions and interviews in the group (Bhana & Mayeza, 2016; Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Schippers, 2007). Nomfundo specifically speaks about her ostracisation from games and play in female friend groups based on her disinterest in fashion and boys. She constructed a narrative of girls’ femininity as frivolous, scholastically underachieving and materialistic. She defined being a

girl in opposition to being a boy, while projecting hard work and achievement to more male traits - suggesting that masculine traits are both authentic for boys, and aspirational for girls.

The use of “moffie” as a sentiment of anti-femininity was salient in response to boys’ behaviour, as is common in previous research. However, only a few of the participants were aware of the sexual contexts in which the word “moffie” is also used, which may be due to the participants’ age – at preadolescence and younger, many of them may not yet understand the nuances of the word. The word ‘moffie’ was used frequently to admonish and regulate behaviour, and was defined in varying ways by almost all the participants. The participants’ overall use and experience of the term encompassed lack of aggression, studiousness, child-like behaviour and anti-femininity. Some of the participants also showed awareness of its use as a tool by peers to control the above unwanted behaviour. Even within negotiated gendered behaviour (i.e. Nomfundo’s choice to behave more ‘like a boy’), anti-femininity appeared to be the bedrock of the internal and external gendered messaging.

The influence of religion on gender roles. Peer opinion and regulation is often informed by messaging that children receive throughout their lives (Campbell & MacPhail, 2002; van Beusekom, Baams, Bos, Overbeek, & Sandfort, 2016). This messaging includes access to information, opinions of adults around them and value systems of the schools in which they are placed. In homes, schools and the general community, religion was an important source of messaging for the participants. Their understanding of religion appeared to be a strong reasoning against gender non-conforming behaviour, as well as other behaviours that they found disagreeable. Their understanding of religion, specifically Christianity, was used to make meaning of the normative presentation of gender. Religious authoritarianism is has been correlated with more negative attitudes against LGBTQ persons (Rowatt, LaBouff, Johnson, Froese, & Tsang, 2009), however the participants’ specific use of religion to make sense of gender non-conformity was unique to each participant.

Photograph 1: Children's religious art at the church.

During Nomfundo's (12) interview, she stated than boys and girls cannot defy normative gendered behaviour as it is not something that aligned with her religious understanding of gender: **"**You know what, it's not right, because when you born, you were born a boy, so you have to accept it that you are a boy".

Photograph 2: Nomfundo- "He stopped reading bible so she is reading it to him."

Similarly, in her interview, Nokhu (12) mentioned that gender is unchangeable and “even if you pray and pray, it will not change”, while Sharon (13) further expressed the view that “When God created Adam and Eve, he didn’t create a boy and a boy, he created a girl and a boy”. Though none of the conversations were specifically centred on sexuality or same-sex relationships, gender non-conforming behaviour appeared to be understood as interchangeable with homosexuality. To many of the participants, this seemed to evoke a moral response that drew on Christianity. Lack of access to adequate information regarding gender ensures that religious messaging from schools, caregivers and/or church become the central points of children’s understanding of gendered constructs (Chaux & León, 2016). Religion is, thus, part of an intersecting array of gendered messaging that children are exposed to, particularly with those in this reading group - which takes place in a church. Opinions of almost all the children in the group aligned according to their religious understanding of “correct” gendered behaviour.

Takatso (13) was the only participant to disagree with the religious standpoint in an outright way. Using her own understanding of religion and culture, she argued the point that

different dress codes have existed and been accepted over different periods of time. This argument resulted in Sharon and Takatso debating the role of culture and religion when it comes to acceptable dress codes:

***Takatso**:* *But long time ago, man used to wear long dresses, no one used to judge them.*

***Malini**:* *That's a good point.*

***Sharon**:* *Except for the Muslims, they wear those salaah top. They wear a pants under also.*

***Malini**:* *Ok.*

***Nomfundo**:* *People can understand that they're a Muslim, they have to wear a salaah top when they go to Mosque. Salaah top and a kufiya, they have to wear that, people can understand.*

***Takatso**:* *Ok, but what's the difference? What's the difference because they're also men.*

***Nomfundo**:* *Because it's –*

***Bonga**:* *It's in their culture*

***Malini**:* *Yes, their culture that's a good point... sorry what was your name?*

***Cross-talking**:* *Bonga.*

***Malini**:* *Ok that's a good point, she said it's in their culture. Is that true?*

***Nomfundo**:* *Yes.*

***Takatso**:* *Yes it is their culture but there's no difference. They're still wearing dresses.*

***Sharon**:* *That's not a dress, it's a salaah top.*

***Takatso**:* *It's a dress.*

This was a particularly interesting interaction as Takatso (13) seemed to consider the historical and cultural subjectivity of clothing, while Sharon (13), Nomfundo (12), Sihle (11) and Bonga (10) expressed that religion and culture is removed from gendered behaviour. The rules of gendered expectation is malleable insofar as it is aligns with societal norms. Societal norms form the axiom from which gendered expression emerges. Thus, clothing that resembles a stereotypically feminine style (i.e. a kufiya or salaah top) is allowed provided it has an affiliation with an existing social norm. However, if the expression is not understood in religious or societal ways, it is constructed as inappropriate *gendered* behaviour (rather than inappropriate social behaviour in general) – "moffie".

Sharon (13) and Takatso (13) had had another disagreement regarding gender and religion. Takatso mentioned that gender non-conforming people and gay people have been "born in the wrong body" – a point that was contested by Sharon and other children in the group:

***Nomfundo**:* *How can you have feelings for a man but you also a man? And what do you see in a other man but you also a man? And if you a girl, what do you see in that girl but you also a girl?*

***Sharon**:* *That's why God created a girl and a boy.*

***Malini**:* *So we have one comment on this side.*

***Takatso**:* *They have feelings, a man has feelings for a man because they were born in the wrong body. They're hormones are... if you a man then you, you have more hormones for like a girl, stuff like that. Ja it's because you were born in the wrong body.*

***Sharon**:* *No I don't believe in that, because when you are born, you weren't acting the way you were acting now, when you big [interrupts]*

***Takatso**:* *Because your hormones change.*

The essentialist model of gender, which is still at large today, frames gender identity as constant, static and aligned with biological sex (Kray et al., 2017; Martin & Ruble, 2004). Here, in an attempt to defend homosexuality, Takatso conflates an idea of gender identity ("born in the wrong body") with being attracted to the same sex – conflating gender identity and sexuality. The conflation of the two ideas was then responded to from a religiously moral standpoint – centred on the rejection of homosexuality (Rowatt et al., 2009; Stefurak, Taylor, & Mehta, 2010). The use of religion as a method of control, over sexual behaviour, sexuality and gender performance, is one that has been long researched (Chaux & León, 2016; Swart et al., 2002; Wilkinson, 2004). Non-conforming gendered behaviour and homosexuality as 'un-Christian' is a common rhetoric in South Africa, and globally (Vincent & Howell, 2014). Moreover, in South Africa, anti-homosexual sentiment and violence was rife during apartheid politics, which used a Eurocentric Christian interpretation of sexuality as the basis for its messaging. Despite heralding in the age of human rights in post-apartheid democracy, the sentiment of the 'ungodly' or 'un-Christian' view of non-conforming gender behaviour and sexuality remains at large (Serano-Amaya, 2018). As such, it was unsurprising that the majority of the group, which takes place in a church, mirrored the sentiment of homosexuality as an immorality or a deviance. Nosi (14) remained quiet in the group but was more open to discussion in her individual interview, as she disagreed with the group's constructions of right and wrong using religion. Both her and Takatso appeared uncomfortable in the group's narrative of it and chose not to pursue the argument. Although this is indicative of the nature of focus groups, particularly when it comes to children, the morally charged nature of the topic restricted conversation in a unique way. There was much teasing and noise during the interview and towards the end, one of the participants appeared upset that others had laughed at her opinion[1]. This was why the individual interviews were

[1]After the focus group, I had an informal conversation with the participant to ensure that she did not leave the session upset.

particularly useful and necessary in exploring the statements that were, or were not, brought to the fore in the focus groups. Much like peer dynamics on the playground, fear of peers' reaction or rejection when it came to religiosity and gender played itself out in the focus groups. For the majority of the participants, transgressing normative gendered behaviour was not simply seen as strange or unusual, but held deeply negative moral implications – thus, making it difficult for those with opposing views, in the church space, to voice them.

This section explored the different ways in which gendered expression is regulated and negotiated. The word 'moffie' was understood and used in varying ways, and often served to police gendered behaviour in participants' lives. Negotiating non-conforming gendered behaviour was also informed by religiosity, which is not only a powerful influencer in the way that these participants understand gender and sexuality, but also restrictive for participants who held differing opinions on gender. At this point, it is important to note that participants' understandings of gender roles are inextricable from intersecting factors at play. In South Africa, gendered expression and identity have been historically defined in terms of violence. The area in which these children are from, Manenburg, is considered a violent area (primarily beset by gang violence) in the Western Cape (Mullagee & Bruce, 2015; Salo, 2003). Constructions of gender, and the policing thereof, was later revealed to encompass more violent interactions. Hegemonic forms of masculinity and femininity, and the policing thereof, may not simply be a way of existing but a way of surviving or avoiding violence in this specific context.

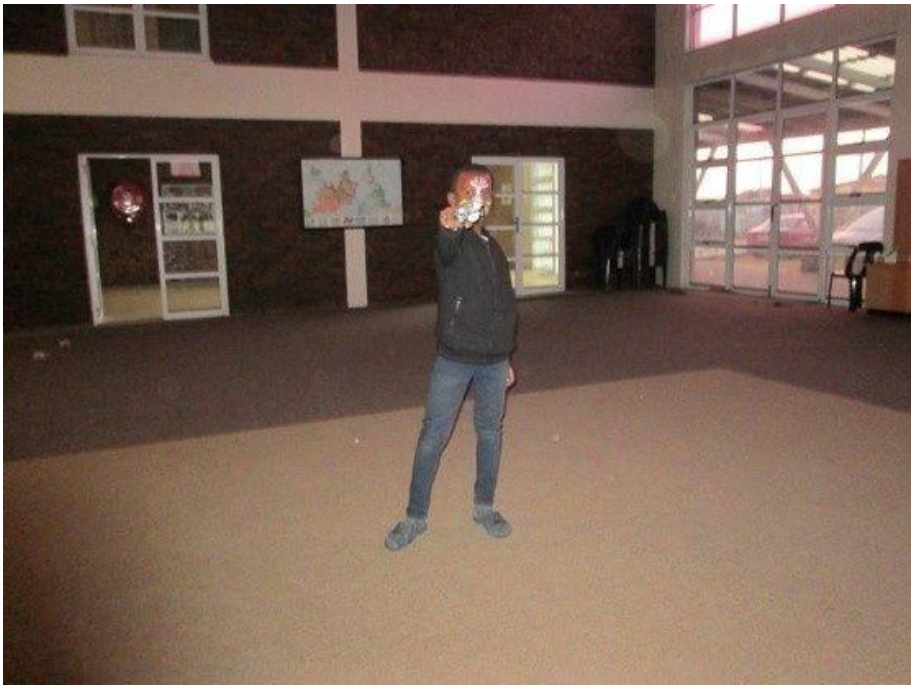
Normalisation of Gendered Violence

The prevalence of gang violence and violent crime in Manenburg has long been documented (Kinnes, 2014; Mullagee & Bruce, 2015). The theme of violence in the community was prominent in the data overall, including the photographs, collages, as well as interviews. Though conversations about violent crime and gang violence occurred in focus

groups and was represented in some of their photos, it was not the primary narrative. Instead, participants' narratives leaned toward everyday forms of peer violence at school, as well as in homes. Gendered and sexual violence was also salient in their narratives of instances of peer and family interaction. A deeper look into the various narratives on violence, within social and cultural intersections, indicated the gendered nuances in the ways in which violence is perceived.

Photograph 3: Boy threatening to shoot girl.

Gendered violence in homes and communities. Manenberg was established as a 'coloured' area in 1966 during the forced relocation programme during apartheid (Mullagee & Bruce, 2015). Today, the effects of spacial apartheid – where deprivation is maintained through geographic isolation, social inequality and racial polarisation – exacerbates unemployment and social invisibility. With statistics that show a high rate of violent crime in the area, it was expected that the participants would photographically represent or speak about the impact and trauma of violence in their lives:



Photograph 4: Katlego - "There is much violence in the community."

Photograph 5: Liya - "The boy wants from her is to go and sell her body to people and then the boy can have drugs and alcohol again."

Although the children were of a relatively younger age, the representation of serious violence was dominant in their narrative – suggesting the pervasiveness of fear in their daily lives. Statements such as the above emerged from many of the participants, with issues of physical

safety taking the forefront. Many of these stories seemed to be aimed at educating me (an outsider) on their community. However, when it came to their everyday experiences of violence, participants focussed specifically within school, home and family contexts. When asked about violence in the community, one of the male participants, Katlego (8), mentioned: “sometimes I hear girls are being bullied and being robbed here in this, this, um this new high schools and primary schools”. Liya (10), had a similar response and took a photo of small rubber toys to illustrate her story about peer violence:

Photograph 6: Liya - “I was thinking this story that the girl has been bullied by the boy.”

The narrative of boys instigating fights with girls was reflected by three other participants as well. Interestingly, many of the stories and conversations on violence converged on aggressive gendered play and interactions among peers. The dynamic of gendered aggressive play among children evolves as they move into adolescence. Younger children are shown to experience more fights within same-sex peer groups, but with the onset of adolescence, patterns of aggression against the opposite gender changes. It has been shown that aggression and sexual harassment initiated by boys against girls increases from primary school to high

school, and rises further from high school to university (Pellegrini, 2001). The literature shows that this idea follows a concept of courtship in which boys are pushy, aggressive or physically unboundaried in order to engage girls (Bhana & Pattman, 2011). Though violence and fighting in same-sex groups generally decreases with age, there has been shown to be an increase in violent behaviour between primary school and high school for boys – an age in which they reassert dominance in their male peer groups (Murnen & College, 2015). All the male participants spoke about being victims to physical or verbal violence by other boys in their school. It has been shown that violence and dominance associated with this accepted form of masculinity is what determines the male power dynamic at school, which ties in to earlier points in which refusing to fight or informing teachers of violence results in homophobic slurs and narratives of not being a "real boy" (Bhana & Mayeza, 2016). Their 'boyness' is subject to acknowledgement and acceptance from other male peers. The girls seemed to feed into a more general sentiment of gendered violence – one in which boys are expected to partake in aggressive or violent activity amongst each other and against girls, while girls' bodies are specifically targets of different types of violence. Mayi also took a similar photo with the rubber toys:

Photograph 7: Mayi - "This man is helping for this girl but this girl don't trust this man."

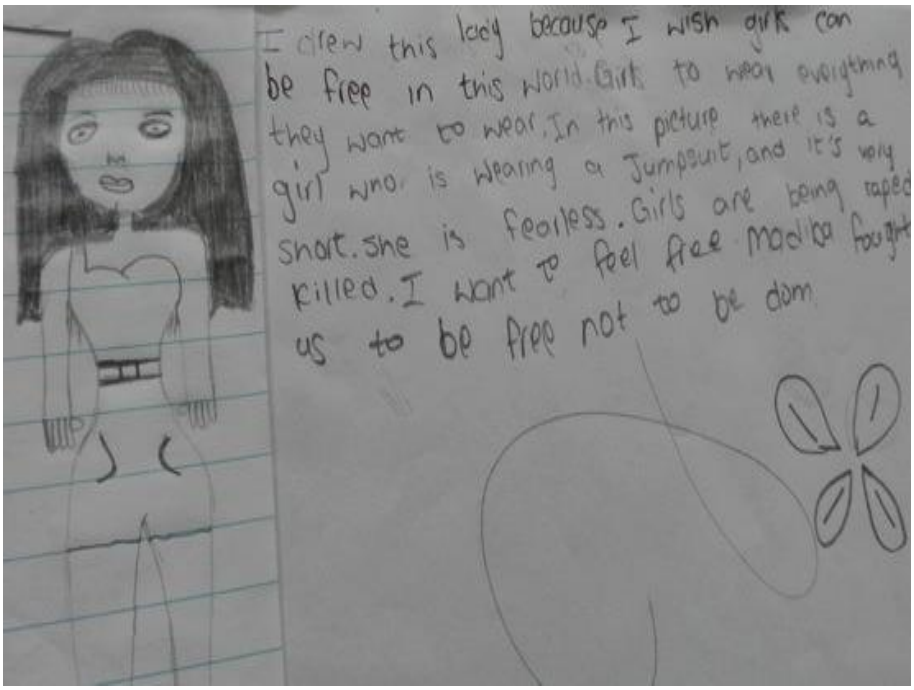
Throughout the interviews and focus groups, the narratives of violence often converged on the participants' awareness of the vulnerability of girls and women. Though the participants stated that boys can also be kidnapped, they also argued that it is girl children who are more vulnerable. This awareness may be a response to the direct and indirect messaging that young girls receive regarding their vulnerability against violence by men, which become tied to notions of what it means to be a woman. With these participants in particular, it is also a response to the everyday interactions and experiences that they witness in their communities and homes. Takatso (13) was another participant whose personal experience of violence in the home was a factor in shaping her constructions of gender. She shared a personal account of trauma, in which her stepfather, who she mentioned is a police officer, fired gunshots in her home and at her mother in anger:

Sometimes I feel uncomfortable having a stepfather, because he is a police.

Sometimes he shoots on my house when he is angry with my mother, he shoots, every

time he has a fight with my uncle, my mother's second last born brother, he always wants to shoot.

Statistics SA (2016) shows that one in five women are victims of physical violence in intimate partner relationships. This increases to four in ten women who have separated or divorced from their partners, and one in three women in poorer households. Financial deprivation often leads to the lack of access to adequate education, resources, police protection and legal networks, which create challenges for women to negotiate safe or equal relationships (Abramsky et al., 2011). In addition, attitudes that support a patriarchal view of relationships are more strongly correlated wifth abuse than economic deprivation (Jewkes et al., 2002). In Takatso's situation, the fact her stepfather (the source of violence in the home) is also an officer of the law, legally delegitimises the experience of violence and further disempowers her in the wake of the abuse against her mother (Jensen, 2014; Jewkes et al., 2002; Kim & Motsei, 2002). When asked how she makes sense of the violence and hardships she has experienced with regards to being a girl, she constructed her meaning in terms of global oppression. She compared women's freedom to that of racial freedom:



Takatso's journal entry.

In her journal entry above, she states that “girls are being raped and killed. I want to feel free, Madiba fought for us to be free and not to be dom”. In her interview with me, her narrative focused on the similarities of racial oppression and gendered oppression. In many cases, men’s involvement in violence, such as gang activity, is a means to social and economic capital, as well as maintaining a hierarchical power system. Ratele’s (2014) “hegemony within marginalisation” plays a role in understanding this phenomenon as not only a consequence of deprivation, but men’s resistance to the social and racial marginalisation and disempowerment within the community as a means through which their gendered personhood is affirmed. This can be played out in multifarious ways, with gendered and domestic violence as one outlet. Takatso’s understanding of this focussed on the compounded, layered oppression of girls and women in this context. She spoke of race in her interview, drawing a parallel between the way that people of colour were restricted and punished for defying the racial rules of apartheid, and how women are punished for breaking gendered social rules. For her, the defiance of gendered norms for girls in her community is dangerous and requires bravery, thus depicting a girl wearing a jumpsuit as “fearless” against sexual and gendered violence.

Sexual assault and rape. The narratives of sexual violence ranged from non-consensual touching to rape, and was mostly articulated by the girls. The stories around sexual assault were strongly gendered, and elicited different emotions from participants. They were raised predominantly in the individual interviews more than focus groups.

Takatso’s (13) interview stood out in terms of the experience of sexual violence. The photos she had taken for the project featured another participant in the group, who will be referred to as X in order to maintain confidentiality. The photos showed X looking sad, hiding their face, or looking away from the camera. In the second focus group, Takatso explained that the photos showed a person who is struggling with life and is considering

suicide because of feelings of sadness and depression. However, when prompted to talk further about it in her individual interview with me, she shared that the story was based on an experience regarding sexual assault:

Malini*:* *Mm. And what made you think of that story?*

Takatso*:* *Because many people are being abused. Um I don't want to like, okay, right now I don't, it is not like I am getting to X's personal life but her uncle did something to her, so now this, she experienced being abused. I am sorry to say nè she was raped by, I am only telling you that, by her uncle, but now she told her mother that... so it was a long story thing.*

Malini*:* *Oh wow. And how did she tell you... about what happened?*

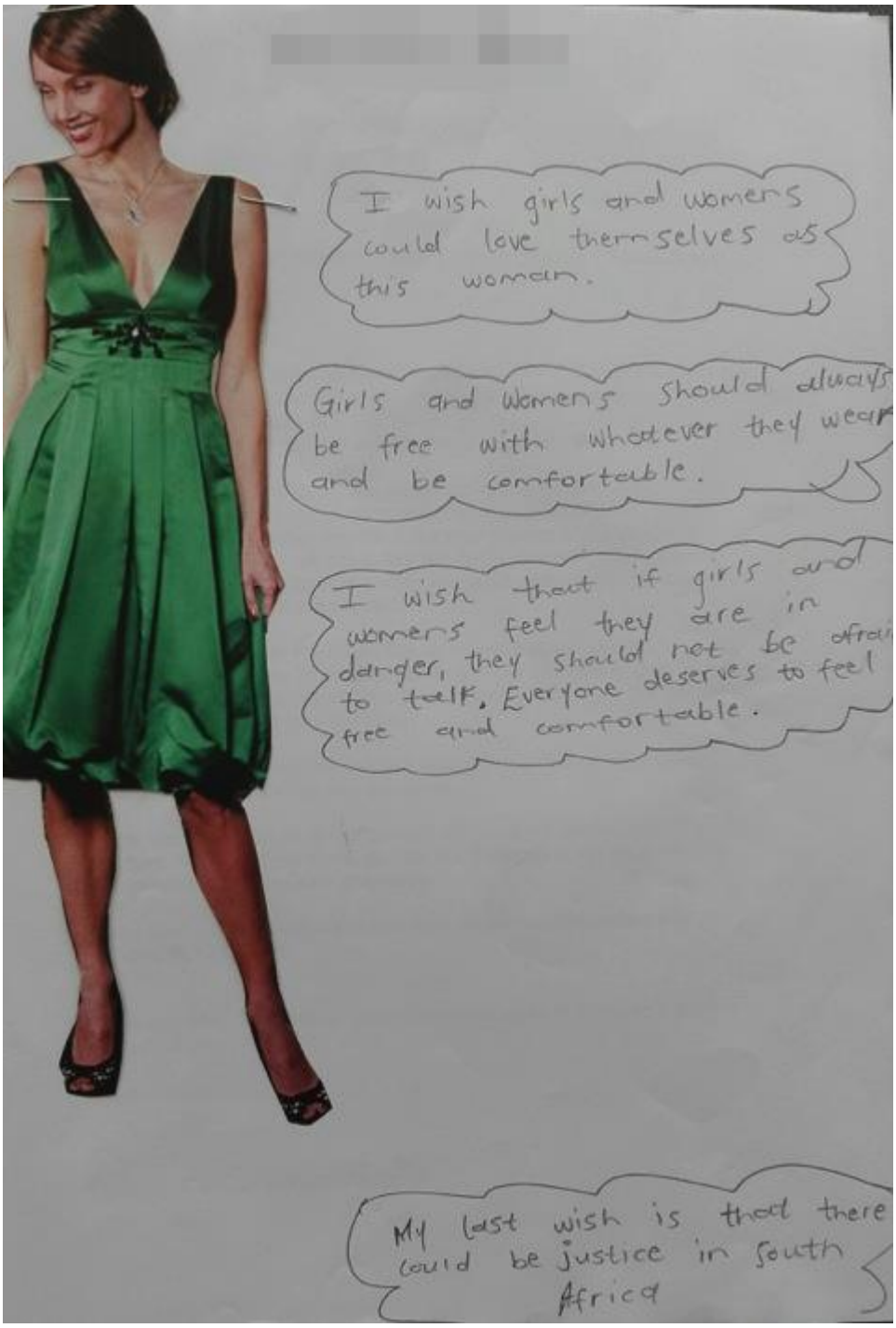
Takatso*:* *We were at Sipho's house so now there, I don't know what happened... that night was actually fun [laughs], they were telling many things about secret and stuff, so secrets came out there.*

Malini*:* *And how did you handle it? I mean it is kind of a big deal when you hear that.*

Takatso*:* *I did ask her questions and they go to court and stuff but yes, but the whole family turned against her mother and her because, because they didn't want to believe um X's story.*

When asked how this made her feel, Takatso responded that it makes her feel uncomfortable, particularly being around boys. Tied to her statement regarding the parallels between gender and racial oppression, sexual violence and community response to sexual violence became another point of oppression. I chose not to bring up the allegations made by Takatso to X, in order to protect confidentiality and privacy (see Ethics section). Photos of X have been also excluded in order to maintain anonymity.

Another participant, Nosi (14), brought up sexual assault as well, and illustrated her point by making a collage:



Nosi's journal entry.

Nosi speaks about the lack of 'justice' in the community. Her idea of injustice stems from witnessing the inadequate process of law when it came to a rape that was experienced by her

friend[2]. A report from the Medical Research Council (2017) showed that only eight percent of rapes brought to court end in conviction, with conviction rates for underage victims even lower. The issue of stigma and ostracisation when reporting sexual assault, particularly within families, has been well researched (Wyatt et al., 2017). Overt disempowerment in the face of violent sexual assault may point to the overall intersecting factors that make certain women more vulnerable. Lack of access to resources, legal aid, social support and economic security are factors that amplify vulnerability in women who live in violent communities. Most of the female participants expressed a fear of being sexually assaulted or kidnapped. However, it is important to note that Takatso and Nosi are slightly older than the other participants (13 and 14 respectively). Though only two to three years older than many of the others, their construction of female bodies as sexual targets, as well as the disempowerment of girls and women due to this, was prominent in their narratives.

The overall narratives of sexual assault and disempowerment were not only overt and violent, as with Nosi and Takatso's stories above. Nomfundo's account of sexual violence highlighted a more indirect, non-consensual interaction between younger boys and girls at school. She mentioned that boys at school make a game out of touching or grabbing girls. When asked how she felt about that, she expressed her fear that speaking against it would make her body the target of the violence too:

***Nomfundo**:* *You see, if they're touching other girls' bums, if I say something, they're going to touch my bum too. So I better keep quiet, so they don't touch my bum, can you see?*

***Malini**:* *I see. Well, that's not nice.*

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[2] In the absence of X's personal account of sexual assault, I contacted Nal'ibali to organise counselling for the children in the group, including Takatso and X.

***Nomfundo**:* *And if you fight back, then they say so oh, you mos fight back when I touch your bum, I'm going to catch you after school, you're going to see what is going to happen, I'm going to hit you. Then after school, then all the boys come and then they all want to touch your bum just because of that. "Then you're going to see, if you just say no, I'm going to smack you" - they're like that.*

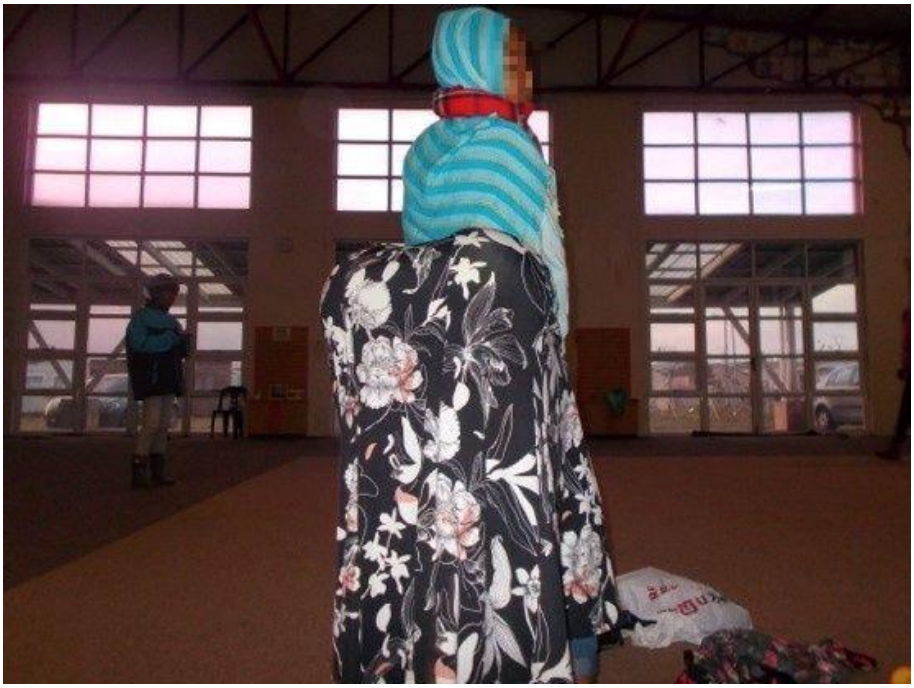
Research has shown that unwanted sexual touching often occurs at the prepubescent stage, where boys and girls start to internalise an understanding of sex and sexual roles (Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Murnen & College, 2015; Pattman & Bhana, 2005; Pellegrini, 2001). "If you say no, I'm going to smack you" is a telling statement that highlights the threat of violence which serves to reinforce a sexual and gendered power imbalance in Nomfundo's experience. Exercising agency in this situation represents a real physical risk, forcing her to adjust her behaviour. Tied to this, one of the boys in the first focus group, Sihle (11), spoke about the difference between boys and girls by highlighting the way in which girls react to being touched: "Girls' brains and boys' brains are different, because if the boy touches the girl in a wrong place, she doesn't like it". Sihle appears to assume that girls are the only ones who disapprove of being touched in specific places, and ascribes the existence of those 'wrong places' exclusively to girls' bodies. The fact that he attributes biology ("brains") as the reason for girls not liking being touched in certain places is also indicative of how he may understand the ways in which sexuality and consent is constructed. He understands the reaction to unwanted touching as a biological response, rather than a social one. Though this essentialist framework was used regularly by the participants to narrate gendered performance to me, it is interesting to note that it appears to inform the way Sihle perceives the social construction and performance of heteronormative sexuality as well – as biologically predetermined more than a social interaction like any other.

It is evident from these narratives and experiences that both adolescents and younger children are aware of gendered nuances in peer violence, domestic violence and sexual violence. Rape, sexual harassment in the form of touching, and domestic abuse were three of the most salient themes within the overarching narrative of gendered violence. For the female participants, their sexuality and sexual awareness became a point of vulnerability and consequence. How they perceived their bodies and gender identity was aligned strongly with messaging located in restrictive discourse on female sexuality.

Subjugating Female Bodies

The social construction of femininity (in opposition to masculinity) ties ideas of womanhood to sex and performance of sexuality (Butler, 2009). The performance of sexuality for women, which may vary according to culture and country, is intertwined with moral implications of what is respectable behaviour. The understanding of female sexuality as a barometer for respectability seemed to colour the ways in which the girls in the group narrated their 'femaleness' as a whole. For the female participants, their gendered identity converged on two main themes arising from their female sexuality – sexualisation and pregnancy.

Sexualisation. A discussion on sexual attractiveness stemmed from the photos taken by Nomfundo (12), Nokhu (12), Bonga (10), Naledi (12) and Sharon (13) during the photovoice component of the research project. The participants highlighted the ways in which their bodies are sexualised, judged and punished. Using balls, the girls modelled a female body with large breasts and buttocks.



Photograph 8: Naledi - "Boys only want girls who have big bums."

Photograph 9: Naledi simulating big breasts.

In addition, another photo was taken by Sharon and Nomfundo – with Nomfundo wearing the costumes and soccer balls, standing next to Sharon in her school uniform. They described this photo as a comparison between the two girls. Sharon said that boys call girls who have smaller buttocks "ironing boards" and will choose the girl with bigger buttocks.

Photograph 10: Nomfundo and Sharon show the comparison of their bodies- "You see, she, she have big bums and she, she have small bums."

Pre-adolescence is an age in which girls and boys become more aware of the sexual components of their bodies, and the bodies of the opposite gender. Research with young girls and adolescents have shown that girls become aware of their bodies and appearance in significantly more overt and sexualised ways than boys (Slater & Tiggemann, 2016). Depending on the context in which they are raised, how girls make sense of this becomes a part of their identity and self-worth. This impacts on self-esteem, increases self-objectification, and effects the social dynamic between girls and boys (Carlson Jones, 2001; Coleman, 2008; Siegel, Yancey, Aneshensel, & Schuler, 1999). Throughout the interviews, almost all of the female participants of all ages seemed to have understood that their appearance – particularly sexual aspects of their body – are noticed and evaluated by boys. Sexualisation of women's bodies was also a prominent narrative in talk of clothing - in various individual interviews, the girls linked self-respect to clothing style. Many of the participants highlighted the double standard in clothing, stating that men are not called names for their clothing choices and denouncing the word "slut" to shame and control women –

showing an awareness of the ways in which the performance of femininity vs. masculinity is perceived. However, they also maintained the pervasive idea that girls should uphold sexually virtuous behaviour and appearance. Prostitution and female promiscuity were often framed as the lowest descriptors for women. Liya (10) stated that women should not wear short skirts because “what do you think of your private parts”. Similarly, many of the participants linked choice of clothing directly to a woman’s sexuality, more specifically, the assumption that the woman is aiming to draw attention to her sexuality through her clothing choice.

Overall, the participants seem to draw on the *intention* of women who wear short clothing – which is seen as purely sexual, and deliberately so. Thus, it may not simply be girls’ sexuality, but perceived self-awareness or deliberation of their sexuality that is seen as somehow wrong or immoral – in many ways, recreating the construct of sexuality in women as shameful (Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Farvid, Braun, & Rowney, 2017). Although they expressed defiance against the differing standards for clothing among men and women, the girls and women who were judged by the participants for wearing provocative clothing or behaving in sexually promiscuous ways were constructed as deviant from the “normal” girl – thus framing this particular performance of femininity as unacceptable.

Pregnancy. Linked to sexuality, constructs of pregnancy featured strongly in participants’ narratives. Bonga (10) and some of the other girls took photos of themselves with a soccer ball under their shirt, modelling a pregnant woman:

Photograph 11: Nomfundo pretending to be a pregnant woman.

Nomfundo (12), in her interview, framed pregnancy as a loss for girls compared to boys, saying that boys pressure girls into sex and lose interest once they fall pregnant – later finishing school, while the girl is forced to raise the child. This was mirrored by Nokhu (12):

Photograph 12: Nokhu - "Teenage pregnancy is current in South Africa because teenagers don't know how to control themselves."

Nokhu's statement in the photo highlights the constructions and fears about teenage pregnancy in South Africa. The understanding of pregnancy in adolescents in South Africa has been largely racialised and linked to economic security (Jonas, Crutzen, van den Borne, Sewpaul, & Reddy, 2016; Macleod, 1999; Macleod & Durrheim, 2002). Teenage pregnancy among middle class white adolescents is referenced to more psychological formulations, while teenage pregnancy in black adolescents is ascribed to socio-economic issues, with calls to regulate black adolescent women, their bodies and their sexual behaviour (Macleod & Durrheim, 2002; Macleod, 2003). Though explorations of gendered culture in sexual dynamics are slowly changing the ways in which black adolescent women's pregnancy is framed, the public perception of it remains focussed on a narrative of socio-economic and social consequence. The participants' pregnancy narrative mirrored public perception, and centred largely on how female bodies (specifically women of colour) are a liability when comes to sex and pregnancy. This highlights the power discrepancy between girls and boys when it comes to sexuality – boys can engage in consequence-free sexual activity, while girls cannot. Nomfundo and Nokhu spoke of how sexual conquests are considered an achievement for boys, while girls (by nature of their bodies) have to bear the consequences in the form of pregnancy.

The understanding of pregnancy as a moral consequence for girls is linked closely to heterosexual dynamics. Research shows that sexual dynamics between men and women are often framed in subject/object ways in which men are the pursuers and subjects, and women the object of desire (Bhana & Pattman, 2011). Nomfundo (12), Takatso (13) and Nokhu (12) brought up the topic of sex that aligned with this construction - framing women are the custodians of sexual abstinence. Nomfundo (12):

> *So the girls like just get peer pressure and like okay, I don't have choice, I have to prove that I love him, so I'm going to sleep with him, then they get pregnant, then the boys leave the girls like that.*

Nomfundo talks about her understanding of the negotiation of sex between girls and boys – that it is something sought by boys and abstained by girls. Nomfundo frames the negotiation of sex between boys and girls as coercive; something that boys want and girls feel pressured to do and later regret – in this case, to "prove" commitment or love. For many of the participants who are girls, their bodies, sexuality and pregnancy were framed in a way that appears to be entirely negative – almost a warning. This could be because of the type and quality of sex education offered to children. Sex education and HIV education in South Africa still primarily focuses on abstinence and shame-based methods, as well as scare tactics using pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease as the inevitable consequences (Bhana et al., 2010; Campbell & MacPhail, 2002; Jonas et al., 2016). In addition to religiosity, this information is simply another aspect of the wider narrative children observe on appropriate gendered behaviour and sexuality. Interestingly, the male participants did not provide much commentary on women's and men's bodies in either interviews or focus groups. This could be based on the fact that most of the male participants were of a younger age, which perhaps resulted in less awareness or attention given to the ways in which the female participants experience their bodies.

In this section, female participants' experience of their bodies and sexuality were explored. Though they expressed doubts about perceived double standards when it comes to body image, clothing and sex, they also strongly maintained normative gendered ideas of sex and sexuality. Female sexualisation and pregnancy were salient themes, and were both framed in negative ways that mirror current public narratives of women's bodies and racialised biases of girls' sexual behaviour. Though the participants' sentiments leaned

toward constructions of female bodies as something to preserve against sexualisation and pregnancy, they also showed an awareness of normalised gendered constructions as a whole. The contradictions within their views were numerous and appeared to be an expression of the polarised messaging that they experience.

Narratives of conformity and resistance

Much of the conversation and content that arose from the data collection process showed the ways in which gender norms are internalised by participants. As illustrated, there was also a notable defiance in their narrative of normalised gendered identities and expectations of women. The participants used photovoice and collage activities to express this:

Photograph 13: Nokhu - "Because if a man can do it, a woman can do it ten times better than a man."

Photograph 14: Sharon - "Sometimes boys hide their singing voice, so girls should show them that they shouldn't be afraid."

Photograph 15: Sihle - "A soccer player is one of those famous people that get paid, like, millions and even girls can play it."

Photograph 16: Nomfundo – "It doesn't matter what the world thinks of you. You can still be the person you are. I am a girl who likes performing around people. I am very talkative and I like that about myself."

Photograph 17: Takatso – "She's sad because girls are not allowed to cross certain boundaries like playing with boys or playing soccer."

Through the photos, drawings and interviews, they provided a complex and, at times, contradictory account of their understanding of their gender and its role in their lives. Both in the focus groups and in the individual interviews, they spoke about how pervasive gender expectations are in their homes and communities, while also expressing a desire to defy those expectations. However, it appeared that this defiance or resistance was specific only to issues of women and girls, and predominantly applied to the traditional limitations placed on their roles in the home and workplace.

The domesticity of gender. Constructions of gender roles for girls was strongly linked to domesticity for the participants. The division of domestic labour, often called 'invisible work', largely occurs along gendered lines (Crompton, Brockmann, & Lyonette, 2005; Lyonette & Crompton, 2015). Research has shown that it has little to with economic status and is better explained by attitudes about gender roles, as domestic labour is still disproportionately undertaken by women in developed countries, as well as in households where women are the primary breadwinners (Lyonette & Crompton, 2015). Moreover, women's attitudes regarding division of domestic labour is shown to be more equality-based than those of men's, who still maintain more strict ideas of gender roles with the household (Crompton et al., 2005; Lyonette & Crompton, 2015). The participants were aware of this dynamic within their households. Sihle (11) was the only male participant who stated that he sometimes doesn't like being a boy because men are required to have a job and while also being expected to do housework such as laundry. This precipitated an interesting interaction between Sihle (11) and Sharon (13):

> ***Sihle****: Sometimes I don't like being a boy because they say you must do your shirts, but the girl must do your, must do you, your, the girl... the woman must do the boys' chores. Like washing, and then the man go work. The ladies must do, like, um, like um, what do you call this... laundry. Ja like that.*

Malini*: So you don't like being a boy because you have to work? Would you prefer to do the laundry?*

Sihle*: Nothing.*

Sharon*: Nothing?! Haibo what do you do at work?*

Sihle*: You can work mos at work, you work with computers.*

Sharon*: No! But what if you work by a laundry place?*

Sharon's response to him signified not only defiance against his opinion, but she brought to the table her opinion that housework is also 'real work'. The phenomenon of the unequal division of domestic labour was reflected in a number of participants' experiences. In addition to the global attitude on domestic labour as a gendered phenomenon, South Africa also has a culture of feminised and racialised, paid domestic work – which is largely undertaken by black women, for white households (Bosch & Mcleod, 2015). As one of the remnants of the apartheid legacy, the culture of hiring domestic workers cheaply from low-income settings reveal the power asymmetries of race, class and gender in South Africa (Gaitskell, Kimble, Maconachie, & Unterhalter, 1983). In contrast to middle and upper class South African households, families in more economically deprived areas do not have the resources to hire help, while most adult family members work long hours (Gama & Willemse, 2015). Traditional gender roles dictate that housework and caregiving are primarily women's jobs, thus the domestic duties fall to the women in the family system, including the girl children. Evidently, for both the girls and boys in the group, the debate on the division of domestic labour was a salient topic. While Sihle and the other male participants were either in agreement or neutral regarding traditional domestic roles for women, most of the girls in the group spoke against it. In response to Sihle and the boys regarding their traditional ideas of domesticity, Nomfundo (12) later used the photovoice

component of the project in defiance, to depict herself in feminine clothing while working as an ‘investigator’ at a computer:

Photograph 18: Nomfundo - “I like to do research work, stuff like that, research old stuff and new stuff, what is going to come.”

For the female participants, the importance of women joining the workforce was a form of emancipation and independence from male antagonism. Bonga stated that if women work and make their own money, they would not feel forced by men to do chores: “If you don’t do chores, the husband will hit you and bully you”. This follows on from themes in which the girls’ attitude for education and achievement often stemmed from their desire to avoid abuse, teenage pregnancy and unemployment:

Photograph 19: Nomfundo - "She skipped steps. She left the education and went to babies and boyfriends…Now she's stuck there, because she have children now."

The participants, both male and female, were both 'doing' and 'undoing' gender in their acceptance and defiance against cultural expectations of domestic labour. Their conversation on households and domesticity was, by extension, linked to their ideas of heterosexual relationships – which included marriage, children and romance. Men and women's roles in domestic labour was one facet in the participants' overall understanding of gendered roles in heterosexual households.

Marriage and relationships. As mentioned, the established power inequity in heterosexual relationships places women as the object of desire, and men as the decision-makers and risk-takers (Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Brook, Morojele, Zhang, & Brook, 2006a; Morrell et al., 2012). For the participants, understanding gender roles concurred with normative gendered expectations within intimate relationships. Though most of the participants stated that they have not started dating, their ideas of how normative heterosexual dynamics work were in line with the literature, and elaborate in nature. However, the participants illustrated their acceptance of, or defiance against, normative

practices based on their unique construct of what is considered ‘fair’. For example, Sihle (11) and Naledi (12) planned a photo together during the photovoice component, in which Sihle is bent on one knee while proposing to Naledi:

Photograph 20: Sihle proposing to Naledi.

The ensuing conversation centred on the relevance of men proposing in Xhosa culture. Lobola was mentioned as the prime reason for why it is boys that need to propose to girls. Lobola, exercised in several African countries, is a form of marriage contract between the bridegroom and bride’s family, in which the transfer of cattle from the bridegroom legitimises the union (Parker, 2015). An important part of this understanding is that the children from the marriage will be expected to follow the father’s lineage group. Lobola in contemporary South African literature has been presented in various lights. Lobola, in and of itself, is neither positive nor negative but has been shown to be practiced in ways that allow for social cohesion and unity, as well as more exploitative ways in economically disenfranchised families (James, 2017). The group understood lobola as a type of employer-employee transaction, in which the family “pays for the girl” who will later “work” for her husband’s family – and expressed an acceptance of it. In contrast, the group also brought up

the cultural practice of polygamy. This was loudly contested, with many of the girls feeling that it was unfair that a man can have “a wife here and a wife there” but women are limited to just one husband. They understood lobola as a fair transaction, but polygamy was seen as something that is patently unjust towards women. Traditional views on gender roles were accepted insofar as it did not transgress the participants’ understanding of ‘fairness’, which appeared to uniquely straddle societal expectation and concepts of feminism. Their deviations from normative gendered expectations were informed by feminist messaging they have internalised; the participants appeared to have been exposed to messaging regarding the importance of education for women, job equity, women’s rights and economic equality. The amalgamation of the more liberal messaging with traditionalist views (based on aforementioned religiosity, messaging on female sexuality, and hegemonic masculinity) has constructed a unique negotiation of gender based on what is constructed as ‘fair’.

Overall, the female participants spoke about social and economic independence as a means to escape poverty and gendered abuse. It also appeared that cultural understanding of marriage and relationships seemed to be impacted by an underlying discourse of gender equality and independence. In many ways, they were ‘undoing’ the constructions of gender in their defiance and questioning of societal norms. Many of their opinions highlighted their complex and contradictory feelings of agency within societal constructions of gender – informed by varied messaging they receive from school, church and home.

Limits and regulation of agency. Although the participants’ narratives on defiance and agency extended to some aspects of gendered constructs, the limits of their ideas of agency became apparent when it came to gender identity. They spoke extensively about celebrating uniqueness and self-love in the face of discrimination. However, feelings of acceptance in the face of general personal uniqueness did not always extend all gendered expression. All participants touched on accepting uniqueness of religion, vocation,

appearance, style, ability, and ambitions. They viewed themselves as agentic in their aspirations and the self-image they chose to present. Much of this messaging is imparted in the Nal'ibali reading club environment, where children are encouraged to "be themselves" and are praised for their uniqueness and individuality. Though this kind of thinking was salient when talking about some gendered behaviour (such as boys playing netball, girls applying for traditionally 'male' jobs, women having agency in relationships, etc.) it was not extended to *all* gender non-conforming behaviour. Overall, behaviours that seemed linked to gender identity were perceived as distinct from the freedom and agency of other expressions or identities. Gender non-conformity when it comes to these behaviours was understood within a frame of deviance. Nokhu (12) was one of the two participants who was aware of the term 'transgender'. Both her and Nomfundo (12) articulated similar positions:

> *It's not right and it's not good because you, even if you transgender, even if you wear lipstick, you wear a dress, you have long hair and you're a boy, your mother... you were born a boy and you're going to die a boy, so there's no use changing this and that.*

Children's perceptions of reactions to their behaviour is important, as the construction of gender is relational, and is thus regulated and co-created collectively (Burr, 1995; Riessman, 2008). The two oldest participants who are adolescents (Takatso and Nosi) overtly expressed that they could not fully understand the negative reaction to people who choose to engage in gender non-conforming behaviour. In my interview with Nosi, she expressed confusion at the difference in reaction to gendered behaviour for girls and boys:

> ***Malini**:* *Do you think it is the same thing with girls if girls acted like boys? Is there a name for that?*
>
> ***Nosi**:* *A tomboy yes.*
>
> ***Malini**:* *A tomboy, okay. Is it bad for girls to do that as well, do you think?*

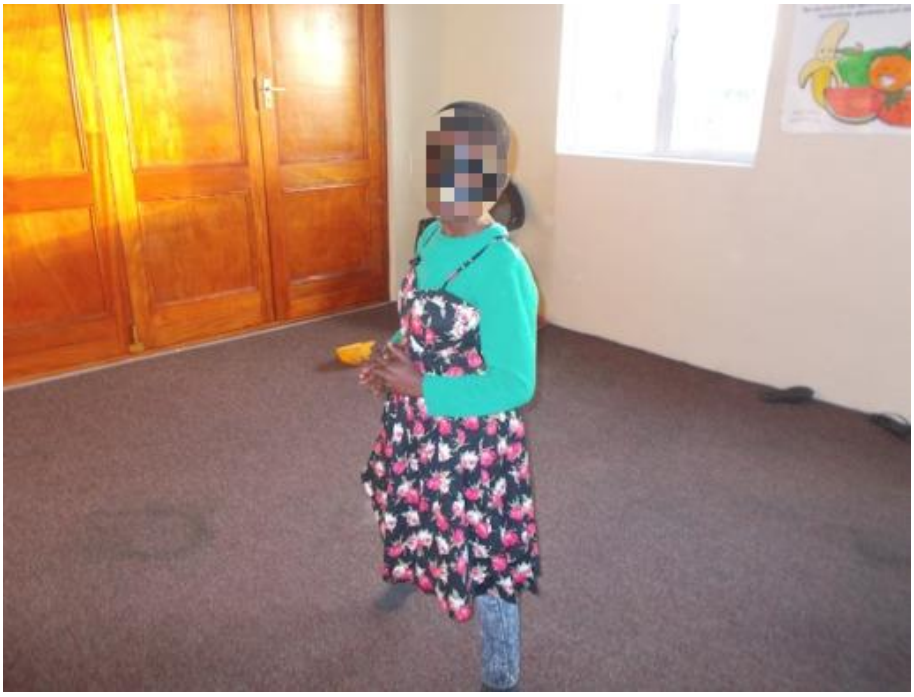
***Nosi**:* *But not badder than boys being girls.*

***Malini**:* *Why do you think it's worse?*

***Nosi**:* *Um because um the boys… we people are not used to boys being girls but it is easy for girls to be boys, I don't know how... but we don't take it seriously when girls want to be boys, but when it comes to boys being girls, now everyone wants to start talking and teasing.*

In contrast, as mentioned in the section above, Nokhu expressed pride in acting "like a boy" but frames the inverse as deviant. There is a body of research that shows that men and boys are potentially more restricted when it comes to gendered behaviour. Bhana and Mayeza (2016) recently showed how violent constructions of hegemonic masculinity in South African primary school playgrounds are used to police boys' behaviour, thus oppressing less desirable types of masculine expression. This is reinforced as boys become older, when non-conforming gendered behaviour becomes less visible and thus more exceptional (Mayeza, 2015) . Other participants were also aware of the difference in reaction to girls and boys in terms of gender non-conforming behaviour. The 'tomboy' description for young girls is not inherently linked to homophobic implications in the way 'moffie' is, thus the behaviour not strongly tied to girls' identity in negative ways. However, once adolescence is reached, 'tomboy' behaviour or appearance may be seen as signs of being a lesbian - putting girls at risk of physical and sexual violence and isolation (Boonzaier & Zway, 2015). The younger participants appeared confident in their contradictory messaging regarding the *types* of gender non-conforming behaviour that are acceptable, while the two older participants struggled to make sense of it. This set their narrative apart from that of the group's. Their lack of certainty in the face of concrete statements against diverse gendered expression by the group may be accounted for by their slightly older age (Blaise, 2005; Brook et al., 2006). They were not as invested in the younger peer group and may be less concerned about

disagreeing with their opinions. In contrast, the younger children's uncertainty regarding varied gender non-conforming behaviour seemed to result in more confident assertions regarding 'right and wrong'. Importantly, this was tied to the sentiment that clothing is a marker of identity, with gender non-conforming styles considered a performance rather than an identity. During the Photovoice activity, two of the boys, Mayi (10) and Sihle (11) decided to wear some of the dresses in the collection of props I had brought. I had noticed that when the younger reading club boys (who were not participants in the study) entered the room, they immediately laughed and called Sihle a 'moffie', which was ignored by Sihle. Upon being asked in the second focus group about this interaction, and whether it is fine for boys to wear dresses, most children (including the two boys who wore a dress during the activity) voiced that it is "wrong". Sihle, both within the second focus group and in a conversation with me afterwards, said that he felt comfortable wearing a dress because it was "wasn't real" and that he was not being serious. Interestingly, Mayi mirrored this statement in his own interview. When asked whether it is acceptable for boys to wear dresses, he said that only some of them could do it and clarified by saying that "gay people, you know, also wear dresses but not me, I can't wear dress. I just wearing it for fun here".



Photograph 21: Mayi wearing a dress.

There seemed to be conditions created by the group that allowed male participants to transgress gendered clothing within the context of the study. This was further reflected in Nosi's (14) interview. In response to Sihle (11) trying on the costumes typically associated with girls, she said that she felt that it was "it was fine, but then again, it was not fine. It was both". I probed further to explore her statement:

***Malini**:* *Like, you think Sihle would do that [wear the dress] outside?*

***Nombuleo**:* *No, he wouldn't.*

***Malini**:* *So why do you think he felt okay doing it here?*

***Nosi**:* *Because we were all girls and no one would make fun of him, and there was an elder to look after us and not, um, to watch us to not make fun of each other.*

***Malini**:* *Okay, that makes sense. Because I didn't see anyone tease him, you didn't tease him, no one teased him. Why do you think no one in this group teased him?*

Nosi: *Because maybe some of us knew that it was just an... act. Let me put it like that – an act.*

The main reason she believed that Sihle was not teased, and the reason that it was, in some ways, "fine" for him to wear a dress during the activity, was because it "was an act". This reflects both boys' opinions on why they felt comfortable in wearing gender non-conforming clothing. An unspoken social acceptance occurred in that moment in which those who participated in the study negotiated a space in which non-conforming behaviours during play, specifically non-conforming masculine behaviours, were permitted based on the collective understanding that none of it would be 'real'. Both Sihle and Mayi referred to wearing dresses as acceptable insofar as it was not a part of their identity, and seen as distinct from their 'actual' behaviour. Mayi goes so far as to say that it is gay men who wear dresses, thus he cannot wear dresses in any other context. Thus, for the younger participants, the performance of gender (particularly masculinity) is only considered a *performance* if the behaviour deviates from hegemonic masculinity. It is known that gendered expectations are more rigid in younger children as these expectations are taught and internalised in a binary manner – either a 'boy' or a 'girl', with both terms referring directly to acts of masculinity and femininity in interaction and play (Martin et al., 2013). Moreover, it has been shown that children's gendered ideas become more flexible when they are exposed to more gender non-conforming messaging and activities (Brook et al., 2006). Thus, the discussion of gendered norms in the focus groups created an exploratory interaction in which the rigidity of normative gendered behaviour was reduced. In the face of overt gender non-conforming behaviour among the two boys, the participants created a space in which gender non-conforming behaviour was allowed once it was established as "just an act". This evoked a tacit acceptance, from others and the boys themselves, that allowed them to switch their

hegemonic masculine performance for a different performance within the strict context of play in the reading club.

Summary of the chapter

This chapter explored the different ways in which gendered expression is regulated and negotiated. This was discussed in five over-arching themes - *Negotiating gendered expression*, *Normalisation of gendered violence*, *Subjugating female bodies*, and *Narratives of conformity and resistance*. It explored the kinds of stories children told about gender, and how they either maintained or resisted normative gendered ideas and behaviour. The word 'moffie' was understood and used in varying ways, but predominantly served to police masculinity, maintaining constructs of hegemonic masculinity in boys' daily lives. Policing non-conforming gendered behaviour was also informed by religiosity, which was revealed as a powerful influencer in the way that participants understand gender roles. The varied messaging that the children are exposed to (from school, church and home) created a unique understanding of gender, in which the participants held both patriarchal views of gendered behaviour, as well as more liberal notions of women empowerment and agency in gender expression. The participants' negotiations straddled the line of 'authentic' and 'performance', in which prevailing stereotypes of gender were rejected when it came to careers, domesticity, marriage and education – indicating that participants were more likely to resist specific normative gendered behaviour if they had previously been exposed to messaging which supported the resistance. This did not extend to sexuality, clothing, mannerisms and behaviour. Hegemonic gendered behaviour (particularly among boys) was seen as authentic and 'real', while behaviours that deviate from that are considered a performance or "an act". Overall, non-conforming gendered behaviours that appeared more linked to gender *identity* were rejected. Finally, the study also showed that children consistently negotiated and explored gender non-conforming behaviour using play.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I outline a summary of the findings and its implications, and discuss recommendations. I then explore limitations of the study and, finally, provide suggestions for future research and conclude the thesis.

Summary and recommendations

In this thesis, I have explored the complex and dynamic ways in which younger children socially construct and negotiate their gendered expression and experiences. The research question explored what kind of stories children construct about their gendered behaviour through written and visual representations, and whether these representations of their experiences reinforce or resist prevailing narratives of gender identity development/construction. The data was analysed through the lens of feminist intersectional theory.

The findings from the first narrative, *Negotiating gendered expression*, highlighted how children were able to identify the ways in which their gendered expressions were externally regulated (from words such as 'moffie', to more violent acts). Though societal input and religiosity were key reference points for 'right and wrong' gendered behaviour, their discussions and arguments highlighted dynamic meaning-making systems that were unique to each participant. The use of violent words during play was used as a tool to control boys' behaviour, which is reflective of the literature (Bhana & Mayeza, 2016; Mayeza, 2015; Msibi, 2012). However, a surprising departure from current research was the boys' *awareness* of the controlling ways in which words such as 'moffie' are used, resulting in their negotiating compliance to such words.

The second narrative, *Normalisation of gendered violence*, explored how the expectation of violence against girls and women informed how participants understood

gender as a whole. The construction of ‘girl’ was strongly tied to sexual vulnerability – a vulnerability that is linked to female identity. Although the heightened awareness of violence was influenced by the experience of living in Manenberg, narratives on gender-based violence and female sexual vulnerability aligned with general public discourse and literature on violence against women (Jewkes et al., 2002; Palermo et al., 2014; Swart et al., 2002). Although their understanding of violence was centred on fear, their narratives of non-consensual gendered contact were constructed as simply unpleasant and inevitable. The findings within their narratives align with current research on girls’ experience of gendered violence and threats of gendered violence, specifically in South Africa (Bhana & Anderson, 2013). However, their overt sensitivity to and awareness of violence, at their young age, may point to their amplified vulnerability within their community. This speaks to the importance of early gender-focussed programmes and interventions to focus on the nuances of consent, boundaries and bodily autonomy.

The issue of bodily autonomy is connected to the third narrative, *Subjugating female bodies*. This narrative highlighted the complex ways in which the young girls view themselves as ‘female’, which was centred on both a relating to and defiance against the sexualisation of their bodies. Although the girls prescribed to ideas of the virtues of female modesty and resistance to sexualisation and pregnancy, which is reflective of the literature, they also conceptualised this way of being as unfair and unreasonable (Bhana et al., 2010; Macleod, 1999). A key point in this finding is that the juxtapositions in their construction mirror the juxtaposed messaging that they receive. Contemporary messaging on the positivity of individual uniqueness, freedom of choice and equality are at direct odds with underlying beliefs of gendered roles and expectations. Interestingly, although the participants resisted normative gendered roles for women in families and work, they maintained constructs of female sexual abstinence (indicated by behaviour and clothing). Thus, the ways in which the

girls construct themselves in relation to their gender are often not aligned, as they appear to internalise both contradictory sets of messaging. This results in an understanding of their gender that is not unitary, but holds multiple and contradictory constructs.

Finally, in *Narratives of conformity and resistance*, individuality and agency were celebrated with the distinct exception of non-conforming gendered behaviour. Participants constructed hegemonic gendered practices as authentic while seeing alternative expressions of gender as a performance, suggesting that they construct non-conforming gendered behaviour as fake and disingenuous. Specifically, the parameters of negotiation within male gendered expression depended on whether the participants believed the expression would *define* their gender identity – restricting their play and negotiation to behaviours that would not threaten their identity as a 'boy'. Similarly, the girls' defiance centred on the importance of vocation, opportunity and education, but did not necessarily extend to the performance of female sexuality – which was constructed as a marker of morality in women. The findings highlighted the unique ways in which gendered messaging (from schools, home, and church) converged to create contradictory constructions of gender. Current research has not explored the ways in which children negotiate learned contradictions within gendered expression. In this thesis, the participants' negotiations of gender always occurred within these contradictions, in which there is both an acceptance of normative gendered constructions, as well as defiance of it. Importantly, the findings suggest that the defiance occurred insofar as it did not challenge the participants' gender identity or heterosexuality. Moreover, it showed that non-conforming gendered behaviour linked to identity is more likely to be explored and negotiated by participants within the safety of play and 'make-believe'.

The implications of these findings highlight the importance of research on the transformative potential of children's play, which is their predominant system of meaning-making and enactment (Ramugondo, 2012). Based on the above, Judith Butler's

conceptualisation of the *performance of gender* is relevant – which highlights that gender can be taught to be perceived and done differently (Butler, 2009). It would thus be useful to use gender-based interventions or classes that use play as a means for both understanding children's constructions and context, as well as to provide different gendered constructions for their engagement and negotiation – helping to consolidate the current mixture of messaging children to which children are exposed. Reading clubs and story groups, such as Nal'ibali, would be an ideal model in this regard. Methodologically, the use of storytelling, art and conversation within children's play (i.e. the Mosaic approach as a methodology) has been central in this study to gaining a wider understanding of children's experiences of gender and sexuality (Moss & Clark, 2005, 2011). In addition, inviting the presence of trusted and familiar adults within children's own space proved crucial in ensuring their comfort and feelings of safety during the process. This research will be shared with Nal'ibali and their partner organisations in order to help provide an understanding of how children construct gender, in order to inform a more gendered facet of their reading and storytelling model.

Limitations

This study presented several limitations. The time constraints and elaborate nature of data collection allowed recruitment of participants from only one community - sourced from the Nal'ibali campaign's Manenburg reading club. Although the data collected from this group could be beneficial to future research, it will not present the richness of data one would acquire from recruiting samples from multiple communities. Photovoice allows for visual representations of children's experiences, however the language barrier during interviews may have impacted what children felt comfortable expressing to me (as English is not their mother tongue). In addition, the power imbalance between adult and child could have had an impact on what the participants chose

to explore or express, or how comfortable they felt doing so. Thus, I used varied means of communication (art, photography, collages, dress-up) in order to allow for more nonverbal options of expression, as well as to ameliorate my potentially intrusive presence as an adult.

Future directions for research

The findings presented in this research provided an in-depth exploration into the ways in which younger children construct and negotiate their gendered experiences. Based on the findings, future research could further explore the types of contradictory gendered messaging to which children are exposed. Exploration of the sources of varying modern messaging, as well as children's unique internalisation of it, would be useful in understanding the foundation of how children choose to negotiate gender. In addition, further research on the defiance and rejection of normative constructs could be explored – focussing specifically on how those constructs relate to affirmation or disavowal of gender identity. Furthermore, this study did not explore the gendered experiences of children with non-conforming gender identities. Future research could therefore use participatory methods to explore how gender non-conforming young children construct their behaviour, as well as children from a range of different backgrounds. Finally, this study made use of participatory research methods with children, and future research could make use of different forms of participatory tools (such as storytelling and play) to explore participatory interventions with younger children.

Conclusion

This thesis explored the contextual ways in which gender is constructed, perceived and negotiated by young children – encompassing areas of gender-based violence, female vulnerability, the performance of hegemonic masculinity and agency. The study explored the various ways in which the the identity of 'boy' and 'girl' hold multiple social constructions which reflect the messaging children receive. Boys' defiance of masculinity did not extend to clothing or mannerisms (markers of masculine identity), while girls' defiance of femininity

also did not encompass acceptance of female sexuality. The research has shown that gender is not only internalised at a very young age, but that children construct hegemonic gendered performances as *authentic*, while non-conforming gendered behaviour is seen as a *performance*. The participants were able to hold contradictory messaging in the social construction of gender – choosing to defy normative constructs insofar as they do not challenge participants' cisgendered and heterosexual identity.

The potential of participatory methods to elicit and co-construct meaning and stories about gender with children has been explored in this study – showing the effectiveness of participatory methods in exploring children's narratives in South Africa. This research is thus an important exploratory contribution to better understand the different ways in which gender is constructed at a young age, and how those constructions are negotiated in their wider social context.

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APPENDIX A

Focus group 1 interview schedule

Read through assent forms, ensure it is explained and collect signed copies from the children.

Question: “Do you have any questions about what we’re going to do?”

Introductions: Each participant introduces themselves to each other and the researcher, followed by a Nal’ibali-style “check-in” – where the participant talks about how she is feeling and shares something she recently found interesting.

Ice-breaker: The Nal’iabli reading group facilitator will perform an ice-breaker, involving play, to get the participants comfortable. This routine may help the them relax as it is a familiar and weekly reading-club activity.

“I want to start the reading club today by asking some questions. Is that ok? Afterwards, we can all draw pictures of what we talked about.”

Potential prompts:

- How many girls are here? How many boys?
- What do girls/boys like to do?
- Do you think girls can do what boys do?
- Is there anything girls/boys are not allowed to do? Why?
- What is your favourite thing about being a girl/boy?
- Is there anything you don’t like about being a girl/boy?

- What do girls/boys do at home?
- What do girls/boys do at school?
- Are girls and boys the same? Why?

After this discussion, the researcher (together with the Literacy Mentor) will ask the participants to draw what they think girls do, and what boys do. This instruction will be left open-ended so that the children can choose for themselves how they understand ‘boy’ and ‘girl’ – and their perceived difference between the two.

APPENDIX B

Focus group 2 interview schedule

Start the group by reminding the children that they don't have to participate should they not wish to.

"In this group, we would love to hear about your pictures and photos. Would anyone like to tell us about theirs?"

Prompts:

- What's happening in that picture/photo?
- Why did you decide to draw that?
- What does the rest of the group think?

It is important to note that the questions and prompts are flexible and will change based on the nature of the drawings and the child's responses to the questions.

APPENDIX C

Individual interview schedule

Remind the participant that they can choose to opt out of the interview if they so wish. The Literacy Mentor can be present should the participant request it.

“We would love to talk to you about the pictures and photos you took. Why did you decide to take this photo? Tell me more about what this photo means.”

“This is a great journal entrye/drawing. Tell me more about this journal entry/drawing. Why did you decide to write this?”

- Use themes from focus group discussions as prompts
- Use their narrative in the interview to guide the questions asked
- Use their language or story in their journals to explore themes with them

End off the session by asking whether the participant wants to share anything else, and whether they enjoyed the process.

APPENDIX D

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Department of Psychology

University of Cape Town Rondebosch 7701 South Africa
Telephone (021) 650 3414
Fax No. (021) 650 4104

25 January 2017

Assoc. Prof. Floretta Boonzaier
Department of Psychology
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch 7701

Dear Prof. Boonzaier

I am pleased to inform you that ethical clearance has been given by an Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty of Humanities for the amended protocol, submitted 25 January 2017, to your study, "The gendered and sexual lives and identifications of South African youth: A participatory project". The reference number remains PSY2014-002.

I wish you all the best for your study.

Yours sincerely,

Lauren Wild (PhD)
Associate Professor
Chair: Ethics Review Committee

APPENDIX E

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Department of Psychology

The gendered lives of young people in South Africa –Parental Consent Form

1. Invitation and purpose

   Your child is invited to take part in an empowerment research project on gender in the lives of young people in South Africa – which looks at how children understand what it means to be a boy or a girl. We are researchers from the Department of Psychology at University of Cape Town.

2. Procedures

   Participation in this study is voluntary, which means your child is free to stop being part of the study at any time, without any negative consequences.

   If your child decides to take part in the study, s/he will be expected to do the following:

   - Meet 6-8 times with the researcher/s as well as the other children in the study. The meetings will include photography training, drawing and journaling, group discussions, and individual interviews with the researcher. During these meetings, we will talk about the project, what you child expects from the study, your child's views and experiences of their lives, and your child's photographs. The meetings and discussions will take place at the Nal'ibali reading club church, and will not last longer than 90 minutes and refreshments will be provided for your child. The meetings and discussions will be audio recorded but we will make sure that your child's identity is protected in any of the information that we use from these discussions. In other words, we will not use your child's real name outside of the study.
   - Participate in photography training by a photographer who will teach your child how to use a digital camera and how to take good pictures. This training will also take place at the reading club church.
   - Take photographs that show his/her life and his/her community. Your child will be given a camera to use. Together we will choose some of your child's best pictures and we will pay for the printing of the photos after s/he has taken them.

- Talk about the photos with the researchers and with the other children in the group. Your child will also write a story about his/her own photographs and pictures.
- If your child would like this, we will show his/her photographs at a public exhibition. Your child does not have to do this if s/he doesn't want to, but if s/he does, your child can choose which photographs or stories s/he would like us to show.

3. Inconveniences

   We don't expect that your child will be upset by the research but if it does become upsetting, your child may stop participating at any time without any negative consequences. If your child becomes upset or distressed in this project we will refer him/her for counseling, if necessary.

   Your child may choose to stop being part of the study at any time and this will have no negative consequences for your child or his/her participation in Nal'ibali.

4. Benefits

   Your child is given an opportunity to share his/her views and experiences and what your child tells us could help us create other community programmes with young people. Your child is given an opportunity to tell us and others about what is important to him/her when it comes to being a boy or a girl. Your child will also receive training in how to use a camera.

5. Privacy and confidentiality

   We will protect your child's personal information. Your child's information will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the principal researcher's office without his/her name and or other personal identifiers.

   In the group discussions, what your child says will be heard by other children in the group and we will ask them to respect confidentiality in the groups – in other words, to not take that information outside of the group. We have no control over what children in the group will say outside the group – so be aware that full confidentiality of the group discussions cannot be guaranteed. The group discussions, meetings and interviews will all be digitally recorded and these files will be stored on the principal researcher's computer and will be protected by a password.

   Some of this research may be published in academic journals but your child's identity will be protected at all times. Again, no real names will be used.

6. Money matters

   Neither you nor your child will be paid for taking part in the study.

7. Contact details

   If you have further questions or concerns about the study please contact one of the researchers at the Department of Psychology, University of Cape Town:

   Malini Mohana: 083 275 9628
   Dr Floretta Boonzaier: 021 – 650 3429

   If you have any issues or problems regarding this research or your rights as a research participant and would like to speak to the Chair of the Ethics committee, please contact Mrs Rosalind Adams at the Department of Psychology, University of Cape Town (UCT), 021 650 3417.

If you understand the process, the risks and benefits of the study and you agree/consent to your child participating in the project, please sign below:

Parent/guardian Name: _____

Parent/guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Agreement For Tape-Recording

I agree to have my child's voice tape-recorded in the interview.

Parent/guardian Name: _____

Parent/guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX F

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Department of Psychology

The gendered lives of young people in South Africa – Focus Group Assent

We want to tell you about a research study we are doing. A research study is a way to learn more about something. We would like to find out more about what it means to be a boy or a girl. You are being asked to join the study because we would like to hear what you think about this topic.

If you agree to join this study, you will be asked to draw some pictures, take photos and journal. We will do these activities three or four times. We will also sit together in a group and talk about your pictures and photographs. The researcher will also ask you to join her for an interview, where you can talk about what your pictures or photos, and what wrote in your journal. This will be recorded using a voice recorder.

You do not have to join this study. It is up to you. You can say okay now and change your mind later. All you have to do is tell us you want to stop. No one will be mad at you if you don't want to be in the study or if you join the study and change your mind later and stop.

We may learn something that will help other children and adults to know what you think being a boy or a girl means.

Before you say yes or no to being in this study, we will answer any questions you have. If you join the study, you can ask questions at any time. Just tell the researcher that you have a question.

If you have any questions about this study please feel free contact Malini Mohana, 083 275 9628.

If you sign your name below, it means that you agree to take part in this research study.

_____
Date (MM/DD/YEAR)

_____
Signature of Child/Adolescent Participant

Agreement For Tape-Recording

I agree to be tape-recorded in the interview.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX G

Social support and counseling list.

1. Childline

56 Roeland Street, Cape Town, 8001

Tel: (+27)-(0) 21-461 11 13

Email address: childline@lifelinewc.org.za

Web: www.lifelinewc.org.za

2. Department of Social Development

Western Cape tel: (021) 483 3858/3765/3158/5445

3. CAFDA

CAFDA Family Centre, Corner Prince George Drive and 8th Avenue, Grassy Park

Tel: 021 706-2050

4. Cape Town Child Welfare

Lower Klipfontein Road, Gatesville

Tel: +2721 6383127

Email address: information@helpkids.org.za

5. Cape Mental Health

22 Ivy Street, Observatory

Tel: 021 447 9040

Email address: info@cmh.org.za