Understanding youth experiences in Mitchells Plain: a narrative photovoice investigation

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

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

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Abstract

South African young people in townships such as Mitchells Plain live lives marked by continuity and change and plagued by violence or the threat of it. Research with youth has historically focussed on educational attainment, employment, and risk factors for disease. Such scholarship, which is frequently decontextualised, offers limited insights into how adolescents' identities are formed in response to the broader communities they live in. This paper aimed to broaden the scope of research around identity development in adolescent youth by utilising decolonial feminist approaches and photovoice methods in a secondary research study to investigate how youth in Mitchells Plain define themselves and their communities. Special emphasis was placed on gendered identity, along with racial, class, sexual and place-identity as non-discrete categories of identity which nonetheless influence how youth perceive themselves, their peers, and their communities. Adolescents reproduced and resisted popular discourses around violence, gender, and life in working-class communities in South Africa. Youth narrated their understandings and experiences of gender-based and community violence; their efforts to seek safety; their striving for autonomy and achievement; and how they formed different types of relationships as modes of resistance and resilience. This research offered insights that challenged dominant narratives about young people in the Cape Flats, which may inform improved interventions targeted at youth. This study's key contributions included the challenging of binaries of victimisation and perpetration of violence amongst youth, along with those around childhood and adulthood. Preventing youth violence, strengthening buffers to the effects of violence on youth and developing a broader understanding of the underpinnings of violence in working-class communities - particularly sexual and gendered violence - are key areas of research and intervention.

Keywords: *decolonial feminism, youth, violence, gender, sexuality*

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Chapter One
An Introduction

The adolescent subject in South African schools

Much like colonised subjects were othered to establish the "self" and the "other", "childhood" has been manufactured and reproduced in opposition to "adulthood" in manners that create binaries that ascribe certain characteristics to children and others to adults. Developmental psychology and neuropsychological research, which emphasise the inability of teenagers to engage in rational decision-making and judgement, may reinforce dominant narratives around the "irrational" teenager while paying little attention to the way childhoods & teenage hoods differ according to the contexts in which they inhabit, and the levels of freedom and responsibility managed by youth in particular contexts. The prevailing 'truth' around adolescence in developmental psychology is that adolescence symbolises a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood (Burman, 1994). During this stage, the adolescent cannot be "decided" as they are neither a child nor an adult but are simultaneously both in a manner which contains and excludes binary oppositions between naivete and experience, dependence and independence or immaturity and maturity (Macleod, 2003). Therefore, the assumption of "teenagehood" as a real and generalisable experience can result in the generation of particular ideas and literature on occurrences such as teenage pregnancy, which is a source of increasing alarm for adults, along with specific interventions that combat the constant threat of degeneration that adolescence carries (Macleod, 2003). When research is done with teenagers in marginalised communities, a specific kind of violence can occur when interactions with them refuse to acknowledge and make visible the way environments, particularly those in which violence is present, shape the experiences and expectations of adolescence.

Although research on youth in South Africa may be prompted by concerns over the health and futures of adolescents, decolonial work ought to acknowledge that while some of these concerns are for the physical and mental well-being of youth, others may perpetuate the sort of regulatory discourses that surround South African youth and their potentials (Macleod, 2009). Many gender scholars question the political effects of research done around young people's sexualities, and the programs or projects within schools, universities, or communities which they inform or are informed by (Shefer & Hearn, 2022). A decolonial feminist approach to research offers opportunities to question the societal curiosity about and investment in intervening in youth sexualities as a present-day manifestation of colonial

anxieties around African youth. Research ought to be critical of constructions of childhood which ignore the history of the concept and shifting nature of childhoods across time, culture, and context (Macleod, 2003). In South Africa, such research might question the establishment of "norms" in a country with such different social and material realities across class, race, and geographical location.

Psychological research, as part of the social sciences, engages in modes of knowledge production that are frequently thought to be outside the workings of power, when in fact, it is part of the deployment of power (Foucault, 1970). For example, US psychology is not only greatly centred on North America, but psychologists in this region are frequently unaware of how its history and culture shape its methodological and theoretical structures, along with assumptions about stress, trauma, and the individual (Christopher et al., 2014).

Emerging and historical work on youth in South Africa has focused greatly on the sexual and reproductive health of young people, particularly young women considering the increased prevalence of HIV in adolescent girls (specifically, those aged 15 – 19) along with the possibility and impact of early childbearing (Zuma et al., 2022). This has been a needed response to the HIV/ AIDS epidemic, which disproportionately affects youth aged 15 – 24, who comprised approximately 38% of all new infections with HIV in the country in 2017 (Zuma et al., 2022). While this public-health focus of research aims to inform policymaking and intervention structuring; its attention on identifying risk factors frequently does little to identify or address the mechanisms through which young people's victimisation as well as perpetration of sexual coercion and violence becomes normalised and thus, increasingly prevalent. In South Africa, present-day sexual violence is fuelled by justificatory narratives that are grounded in colonial and apartheid practices. These practices legitimised violence by the dominant group against the disempowered in political arenas, as well as informal, social and domestic spaces (Moffett, 2006). While their legacies do not excuse contemporary acts of violence, they are important in understanding modern-day relationships and violence against women and children.

There is a growing body of research investigating the nature of love in Africa in the context of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, allowing for adolescent discourses of love to be uncovered whilst monitoring the gender and wider cultural norms that reproduce femininities and masculinities characterised by domination and subjugation (Bhana, 2015). Therefore, the sexual socialisation of young people has become a key area of investigation and intervention, including school-based sex education, which is frequently conveyed through Life Orientation lessons, parental communication, youth-approachable services, peer education and media

programming or public health campaigns (Macleod et al., 2015). Youth in South Africa are frequently presented with two subject positions or identities, namely the "responsible sexual subject" and "the victim" (Macleod et al., 2015). While the former subject position allows youth to envision themselves as able to pair responsibility with knowledge and understanding; knowledge on reproductive systems, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unwanted pregnancy are prioritised, with indirect messages about sexual regret or shame included in school texts (Macleod et al., 2015). The latter position emphasises similar dangers as the consequences or fallout of sexual assault which survivors, particularly girls and women, may have to manage; highlighting feelings of helplessness, passivity, and "damage" that women who have been sexually violated may experience. What is most problematic about this subject positioning and its emphasis on vulnerability, inactivity, and powerlessness, is that it can serve to obscure the many times that women and girls resist male power and challenge men - exercising agency and acting in response to desire and pleasure rather than conforming to gender roles and norms (Bhana & Pattman, 2009; Shefer, 2016). It also leaves limited room for identification with a survivor subject position and casts doubt on the possibilities of resilience and post-traumatic growth. Other subject positions highlighted in South African schools and their Life Orientation programs include the rights-bearing agentic sexual subject, the vigilant sexual subject, the coercive or violent sexual subject, the heterosexual subject, and the developing sexual teenager (Macleod, 2003). Young people are participants, and frequently leaders, in continuously reinventing cultural models, which Henderson (2001) describes as an activity of mimesis or mirroring expressive of their multiple identities. Therefore, identifying and elucidating how youth with different identities inherit, shape, and participate in expressions of gender and sexuality may be helpful in the project of unsettling and reshaping harmful cultural models.

Communities and schools act as sites where gender and sexuality are both made and unmade. There is a growing body of evidence that people adapt their behaviour and sense of self according to the social contexts in which they manoeuvre (Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008 as cited in Veale et al., 2014). For example, in particular community contexts, masculine identities and behaviours can become aggressive and violent, while in other social contexts, they may be benign (Veale et al., 2014).

Decolonising research done with and about children may emphasise the way contexts shape the lives of children and adolescents, moving beyond the children's rights framework which has grown dominant over the past three decades with its progress in knowledge construction about childhood and adolescence (L. Jamieson, personal communication, May 9,

2023). The idea of a global child, frequently reinforced by psychological research about children and their development, is often de-contextualised and de-territorialised. Such a child may be expected to follow a generalised trajectory of development and growth, with interventions aimed at ensuring that this development is not disrupted or deviated from. While this approach is helpful in matters of physical and educational development; it may leave little room for knowledge construction about the psychological development of children and adolescents in non-Western contexts and their implications for individual and public health.

Of particular interest is the construction of young people's masculinities and femininities within working-class communities which have been shaped by the legacy of the Group Areas Act, a form of race-based residential segregation which relegated racialised groups of people to locations outside of urban areas, which were predominantly reserved for the white population. Material and social forces have impacted the expression of youth sexualities and violence (Bhana, 2015) in areas such as townships, which came to be characterised by fractured communities and the proliferation of violence.

Gender, sexuality, and adolescence

Gender continues to be a key influence in how sexuality is formed and expressed, and through which power manifests (Bhana & Pattman, 2009). The formation, solidification and expression of gender norms and roles are at the forefront of investigating and addressing South Africa's multiple intersecting sexual and reproductive health challenges. Adolescents are important people to collaborate with in research about the interactions between gender, sexuality, and violence. Collaborators ought to view them as *simultaneously* in need of knowledge and guidance as well as in possession of knowledge about love, gender and sexuality. Knowledge about the daily lives of teenagers, how they inhabit their communities, their schooling, friendships, intimate partnerships, and ambitions may offer insights which can be used to combat youth violence and curb the proliferation of community and gender-based violence.

Aims of the project

As part of a larger research endeavour to Unsettle Knowledge Production on Gendered and Sexual Violence, this project aims to add to the growing literature on gender-based and sexual violence. This knowledge is generated using decolonial methods to avoid the reproduction of knowledge in the academy which dehumanises, further marginalises and

pathologizes marginalised people – particularly those whose gender, race, sexuality, location, and age (amongst many other factors) places them at the intersections of matrices of domination which shape their lived experiences. Instead, this research project aspires to advance social change and contribute to expanding gender equity and nonviolence in South Africa.

Youth research often focuses closely on the spheres of education and work (particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds), resulting in a narrow understanding of youth transition (Geldens et al., 2011). Research and media reportage on areas in the Cape Flats and their younger inhabitants frequently reflects a colonial anthropological gaze or disproportionate focus on risk factors contributing towards criminal behaviour or victimisation. Frequently ignored are the reasons why young people behave as they do, and correlations between risk factors and offending or victimisation may further serve to pathologize individuals with certain backgrounds and lived experiences (Armstrong, 2006; O'Mahony, 2009). This ignores the vulnerability of the communities in which they live and the societal context in which violence occurs is often disregarded or abstracted from consideration, particularly in quantitative work (Shy, 1997; O'Mahony, 2009). Emerging research on the effects of violence on youth identity has revealed narratives of struggle between being a desired "good self" and taking crucial steps for survival (Schiavone, 2009). By accounting for and investigating key factors in youth justice such as personal agency, sociocultural contexts, psychological motivation and human rights dimensions, this work adds significantly to a cohort of work which aims to bring about social justice.

Photovoice methodology and analysis also allow research to transcend the cultural and developmental barriers to communication that are inherent to many linguistically oriented research practices (Malherbe et al., 2016). Using a narrative and decolonial feminist approach, this study aimed to give a nuanced voice to youth in Mitchells Plain by asking the participants and the data different questions and thinking more widely about ethics and representations of youth. This serves to push back against the status quo and centre radical discourses that question fundamental definitions (O'Mahony, 2009). By bringing gender (along with race, class, and sexuality) to the forefront as part of youth identity and development, this study will contribute to a larger pool of intersectional research which acknowledges the mechanisms through which these categories shape lived experiences rather than engaging with them singularly as risk factors.

Thesis structure

The first chapter offered an introduction to the adolescent subject in research on youth, particularly their gendered and sexual development and identity formation. Chapter Two consists of a review of the literature outlining the contexts in which the experiences of young people in South Africa take place. More closely, youth in environments which are shaped by violence, livelihoods moulded by societal reactions to gendered and sexual identities, and the impact of violence on the identity development of adolescents. The theoretical framework and methodology informing and shaping this research are provided in the third chapter. This chapter introduces and expands on decolonial feminist approaches to research and discusses ethical and reflexive considerations applied to the project. In Chapter Four, the findings of the study and an analysis of the thematic narratives that surfaced are presented. A conclusion of the dissertation is provided in Chapter Five – offering a summary of the research findings, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research on youth and violence.

Chapter Two
A Literature Review on the context of youth experiences in South Africa

This chapter will review existing literature on the identity development of young people in South Africa, starting with a contextualisation of youth in South Africa. An examination of the challenges which young people face in connection with their sexual and gendered identities will spotlight working-class communities and the socio-political history of violence in Mitchells Plain and South Africa. This chapter will then review literature on the impact of violence on the development of gendered and sexual identities amongst youth as well as the mechanisms through which communities shape young people's experiences and identity development. Subsequently, the chapter will present a rationale for participatory action research with youth (which foregrounds their voices) and the importance of understanding how the communities and the presence of violence influence their identity development. Lastly, the chapter will present the research questions and aims of the study.

Youth in South Africa and the challenges they face

South African young people's everyday lives are marked by both continuity and change; with youth navigating the juxtaposition of living in a society with a violent history and a fluctuating present, which is often plagued by present-day violence (Bagnol et al., 2010). Youth identity formation in South Africa's post-apartheid society differs according to age, location, and setting, along with the racial categories and legislation of apartheid (Lundgren & Scheckle, 2019). Racial divisions and hetero-normative discourses make the historical past and socialisation visible, revealing how these still play a role in the functioning of a society that may pinpoint "new" targets of violence, such as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Queer (LGBTQ+) people (Bagnol et al., 2010) in addition to targets such as women and Black people. Even as socialisation across differences becomes more commonplace and fluidities in tastes and expression of identities are visible among youth; inequalities continue to persist between different races, classes, sexual orientations, and genders, affecting the lived experiences and identity developments of those who are marginalised in particular ways (Bagnol et al., 2010; Lundgren & Scheckle, 2019).

Mitchells Plain, contextualising adolescence

The Cape Flats faces specific challenges that affect youth uniquely. These areas were created by the apartheid government to house coloured[1] communities who were displaced

[1]Coloured is used to refer to a socio-political identity constructed under South Africa's apartheid era which refers to people of mixed-race or Creole heritage. This identity has

from central and western areas of Cape Town as they became designated white areas under the Group Areas Act (Adhikari, 2008). Such communities swiftly became hotspots for gangs and drug abuse as they deteriorated in the aftermath of these forced removals. Subsequently, many children and youth grow up experiencing various forms of economic, family, and social insecurity and are victims of multiple forms of violence (Weber & Bowers-DuToit, 2018). These new townships saturated the racial category "coloured" with physical, spatial, and economic meanings - but few studies have reflected on how these spaces have acquired numerous new meanings since resettlement, particularly for their inhabitants (Salo, 2003).

Unemployment, substance abuse, school dropouts, breakdown of communal and family bonds, lack of police resources, inequality and cramped housing situations are often attributed as underlying causes of gang and youth violence (Adhikari, 2004; Hendricks, 2020). These structural acts of violence precipitate direct violence in South Africa through their unequal distribution of power. However, research and interventions in these areas ignore the multiple levels of risk and are often under-addressed and underfunded (Galtung, 1969; Clark, 2012; Peterson et al., 2005). Instead, interventions such as the deployment of the military into areas such as Mitchells Plain signify the national response to escalating violence; with long-term solutions for curbing and eliminating gang violence left relatively unaddressed **(**Hendricks, 2020). Much like research on the effects of war on youth, academic research which concentrates on violence exposure as a primary risk factor often does so at the expense of recognising the systemic impact of gang violence and crime on the broader ecology of youth's lives, including disruptions to key social, economic and political activities (Barber, 2013). These issues often impact youth severely, and high rates of abuse and neglect, particularly sexual violence against young girls, occur within what is referred to as an "ecosystem of violence" (Weber & Bowers-DuToit, 2018, p. 2). Recent research indicates that, in South Africa, reducing sexual violence against children can reduce the prevalence of drug abuse by up to 14%, anxiety could be decreased by 10% if children were not emotionally abused, and in women, alcohol abuse could be lowered by 14% if women were not neglected as children (Hsiao et al., 2018).

Living in a community where violence is prevalent and continuous can trigger psychological disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), developmental conflicts, depression, and risk for suicide, along with behavioural and cognitive effects such

undergone rapid transformations in expression post-apartheid (Adhikari, 2004) and is used here to refer to those communities which continue to embrace it as part of their identity.

as violent, aggressive, and offending behaviour (Nuttman-Schwartz, 2017; Van der Merwe & Dawes, 2007). While these behaviours (along with PTSD symptoms such as hyperarousal and avoidance) can lead to a greater chance of survival in contexts of continuous threat, this can ultimately precipitate revictimization and intergenerational cycles of violence (Hinsberger et al., 2016; Schiavone, 2009). Research shows young men living in low-income areas in South Africa are especially at risk of developing an attraction to cruelty and an increased willingness to fight in response to exposure to violence (Hinsberger et al., 2016). These behaviours are simultaneously related to higher levels of posttraumatic stress (Hinsberger et al., 2016).

Troubled young people in communities such as Mitchells Plain are often individually pathologized when depicted in media, with children who behave violently or under the influence of drugs and alcohol seen as dangerous and bad influences. Headlines such as "Mitchells Plain kids lack motivation" misdirect attention to a lack of aspirations in children rather than the continuing effects of inequalities created in the past and lack of support structures and meaningful empowerment (Loggenberg, 2013). Such media reports on Mitchells Plain, which often centre on extreme violence, hopelessness, and poverty, perpetuate single-dimensional, ahistorical portrayals of the area as inherently crime-ridden and dangerous. This echoes the "othering" colonial anthropological gaze that is often laid on towns and areas where tragedies occur (Boonzaier, 2017). The resilience and resistance of youth in response to these societal injustices and subsequent portrayals remains under-researched. When research on the resistance of people in townships or working-class suburbs is done, neo-liberal discourses of resilience, adaptability and self-help may be employed while rendering those of oppression and inequality invisible (Huysamen et al., 2020). In reality, communities such as Mitchells Plain may simultaneously be places of hope *and* despair for their inhabitants. Knowing how youth identify themselves within such communities can mobilise youth and provide great insights into the types of support and interventions that may be useful for positive community changes.

Violence and Youth Identities

"[Violence] affects children's views of the world and of themselves, their ideas about the meaning and purpose of life, their expectations for future happiness, and their moral development" (Margolin & Gordis, 2000, p. 446). Through access to material assets such as financial resources or transportation, youth in the Cape Flats may have the opportunity to adopt new and shifting identities. However, access to resources does not occur in a vacuum for the less well-off but oftentimes through liaisons with more powerful community members

such as gangsters (Salo, 2003). For marginalised youth, joining a street gang is viewed as an aged mechanism to deal with issues of identity and belonging; and is deeply tied to the way gangs are not only symbols of resistance for frustrated youth in under-resourced communities, but also institutions of provision (Petrus, 2013). The lived realities of class, and how it intersects with race, gender, sexuality, and location, are important to understand to go beyond research centred on "risk" amongst youth, as certain practices of identity may be malleable or even enjoyable, depending on social forces (Deutsch, 2009; Petrus, 2013; Salo, 2003). Thus, it is imperative to investigate and provide alternative possibilities for identity realisation for youth, particularly young men whose mortalities and adult lifespans can be linked to certain practices of masculinity.

Structural violence is not only visible through issues of class, but gender as well. The development of adolescents' gendered identities is affected by witnessing domination by men and submission by women, as shifts occur in how they relate to the opposite sex (Mullender & Morley, 1994 as cited in Makhubela, 2012). High exposure to domestic violence puts children at risk for other forms of violence and negatively impacts identity development; including in aspects of trust, autonomy, and intimacy - which are key in adolescent development and relationships (Makhubela, 2012; Schiavone, 2009; Ward et al., 2007). In high-risk contexts, dominant forms of masculinity encourage personal violence in men, helping to legitimise other forms of violence amongst adolescent boys, such as engaging in hypermasculine behaviour and aggression to defend themselves from victimisation, to paternalistically guard women, or as a survival strategy (Anderson, 2010; Hamlall & Morrell, 2009; Williams et al., 2014). However, research in South Africa has unveiled a questioning occurring in men and boys on their position of dominance, such as an interrogation of patriarchal discourses on their "right" to hit women and girls (Anderson, 2010). Moreover, men's exposure to or participation in other social justice issues may shape men's consciousness of gender, possibly resulting in more gender-egalitarian ideals (Harnois, 2017)

In heterosexual adolescent relationships in South Africa, violence plays a major role in generating and perpetuating inequality within sexual relationships (Jewkes & Morrell, 2018). The social acceptance and tolerance of various forms of violence, particularly sexual violence against girl-children, is a major factor in its ongoing perpetuation (Anderson, 2010; Matthews & Benvenuti, 2014). Sexual and gender-based violence, particularly intimate partner violence, perpetuates a gendered risk of disease, with young women between 15 – 24 at most risk for contracting Human Immuno-deficiency Virus (HIV), particularly those in unequal relationships (Jewkes et al., 2010). Between 2010 – 2013, HIV and tuberculosis were

the leading causes of death among young women of the same age in the Western Cape (De Lannoy et al., 2018). Emotional, physical, and sexual abuse suffered by women as children is also a key determinant of victimisation to violence in their later years (De Lannoy et al., 2018). Public health and broader government interventions have been limited in addressing intimate partner violence and gender inequality as challenges which have pervasive effects on the physical and mental health, safety and well-being of women and children.

Among young women, apartheid and subsequent social inequalities have contributed to mechanisms of sexual oppression – compelling many to adopt a passive and homogenous African femininity (Bhana & Anderson, 2013). Pregnant teenagers are more likely to have had first and subsequent coerced sexual experiences than non-pregnant peers; with both reluctant to refer to these experiences as "rape" (Jewkes et al., 2000). Considering South Africa's high rates of teenage pregnancies and the prevalence of coerced sex in adolescent relationships, knowledge-making sense of young women's sexual and gendered identity development amidst their exposure to sexual violence is crucial. More acquiescent femininities, frequently reinforced by the presence or threat of violence, have also been shown to prevent young women from influencing the circumstances of sex, causing more frequent sex and reduced condom usage (Jewkes et al., 2010). Conversely, Bhana and Anderson's (2013) research on the construction of South African teenage women's sexualities challenged representations of African women's sexualities as docile, in suffering and in pain. The constructions of sexuality by their participants revealed both sexual and romantic agency *and* complicity to male power, materialism, and heterosexual norms. While critical of male power, young women simultaneously regulate their sexuality in the struggle to achieve respectability, and personal safety, and avoid teenage pregnancy as well as the associations it carries in school, such as social decay and degeneration (Bhana et al., 2013; Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Shefer et al., 2013; Shefer et al., 2015). In contrast, young men were given more space to transgress the criteria of respectability without losing it, for example, through drinking and promiscuous behaviour (Campbell, 1995). Such work challenges dominant social representations of young women as passive and lacking agency but exposes that they are not adequately empowered or assisted to meaningfully subvert gendered power inequalities and their consequences, even in so-called "safe spaces" like school Life Orientation classes (Bhana, 2015; Shefer et al., 2015; Vincent & Mthatyana, 2015).

Changing masculinities should also be part of efforts to promote safer sexual practices amongst adolescents as violence, sexually risky and antisocial behaviours tend to occur

together. These factors predict higher rates of sexually transmitted infections which jeopardise young men's health and lives (Jewkes & Morrell, 2018; Ratele, 2008). Understanding the gendered and sexual identity development of youth, as well as providing spaces for young men to interrogate and speak out against violence and misogyny, is important to push back against notions of the "inevitability of male violence" (Anderson, 2010; Morrell & Makhaye, 2007, p. 154).

Sexual identity development amongst youth can be constrained by heteropatriarchal norms and an increased risk of homophobic victimisation for LGBTQ+ adolescents (Msibi, 2012). While agency and pleasure in non-heterosexual partnerships and identities amongst school-going youth remain under-researched, emerging scholarship has investigated how young people navigate homosexuality and the rounded lives of LGBTQ+ adolescents. Langa's (2015) research with adolescent boys in Alexandra township detailed how they engage in homophobia and uphold constructions of hegemonic masculinity by distancing themselves from "gay" boys and stereotypically "gay" practices. On the other hand, Zway & Boonzaier's (2015) work enabled young lesbian and bisexual women to tell stories about their lives and identities through photovoice, revealing complex narratives of self-discovery, alienation, as well as pleasure and affirmation from others. It is important for work which looks at youth identity to take sexuality into account, and when telling stories about the multi-dimensional lives of youth to be careful not to further marginalise the voices of LGBTQ+ youth in research processes which may perceive heterosexuality to not only be dominant but the default.

Broadening the scope of research around youth sexuality beyond discourses of danger and victimhood is essential and enables an understanding of youth identity development as inclusive of the development of gendered and sexual identities rather than endangered by these facets and experiences. Increasing youth consciousness around these challenges and possibilities can aid in the construction of better alternatives to sexually violent or passive behaviours and the promotion of alternative masculinities and femininities, possibly enacting broader community change.

Youth and Community

"People's identities are shaped by the historically determined locations in which they live or frequent on a consistent basis" (Kessi & Boonzaier, 2018 p. 305). **"**Place-identity" might be viewed as a component of the self-identity of a person composed of cognitions about the physical world in which an individual lives (Proshansky et al., 1983). These cognitions may represent the various physical settings that define the day-to-day existence of

every human being; including memories, feelings, values, preferences, meanings and notions of behaviour and experiences of these settings (Proshansky et al., 1983). During adolescence, neighbourhoods are especially important considering young people's limited geographic mobility during this stage (Warner et al., 2011).

Children do not simply shape place-identity around their own experiences with the physical environment but incorporate what other people do, say, or think about these physical settings – whether it be what is right or wrong or good or bad about them (Proshansky et al., 1983). Chonody et al.'s (2013) study on how youth saw violence in their communities showed participants representing violence in their communities through pictures of trash, graffiti, and cramped housing; revealing a perception that violence did not originate through individuals but rather from immobilised community institutions which were unable to develop and enforce norms in their community to discourage such behaviour (Sampson & Groves, 1989). Youth living in negatively reported-on areas such as the Cape Flats may view themselves in similarly damaging terms if they assume the burden of the badness which appears to reside in their surroundings; and may be reluctant to talk about experiences or memories of violence (Fairbairn, 1952, as cited in Makhubela, 2012). Considering challenging circumstances, crime, and community violence, a broader understanding of well-being is needed to understand the way communities shape and affect youth identities. This would emphasize well-being as a relational dynamic which includes the productive interactions between people, culture, and the numerous social and physical spaces which they simultaneously inhabit and mould (Wexler & Eglington, 2015). Notably, youth oftentimes do not have the power over their physical environments that may be outlined in such a dynamic relationship, particularly in certain communities in South Africa. However, if their views are communicated to adults and key stakeholders in the community, possibilities for such a relationship open up. Photovoice studies such as an inter-generational one done in Flint, where youth were able to express their concerns about neighbourhood violence to policymakers and community leaders, can result in policy changes and better access to resources, such as funding for violence prevention (Wang et al., 2004). Youth in the Cape Flats have expressed the need for an array of support services and personnel, such as reliable police and security services, nurses, teachers, mentors, and therapists (De Lannoy et al., 2018). Political will and support for implementing young people's policy and program recommendations can create and enhance youth well-being, as youth are given the opportunity to improve and alter their communities, livelihoods, and identities (Wang, 2006).

Senses of belonging generated by community-institutions, such as schools and the church, can be buffers for children who reside in contexts of continuous stress (Nuttman-Schwartz, 2017; Weber & Bowers-DuToit, 2018). In Campbell's (1995, p. 165) research with youth living in township schools, the possibility of obtaining a higher education and joining the sphere of "Educated People" presented learners with high hopes for personal, family and community advancement. Young men with higher education attainment and those involved in religious activities had a lower likelihood of being involved in teenage pregnancies (De Wet et al., 2018). While they are generally viewed and operate as protective, these institutions can also be ideologically violent, for example, through race and class-infused language ideologies and practices in educational places, or through the perpetuation of patriarchal culture in the church (Cooper, 2018; Le Roux, 2012; Weber & Bowers-DuToit, 2018). Senses of pride in racial and gendered identity, such as that promoted by the Black Consciousness and feminist movements, may also prove to be buffers to stressors, particularly in the face of discrimination and conscientisation amongst youth (Biko, 1987; Williams et al., 2014). This may lead to the formation of dignified identities and incentives for social change.

Identity development is a central developmental task in adolescence. Developmental researchers such as Erikson (1950) and Rosenberg (1979) have stressed the role of the social environment in the development of individual identity (Erikson, 1968; Proshansky, 1983). This is because adolescents navigating a period of questioning attempt to define who they are in various domains of their lives (such as occupation, gender, sexual identity and religion) by engaging with their communities, families, peers and environments in the process of resolving this stage (Erikson, 1968). Communities affect behaviour through the development, maintenance and transmission of social norms that influence preferences for as well as meanings of particular behaviours (Warner et al., 2011). These can include norms such as the appropriate age of sexual debut or the acceptable number of sexual partners (Warner et al., 2011). Consequently, it is vital to ask what the effects of the built environment and the community are on youth identity and how they define themselves within society. These intersectional identities are important to study as they provide insight into the agencies that youth exercise or the limitations they face in determining their futures and enacting community change.

Therefore, it is worth allowing youth to talk about their communities using their voices, images, and ideas in research to understand the relationship between youth identities and the communities by which they are shaped. This may help have a positive or empowering effect on youth identity development (particularly gendered and sexual identity), their place-

identity, as well as on their collective actions within communities when relevant stakeholders and policymakers are recruited.

Research question and objectives

This research is part of a larger research project that looks at representations of gender and sexuality among a diversity of young people in South Africa using photovoice methods. Specifically, this project aims to give voice to the identity formations of high school learners, and their experiences at the school and in their community. The research questions that this project aims to answer are:

- How do adolescents living in Mitchells Plain choose to represent their experiences and racial, gendered, class and sexual identities through Photovoice?
- How do the stories girls and boys tell challenge or maintain dominant narratives about young people in South Africa, their behaviours and their relationships with each other and their communities?
- How do youth in Mitchells Plain narrate their experiences of living in and navigating their environment?

Chapter Three

Methodology

Theoretical Framework - Decolonial Feminisms

For colonised women, processes of racialisation and gendered subordination were hallmarks in the process of colonisation (Oyěwùmí, 1997). "In contemporary contexts, decolonial discourses specifically centre racialised subjectivity, to a large degree ignoring the ways in which this is intersected with other forms of subjectivity and power, with gender being among the most important" (Boonzaier & van Niekerk, 2019, p. 2).

Decolonial feminisms thus emerge from multiple sites of struggles with colonisation, resulting in them being rich and heterogeneous (Velez, 2019). These feminisms ask the "coloniality question" of feminist theories and practices to expose how coloniality supports the oppressive logic which forms the categories which intersectionality identifies (Velez, 2019). In South Africa, decolonial feminist agendas for psychology have the potential to explore and disrupt political processes of psychological inferiorisation and control, as well as highlight the connections between knowledge production in psychology and the reproduction of oppressive power in a myriad of forms (Biko, 1987; Fanon, 1986; Kessi & Boonzaier, 2018). Such work intends to theorise oppression in its entirety while maintaining and promoting the possibility of resistance and liberation (Velez, 2019). Decolonial feminist methodologies aim to shift away from the androcentric focus of psychology, along with its maintenance of a heteropatriarchal status quo (Kessi & Boonzaier, 2018). To do so, decolonial feminist research aims to resist rather than reinforce dominant notions of gender or sexuality that obscure the fact of an "invisible norm" (Puwar, 2001). This can be done through generating research centred on gender and sexuality that does not reify male power in work, particularly in investigating heterosexual relations; as well as through resisting binaristic pictures of women as either victims or agents (Shefer, 2016). Decolonial feminisms aim to offer nuanced narratives or portraits of gender that resist categorical logics rather than unconsciously reproducing the logics of coloniality (Velez, 2019). Such categorical logics often view gender, race, sexuality, and class as identities which can be separated and investigated independently, when the separability of categories results in a fragmentation of oppressed selves, whose lived experiences are a result of a fusion of identities rather than overlap of discrete labels (Lugones, 2010; Velez, 2019).

Modernity or coloniality of being promotes psychologies which research "atomistic actors abstracted from social context" and essentially free from the constraints of their environment (Adams et al., 2018, p. 20). Fanon's meditations are useful in indicating that

identity formation challenges amongst youth are not merely a result of individual crises but are to be found "in the undeclared pathology of our normalcy" (Long, 2017, p. 86), such as the everyday outbreaks of violence which occur in the lives of youth in the Cape Flats. Thus, thinking of identity, including seemingly "fixed" identities such as gender and sexuality, as shifting and responsive to perceived boundaries and positions might be more appropriate for decolonial research (Bhabha, 1994). This is particularly important in research with youth, particularly young women, who have been historically researched and reported on in governmental ways that aim to monitor, regulate, and discipline their behaviours and sexualities (Shefer, 2016). Methodologies need to accompany a research practice that resists the perpetuation of the (colonial) tradition of surveillance with the intent of management and control (Shefer, 2016). Thus, decolonial feminist research aims to give voice to the experiences of the marginalised but to do so in a way that allows for different imaginations of gender and sexuality and the destabilisation of gender norms and their role in oppressive structures.

Intersectionality is conceptualised as the intersection of multiple identities and experiences, and how these relate to power and socio-structural oppressions (Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1991). This concept is valuable for feminist research as structural and political oppression based on race, gender, sexuality, and class does not occur in isolation but in synthesis - overlapping and forming matrices of domination as well as producing unequal material realities (Collins, 2000; Collins & Chepp, 2013). Arguments have been made that spatial inequality ought to be added to this matrix of domination, as this may generate a more complex and nuanced understanding of sources of differential access to resources and opportunities in South Africa, much like it is in nations such as the United States (Lobao et al., 2007). Such an approach is not without shortcomings, and critiques have emerged from decolonial feminists that the way intersectionality theory is applied may perpetuate the use of colonially determined categories, but these are oftentimes the terms that people use to make sense of themselves and their experiences. As related in the previous paragraph, decolonial feminist approaches account for the intersection of identity categories in people's lived experiences by resisting the fragmentation of oppressed peoples through the separation of these categories which operate in fusion and response to geographical location. Decolonial feminist readings are alert to how "the bodies of the gendered, racialised and classed Other have been manufactured and continue to be produced and reproduced, sometimes in new, imaginative and insidious ways and sometimes in ways that are no different to its colonial production," (Huysamen & Boonzaier, 2018, p. 61).

Thus, a decolonial feminist approach is particularly useful in addressing questions of identity around youth in South Africa as it takes into consideration the role of intersecting identities in people's lives. Categories such as race, class, age, and gender affect the lived experiences of youth simultaneously, not discretely. Therefore, analyses which have considered these individually may be limited and fail to consider how forms of oppression fuse, and the inseparability of such categories in people's lived realities (Cole, 2009; Lugones, 2010; Velez, 2019). Emphasis ought not be placed on the "outcomes" of intersecting identities but on the personal narratives and how community structures – including institutional, societal, and political structures – play a role in identity formation amongst youth (Cole, 2009; Warner, 2008). This emphasis on relationality underscores the way race, class, gender, and other systems of power are founded and maintained through relational processes (Yuval-Davis, 2006; Collins & Chepp, 2013). Disrupting power imbalances and viewing the individual as socially produced, while simultaneously perceiving society as fashioned by individual subjects, clarifies the experiences of Black youth living in the Cape Flats, and the strategies which they utilise to respond to and reshape assumptions and experiences in their schools and communities (Kessi & Cornell, 2017; Hook, 2004; Mama, 1995).

This study aims to utilise decolonial feminist approaches by resisting the traditional packaging of identities such as race, class, geography, sexuality, and gender and unpacking their present-day shaping of lived experience as legacies of historical oppression (Kessi & Boonzaier, 2018). Such work aims to examine the multi-dimensionality of marginalised youth's experiences and to use intersectionality as a tool that can link theory with practice and assist in the empowerment of individuals and their communities.

Narrative approach

A narrative approach, which is a type of method found in the qualitative research paradigm, was utilised along with visual research methods, to collect and analyse data in this research project. While there is no singular definition, a narrative approach prioritises the use of storytelling and its characteristics in qualitative research; enabling researchers to make sense of participants' perspectives and experiences in an open-ended way, hopefully generating novel ideas and understandings (Riessman, 2008; Willig, 2008). When a narrator chooses to tell their story, they tend to select parts of it and recount them in a style which indicates that each event is in some way consequential to another, which is referred to as the contingency of events (Riessman, 2001). However, this does not amount to a linear and

temporal structure of storytelling, as is the case with Westernized notions of storytelling (Riessman, 2001). Importance is placed on the social nature of language as conditioning one's narrative accounts, and how life-story narratives are shared during interactions between people with varying relationships and degrees of closeness (Murray, 2003). This may result in people shaping narratives in response to the audience they are directed towards (Murray, 2003; Riessman, 2008). Narrative research also represents and reconstructs experience and displays change or transformation in the story (Riessman, 2008). The assumption that we live in a storied world and interpret our own and others' actions through storytelling is a key tenet of narrative research and psychology and informs narrative interviewing (Murray, 2003; Riessman, 2008).

Such a research approach offers insight into the construction of identity during storytelling. Narratives that exist in a social world can be points of mediation between a person's actions and dominant societal narratives (Murray, 2003). These narratives construct people's understanding of the world, with direct impacts on what they believe about themselves, and how they live their lives (Weingarten, 1995). However, this construction does not occur in social isolation, and the formation of narrative identity tends to occur dialogically. That is, the shaping of personal narratives is strongly interlinked with the shaping of social narratives (Murray, 2003). By allowing marginalised groups, such as youth and women, to reauthor their stories and make meaning of their experiences, a restoration of agency occurs for many who have been stripped of it through dominant and frequently reproduced discourses, "truths" and assumptions (Weingarten, 1995; Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2011). Engaging in a type of "radical listening" to people's stories can reveal themes of resilience, hope, resistance, and possibility rather than simply reinforcing generalisations made by the public and media; and allow for nuanced interpretations (Weingarten, 1995; Kotzé et al., 2009).

Personal narratives are particularly important in studies of identity and community, as they can enable interpretation and meaning making of the experiences of adolescent residents, as well as how learners subsequently construct their identities around these.

Photovoice research methodology

Photovoice methods entail the production of photographs and written stories by participants, or co-researchers, to document their lives and experiences in a particular context (Wang & Burris, 1997). It is a process which combines a narrative approach with participatory action methods (Kessi & Cornell, 2017). By entrusting people with cameras to

document their community's strengths and concerns, photovoice enables co-researchers to possibly catalyse positive change in their communities (Wang & Burris, 1997). This practice engages participants in social activities that can dislocate power relations, resulting in community changes (Kessi, 2011). Photovoice's three main goals also include the promotion of critical dialogue and knowledge about significant community issues, as well as reaching policymakers through the sharing of the project's photographs and corresponding narratives with a public audience to catalyse policy change (Wang & Burris, 1997). Critical dialogue tends to take place through group discussions of photographs, which are prompted by the display of visual images which co-researchers have gathered and/ or manipulated. This develops a better understanding of the topic, enabling discussions and heightening co-researchers' research ownership (Novak, 2010).

Traditionally, photovoice has been used to investigate the social worlds of marginalised, stigmatised, and discriminated people in various contexts (Novak, 2010; Wang & Burris, 1997; Wilson et al., 2006). Its adaptability is one of its key strengths. Thus, photovoice can be used with different groups and communities, making it an especially empowering method for engaging and mobilising youth (Kessi, 2011). In past studies with youth, photovoice research has been effective in addressing issues of identity, stigmatisation, and social change (Evans-Agnew & Rosenberg, 2016; Kessi & Cornell, 2017; Langa, 2010; Wang & Burris, 1997). It has the potential to empower participants by making their experiences visible and promote the participation and collective action of marginalised groups (Boonzaier & Mkhize, 2018; Kessi, 2011; Kessi & Boonzaier, 2018). Photovoice is especially useful for generating photography-created knowledge that the researcher does not possess and could not create on their own due to a lack of similar experiences (Novak, 2010). It is particularly suited to decolonial research as it embraces an attitude that can guide participants to become agents in a process that involves the "rehumanization" of the world (Maldonado-Torres, 2017). In referencing Fanon (2008), Maldonado-Torres (2017, p. 435) defines this rehumanizing attitude as "that which prepares subjects to act or not to act, as well as to act or react in particular ways, including in the task of producing knowledge." Matutu (2019) notes that a commitment to such a stance, and use of humanising methods and practices, aims to make the research encounter more egalitarian.

By engaging with participants as co-researchers rather than subjects, photovoice democratizes the research process through its dependence on participants to generate relevant issues through images, which makes it particularly fitting for decolonial feminist research (Novak, 2010). However, it is crucial to note that because researchers initiate the general

direction of projects, power dynamics between researchers (who can select participants and project questions) and their participants are not entirely and automatically flattened (Sutton-Brown, 2014). This is further discussed in the section on reflexivity.

Participants and recruitment

During its first phase, this project identified Beacon Hill High School and its Alumni association as a collaborator and obtained consent to engage with young people at the school. Following this, eight to ten participants were recruited in three cohorts over three years. The sample for the broader project research consisted of differently gendered adolescents and young adults who may identify as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual or queer (although this was not elicited) and ranged in age from 13-24. These learners were recruited from Beacon Hill High School in Mitchells Plain, which the principal researcher had established connections with. Convenience and snowball sampling were utilised to recruit three cohorts of eight to ten participants each over three years. These students were in grades 9, 10 and 11, and data collection happened between 2016 – 2018. Two cohorts, namely those in 2016 and 2018, consisted of only adolescent girls while the cohort of young people in 2017 consisted of 10 students aged 13 – 19 with seven adolescent boys and three adolescent girls between grades 8 – 11 participating. The research predominantly includes Black[2] students racialised as 'coloured' because of the demographics of the high school.

Through the Alumni association of the school, pupils at the school were made aware of the photovoice project and those who expressed interest in the research were recruited by the principal researcher. Through 'snowballing', these connections led to more participants until 8 – 10 participants were found. Snowball sampling is when researchers access participants through contact information provided by other informants. This encouraged a sense of comfort around the co-researchers through the identification of a common network. It also allowed for repetitive recruitment through referrals from one participant to the next (Noy, 2008). All the necessary approval was obtained from the Department of Basic Education to conduct research at the high school.

[2] The term "Black" is used to refer to individuals from the designated racialised groups 'black African', 'Indian' and 'coloured' in South Africa. To avoid essentialising racial categories produced during the apartheid era, co-researchers were given the agency to self-identify and give nuance to their identities during the research. These categories are utilised due to their continued socio-political significance.

Data collection and procedure

Within this study, the participants recruited at Beacon Hill High School were asked to partake in six to eight meetings at the school. These meetings incorporated a combination of photography training facilitated by a professional photographer and focus groups. The principal researcher and postgraduate students who conducted the original research centred initial focus groups around co-researchers' constructions of gender and sexuality as well as their experiences in relation to these constructs. This process was repeated with three cohorts of learners over three years. In the process of investigating gendered and sexual identities and experiences related to these constructs, other power relations and structural identities such as class and age were also brought into focus by participants, highlighting the extent to which young people in Mitchells Plain take note of their intersectional identities and engagements with their community. While this framework provides a guide for how the research proceeded, it was recognised that this was simply a guide. Therefore, plans shifted in alignment with what the young people themselves, in collaboration with primary researchers, chose to bring into focus in their cohorts. All workshops and focus group discussions were audio-recorded and transcribed.

Phase 1 – Focus groups

Initial focus group discussions were conducted around participants' constructions of gender and sexuality and their experiences related to these constructs. Informed consent, as well as informed assent in the case of minors, was obtained during the first meeting through consent forms which were translated into the languages spoken by participants and their parents. Participants who were minors were not allowed to participate unless parental assent had first been obtained. Co-researchers were informed that they may withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences and that their willingness (or lack thereof) to participate in the study will not influence their participation in the programmes being delivered by the school. Consent was negotiated and re-negotiated throughout the research process (i.e., at the start of each meeting and discussion). The researchers also made time to answer any questions the participants had.

Phase 2 – Storytelling

Participants were asked to write brief stories about their lives in Mitchells Plain approximately a page long. These stories offered participants an opportunity to contextualise their lives, highlighting assets and challenges in their lives and communities in long form.

Phase 3 – Training and production planning

Training co-researchers is a key element of the photovoice process as they will be producing the images for the study (Novak, 2010). Because training needs to be specific for each study, elements of training for this study highlighted the operation of cameras, ethics around photography and informed consent, issues of power, and safety, as well as the research question posed (Novak, 2010; Wang & Burris, 1997). Facilitators recognised the political nature of photography and community-based work, were sensitive to issues of power and ethics in relation to cameras, recognised personal aesthetic tastes and partialities in photography, and were supportive of contrasting styles of picture-taking (Wang & Burris, 1997).

Phase 4 – Productions and exhibitions

The participants were then given two weeks in which to take the photographs. After the co-researchers gathered their photos, the researchers (Principal researcher & postgraduate student) met with the participants to discuss the photographs. These discussions took place in the form of focus groups. Written stories offered co-researchers the opportunity to freely develop their individual stories. The participants were asked to select photographs that they would like to discuss in the group or individually and to talk about their photographs. Participants then began to identify themes that emerged from the photographs and started to develop ideas for practical action in their lives and communities. Finally, there was an exhibition of the participants' work to which stakeholders, policymakers and members of the public were invited. Participants were allowed to choose whether they would like to participate in the exhibition or not, along with which stakeholders they wanted to be present.

Phase 5 and 6– Follow-up focus groups

Follow-up focus group discussions were held with participants to explore their experiences of participating in the project. Opportunities were offered for individual interviews to take place to glean insights that may have been inhibited by the focus-group settings. However, no individual interviews took place or were recorded.

Data analysis

Secondary analysis of qualitative data entails the use of existing data to find answers to research questions that are distinct from the questions asked in the original data (Hinds et al., 1997; Long-Sutehall et al., 2012). There is a general scarcity of literature on secondary analysis due to the emphasis in academia on research only being "real" if it comprises of original data collection (Szabo & Strang, 1997). There are various reasons for applying secondary analysis to data, including facilitating the investigation of new research questions, elaborations on earlier findings, and the application of a new perspective or conceptual focus

to the original research issues (Heaton, 2004; Hinds et al., 1997; Long-Sutehall et al., 2012). In addition, there are several approaches to secondary analysis in qualitative research. These include re-analysis to support original interpretations of data; supra-analysis, which aims to investigate new theoretical, empirical, or methodological questions; as well as amplified analysis, which will be utilised in this project. **Amplified analysis** is a type of secondary analysis conducted to investigate joint and/or divergent themes across data sets (Heaton, 2004). This form of secondary analysis can entail the comparison of contrasting study populations or the pooling of data on a similar population. This research study will aim to do the latter, in pooling data obtained from youth in Mitchells Plain, albeit different individuals in distinctive photovoice studies. The main criteria for the data obtained and used for secondary research is that it should be adequate, and relevant but not excessive, which is the case in this study (Tripathy, 2013).

The secondary amplified analysis of photostories, focus groups and interviews will be conducted using **thematic narrative analysis**. Thematic Narrative Analysis (TNA) seeks recurrent patterns of meaning and common themes across a data set. Because this study yielded rich data in the forms of focus groups, written stories, as well as photostories, this sort of analysis is suitable as it enables researchers to pay attention to *what* is said by participants rather than how, to whom, or for what purposes (Riessman, 2008). Thematic narrative analysis also looks at the content of narratives and their focus while simultaneously keeping the stories intact, which encourages nuanced interpretations of data and an embrace of the meaning-making in which participants engage. Thematic narrative analysis is appropriate for work centred around identity as it can be used to identify broad categories of meaning in learners' photostories and narratives, particularly whether the meanings could unsettle dominant discourses around youth in Mitchells Plain and the pathologizing, stigmatising and binary ways in which young people's gender, sexual, class and racial identities have been researched and reported. Such an analysis will aim to view social categories as reflecting what individuals and communities *do*, rather than something that they are (Cole, 2009). This is particularly important in decolonial research that centralises gender, which is enacted and not merely a social categorisation (Cole, 2009).

While there is no single, specific manner of conducting a thematic narrative analysis, the guidelines laid out by Braun and Clarke (2006) were followed. This involved reading and re-reading focus group transcriptions carefully, and similarly thorough engagements with photostories, while identifying interesting stories and categories within each data source. Following this, the data was looked across to identify common themes across research

participants' narratives (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Prior theory served as a resource for the interpretation of the learners' transcribed narratives (Riessman, 2008). While Riessman suggests that narratives pay little attention to the local contexts in which they occur, this analysis takes place using a decolonial feminist framework. Therefore, it acknowledges and emphasises the social forces at work within personal narrative, and how personal narrative can offer a critical insight into how participants construct and make meaning of their identities and experiences (Emerson & Frosh, 2010). In this case, participants' reflections on living in Mitchells Plain, and the ways in which its environment has shaped their experiences and identities, were a central element in the analysis of the data yielded in this study. Ultimately, this analysis approach creates possibilities for group belonging, social identity and collective action which are key in feminist research; and highlights how the themes and narratives may convert into action and policy (Wang, 2006; Riessman, 2008).

Visual content analysis, while often utilised in media studies, was used to supplement this thematic narrative analysis to analyse the contents of the actual photographs/ photostories. This form of analysis is defined as "an empirical (observational) and objective procedure for quantifying recorded 'audio-visual' (including verbal) representation using reliable, explicitly defined categories ('values' or independent 'variables')" (Bell, 2004, p. 8). This form of analysis is often seen as necessary but not sufficient to gauge the meaning or impact of the images on viewers or consumers of media. Content analysis shows what is given priority or salience and what is not. Four distinct main stages are involved in any content analysis: decontextualization, recontextualization, categorization, and finally, compilation of the analysed content, or images in this case (Bengtsson, 2016). These are presented in the analysis chapter. In photovoice research, this analysis can reveal which images are connected with which, who is given publicity and how, as well as what participants aim to give priority in their explorations and depictions of their environments. Because the study aimed to look specifically at the role of violence in the community and the lives of youth, some photographs highlighted or symbolised violence and its presence in Mitchells Plain, while others may reveal sources of peace, nurturance and fun. A visual content analysis would look at values (violence vs peace) along with variables such as people, places, institutions and activities which are given value by how participants have photographed or written about these photographs along with their stories.

Details on secondary analysis

Previous analyses of one cohort of this data included a structural feminist analysis looking at young women's narratives on gender, sexuality, and violence (Daniels, 2018).

Some of the data, which was produced during a community empowerment project for youth, has also been utilised in a book chapter by the primary researcher (Boonzaier & van Niekerk, 2023).

Advantages of secondary analysis include its cost-effectiveness; lessening of the burden of participation on co-researchers; as well as usefulness for students affected by time delays in obtaining ethical and research and development approval (Long-Sutehall et al., 2010; Ruggiano & Perry, 2017; Szabo & Strang, 1997). This form of analysis also relieves the burden of participation from community or organisational partners who collaborate with researchers to identify, approach and recruit research participants (Heaton, 2004). Data sharing also facilitates the elaboration of earlier findings and the investigation of new research questions (Heaton, 2004).

However, this form of research also has disadvantages, including the elimination of more rounds of research which may have been beneficial for co-researchers, particularly in the case of photovoice research which aims to empower its participants and their communities. Nevertheless, in photovoice studies, there is not as significant a difference between initial as well as secondary analysis due to the researcher not being present during participants' photo-taking excursions in most cases. Primary researchers' involvement in shaping the research question and focus group discussions is, however, evident in recorded exchanges. In qualitative research, the interpretation of data is typically considered to be reliant on the primary researcher's direct knowledge of the context of data collection and "analysis obtained through their own personal involvement in the research" (Heaton, 2004, p. 11). The involvement of the principal researcher as the supervisor of this project ought to result in a critical exchange of insights on the research process, enabling a meta-documentation of it that may compensate for not conducting it (Corti et al., 2005; Heaton, 2004). Lastly, there may be challenges regarding the degree of "fit" between the data and the secondary study question because secondary research relies on data that was not intentionally collected for the study (Heaton, 2004). However, because there is a generous amount of data and amplified secondary analysis will be used, lack of fit in the data set is less likely than in research with more limited data; and it will ask research questions which can be answered *across* different data sets.

Ethical concerns

Harm to subjects

Interviews were conducted at the high school in Mitchells Plain which all participants attended. This was to minimize the inconvenience of travel elsewhere and to minimise the

risk of harm to the participants. However, it was acknowledged that harm is multidimensional, and could also include the causing of emotional distress or the tarnishing of reputation (Willig, 2008). In the latter dimensions, the principal researchers took care to approach the subject carefully and tactfully, and to maintain the utmost confidentiality regarding the process and results of the research throughout the interviewing, transcription, and analysis process where applicable. Preventing harm to school-going participants and their peers or teachers through possible exposure to COVID-19 was the primary reason for the secondary nature of this research, and why additional cohorts of students were not recruited by the secondary researcher.

Violation of privacy and confidentiality

Privacy is defined as the individual's right to decide when, where and to whom they desire their attitudes, experiences, and behaviours to be revealed (De Vos, 2002). The utmost precaution was taken to conceal the identities of the participants in the reporting of the research findings, as well as by using pseudonyms. Consent forms for this study were stored in a locked drawer in the principal researcher's office. The secondary researcher did not have access to the consent forms or identifying data of the participants and was offered access to data which was already masked using pseudonyms and initials.

Data for this study was stored in a secured cloud location (Dropbox) with access only given to the primary researcher but extended to the secondary researcher upon the signing of a confidentiality contract (see *Appendix A).* This data, when downloaded from the cloud, was stored on the secondary researcher's password-protected laptop secured in a locked apartment for ease of access when without a stable internet connection. There were limits to confidentiality should the participants present themselves as a threat to themselves or others during the interview (through threats of harm). The primary researchers in such a case were required to report such an incident to a trusted adult of the participant's choosing for the participant to be provided the help they may have needed.

The use of secondary qualitative data has been met with several critiques and concerns around methodology and ethical implications. One of these is respecting the original confidentiality agreements which research participants have signed. These confidentiality agreements did include clauses which allowed for the usage of the data collected for further academic research and publication considering the broad and ongoing nature of the Unsettling Knowledge Production on Gendered and Sexual Violence project.

Ethical Issues Relating to Secondary Participants

The rights of people who were photographed by the participants were also protected and participants were instructed to obtain verbal consent from people before they photographed them. Consent to photograph young children must be obtained verbally from a parent. Efforts to disguise the identities of informants may also have led to distortions of the data, rendering meaningful secondary interpretation impossible. Therefore, the secondary analysis was done using raw data. However, the faces of all people appearing in the photographs will be obscured in any research reports or publications that include photographs and no names of photographed persons will be used. In selecting photos to include for the exhibition, the researchers will exclude or edit photographs of minors and those that may convey human subjects in a way that compromises their dignity or safety. Tensions continue to exist between institutional ethics and ethical commitments inherent in photovoice's methodology to make participants' voices and identities visible and covering participants' faces may render the marginalised invisible again in the research process (Zway & Boonzaier, 2015). However, in line with ethical norms around work with minors, especially those from marginalised groups and communities, participants' identities will be masked.

Debriefing

Participants in this study were debriefed after every discussion by the primary researchers using different techniques.

Chapter Four

Narratives of youth living in Mitchells Plain

This chapter presents the findings of the thematic narrative analysis of the focus groups, stories and photostories of adolescents living in Mitchells Plain, and a subsequent section highlighting the role of power and difference in obtaining these findings. This analysis aimed to offer answers to the question of how youth growing up in Mitchells Plain represented their experiences and intersecting identities – namely their gendered, sexual, racial, and class identities – through Photovoice. Secondly, it aimed to find out how the stories which youth told challenged or maintained dominant narratives about young people in South Africa, their behaviours and their relationships with each other and their communities. The third question this analysis answers is that of how youth in Mitchells Plain narrate their experiences of living in and navigating their environment. As the narratives of school-going adolescents in Mitchells Plain were analysed, parallels between the manners in which youth depicted their communities, described themselves and their peers, and detailed their understandings of gender, sexuality and violence emerged. Four significant themes emerged: *Making sense of gender-based and community violence*, *seeking safety*, *achieving autonomy* and *relationships as resistance.*

Making sense of gender-based, youth and community violence

During focus groups, young women highlighted the significance of youth violence, gender-based and community violence in shaping their lived experiences and understanding of romantic partnerships. These girls used anecdotes, cautionary tales, and common narratives repeated amongst themselves and older community members to make sense of gender-based and intimate partner violence. Youth violence itself was not addressed as an issue by other community members – who often saw such violence as a consequence of exposure to older people's violence, or as subsequent to substance use and abuse. Interventions against youth violence were therefore limited to lectures and conversations about future violence because it was viewed as less of a present-day issue, but rather, as a precursor to significant harm enactment as "future adults". While this prevented severe punishment, it also minimised young people's roles as agentic beings in the present, therefore limiting opportunities for the rehabilitation of violence-enacting youth. How youth discussed their own behaviour and that of peers aligned with discourses of adolescence as a transitional phase—but also highlighted how this period of time was crucial in defining their adult behaviour. In the focus group exchange below, adolescent gender-based violence was

disciplined by authority figures with warnings that this would lead to intimate partner violence during marriage.

Participant: [3] Last year my sir said to this other boy, uhm, because he was like constantly wanting to hit girls and stuff and then the sir told him you must stop being like that, otherwise one day when you're going to have a wife you're going to beat your wife

Interviewer: Why do you guys think women don't say anything when they are being abused or being raped?

Participants: Because they are afraid their man is going to hurt them again. // And sometimes they're so blinded by the love they think they deserve it. // That's true [laughter]// Shame. (FG 2018, all girls)

Violence against women perpetrated by men was viewed as permitted by women who allowed men to continue beating them – repeating longstanding discourses which hold victims accountable for their own subjugation and silencing in abusive relationships (Boonzaier, 2018; O'Hara, 2012). Adolescent girls also described abused women as unknowingly justifying their victimization by tying it to love extended by their romantic partners. This echoed descriptions of the vacillation between love and abuse described by the participants of Boonzaier's (2008) research with heterosexual couples on the relational construction of the abuse of women. Attempts to understand why men abuse women attributed this to existential fears of death and the beating of a woman as an outlet for this stress and fear, supporting the construction of violence as a release for tension (Boonzaier, 2008; O'Neill, 1998). When girls imagined holding men accountable, another common national discourse emerged: that of re-instating corporal punishment for such offences in the form of the death penalty. Although these young women were born after 1995, when capital punishment was abolished in South Africa, some nostalgically looked at this period as a safer one. Opposing views highlighted the silence that shrouded the private lives of women, shattering the illusion of the "good old days".

Participant: And I think how violence will like stop, how men will stop beating women or killing and raping women, is when the death penalty comes in.

[3] Pseudonyms were used for individual photostories and written stories where participants could be distinguished clearly while the labels "participant" or "participants" are used in transcriptions of focus groups where individual voices and narratives could not reliably be distinguished.

Participant: But you know, back in the days there were men that beat their women and stuff, but it's just the women kept quiet. So they didn't say anything about it, they kept quiet. But now you see like as generations go past the kids they see how my father beats my mother, so they think it's okay, I will also do it. That's how it continues and goes on and on. (FG 1, all girls, 2016)

Girls were also aware of the intergenerational nature of violence as a learned behaviour. Cycles of violence, a deficit in conflict management skills and a lack of parental attention and affection were highlighted as central causes of youth violence. In the extract below, the co-researcher challenges victim-perpetrator binaries concerning young men's violence against young women using narratives of deficient caregiving and paternal presence. In this manner, she renders the unimaginable position of young men who behave violently as victims imaginable (Shefer, 2016). This interpretation of men's violence as a projection of uncomfortable feelings of lack, deprivation or rejection resembles psychodynamic formulations of violence (Langa, 2016; Perelberg, 1999 as cited in Langa, 2016). However, participants emphasized acts of bullying and violence as a possible call for help or attention-seeking behaviour i.e. acting out as help-seeking behaviour.

Participants: And it's always just violence against the children. Like one bullies another. // So yesterday me and Ms Green had a talk and then she asked me, she said about this girl that they bullied, a prefect, this other boy he smacked her … Ms Green asked me, now why are these kids like this, like they're bullying … and then I told her it's because outside of the school they get bullied by the bigger boys. // Yes. // So but it's not only starting now. I told her it's because when they were small there was always someone bullying them. So he bullies that girl. So as it grows, it's growing slowly inside of him, so it's continuing... she asked… why is the kids of this area like this. Then I told her it's probably because of the fathers. They probably want attention from the fathers and … like girls. She said yes, they're just looking for love.

And like this morning, like this girl, she smacked a boy in the class because he said 'jou ma se' and then he kicked her back and they were

> arguing, she wanted to make the change [unclear – 00:08:52] and everybody's like, they're silly because even though he said her, it was her, he didn't have the right to say it, but she could have just been the better person and like go to him at interval and say that was wrong what you did to me or something. She didn't have to take it to violence. But in Mitchell's Plain, they like see it in their families, violence is the answer to everything. (FG 2, all girls, 2018)

Intimate partner violence as well as modes of preventing it were also emphasized by adolescent women. When speaking about ideal romantic relationships, taking time to get to know a prospective partner and their familial background was highlighted as a strategy for establishing healthy romantic partnerships. This correlates with Salo's (2003) research in the Cape Flats, which details how young men, before being deemed as suitable spouses, were evaluated through their statuses as "adult women's sons and as members of a respectable household" rather than primarily through their material wealth, social media presence or potential. Establishing the pace of a relationship, at times by playing "hard to get," was constructed to be the girl's role although young women disagreed in their views on the ideal length of this courtship.

Figure 1: "Young teenagers, girls, are always faced with manipulation and betrayal because boys are always talking with girls to change their perspective of the way they see things (Jade, girl, photostory, 2018)

Adolescent girls initially co-constructed narratives that othered girls who engaged in risky sexual behaviour, unsafe intimate relationships and used substances. By doing so, they participated in cultures of sexual regulation which emphasised respectability (Bhana & Anderson, 2013). Narratives which linked sexuality to risky activities like drug and alcohol consumption emphasized the vulnerability of young women to the manipulations, demands and wishes of others, particularly young men. Girls thus minimised possible positive aspects of romantic relationships and spoke of sex as a desire attributed to adolescent boys but fulfilled by young women – who were repeatedly described as coerced by young men into changing their perspectives or behaviour. Because of the safety implications of making the "wrong" decision when choosing a partner, adolescent women placed great emphasis on gathering information and interpersonal knowledge about potential partners to vet them accurately. This echoed previous research on the intimate relationships of heterosexual young women in South Africa where girls constrained by poverty and limited family support notably exercised agency when initiating dating; but once in a relationship became captured in the "powerful matrix of heterosexual masculinities" that limited their freedom (Jewkes & Morrell, 2012, p. 1735).

Interviewer: We're talking about violence in relationships and a young woman's, not role, but how she exists in a relationship.

Participants: Well, like my opinion is like you should first get to know someone. That's the first thing, like not just see someone, meet him on the social media and then get with that person, and automatically in love. Like you should take at least a year to get to know someone, the basics. // Yo! // Yo, a year I would go crazy. //No, but like really. And two to three to five years, so at least to, okay, I know this person, this person is genuine and once you meet the person's family then you really know what type of person they are. … In Mitchell's Plain...I think people don't take their partners for who they are or what they feel [sounds of agreement]. They're more about how their car look, what the outside appearance looks, because they want to look cool with their friends and I'm the

sexiest girl here, what are you going to do. That's where the violence come in because you don't like really know this person and now you're intimate with this person and this person isn't the person you really want and then you tend to, physical, emotional, verbally abuse this person. Because like you are with her because she looks like that and now you get like, how can I say, you get praisings for that but she's not the one you really want. // … // …// I met a boy ne, he went out with my friend and then I asked him, are you and that person dating, and he like say no, it's just my sex buddy. They don't like take them serious. They're just there for the benefits.

Interviewer: Do you think that's common?

Participants: Yes. Especially in Cape Town, Mitchell's Plain. … But sometimes ne the boy in a relationship will also say, if you love me you'll do this for me.... // (FG, all girls, 2018)

In focus groups, young women inferred that not exercising agency when selecting a partner, and choosing partners based on superficial or materialistic traits such as beauty or possession of a vehicle may precipitate later intimate partner violence. In doing so, they resisted popular discourses about young women pursuing material gain or status in their intimate lives and dating choices (Masango, 2022). However, girls simultaneously blamed adolescent victims of intimate partner violence by alluding that this violence was subsequent to their poor exercising of limited agency when choosing a partner; and the delayed awareness of incompatibility between intimate partners. By doing so, young women distanced themselves from discourses of perpetual victimhood by presenting themselves as informed and savvy navigators of their dating lives and constructed gender-based violence as both a problem of the self as well as a relational problem (Hook, 2004).

The construction of gender-based violence as expressive of incompatibility or a lack of mutual desire echoes that of Boonzaier's (2008) work—which showed couples construct violence as a "dual, reciprocal activity" which was greatly expressive (p. 195). Young women's narratives may thus be embracing the ambiguous, contradictory and inconsistent nature of power in relationships. However, the girls' articulations around violence may have concurrently limited expressions of their emotional vulnerability and disempowerment in the

face of young and older men's dominance (Boonzaier & van Niekerk, 2019; Jewkes & Morrell, 2012).

By suggesting gender-based violence and its roots were endemic to Cape Town or Mitchell's Plain, participants pathologized people in their community based on their geography. This is similar to notions of the township as an inherently violent space (Langa, 2010), but was not used by co-researchers to mask the presence of violence against girls. In fact, participants astutely linked different sources and types of violence and highlighted young women's vulnerability to it even while seeking safety in the following section.

They're just trying to get away from home: Seeking safety

Community violence was a major concern for youth living in Mitchells Plain. Gang wars, much like other kinds of war, disrupted the livelihoods and already-fraught feelings of peace and safety in youth's lives. Participants often described the disruptive effect that stress had on their ability to concentrate on school work, arrive safely at school and make their way home from school, much like how war disrupts key social, economic and political activities (Barber, 2013).

Interviewer: The first question is easy. We just want to know what it's like living in Mitchell's Plain?

*Participant***:** It's not lekker. I also don't like it**,** because it doesn't affect a person's schoolwork, but sometimes when you want to sit with your books and they're shooting and stuff like that then you cannot concentrate properly, and then when you must write your exam, then it's like, you went over your work, but there's nothing that you can remember because of everything that is going on in the road. (FG, all girls, 2018)

Co-researchers described pervasive feelings of fear about being outside of the home or school when shootings were occurring, and girls distinguished themselves from boys, who they depicted as less fearful. Later in the same discussion, the fear of sexual violence was highlighted as the distinguishing feature between young women and men and their approach to navigating their communities. In this manner, girls represented the boys in their community as hegemonically masculine by ascribing core features of the hegemonic ideal such as toughness and strength, along with possible risk-taking behaviour in unsafe contexts

(Talbot & Quayle, 2010). Along with other commentary about young men and their behaviour, this offered an example where the voices of young women passively co-produced and normalised masculinities in their community. In this case: masculinities which tolerated violence and did not experience fear in response to threats in the community.

Participant: …And then when you must walk to school and they're shooting and stuff like that then you're very afraid because you don't know what can happen on your way to school.

Interviewer: And as a girl, do you feel more afraid or less afraid?

*Participant***:** More afraid, because for us we can get ... for boys they're used to stuff like that, not all of them, but the majority of them (FG 4, all girls, 2018)

Notably, co-researchers did not endorse masculinities which tolerated violence. Adolescent boys who considered participating in community violence by contemplating future involvement in gangsterism were cut off from friendships with "progressive" peers, who may try to intervene in their friends' lives and promote alternatives to such livelihoods and violent patriarchal masculinities as is exemplified in the excerpt below. It was noted that young men framed the choice to become a gangster as one which emerged out of a lack of opportunities or resources to engage in other behaviours or modes of survival. Narratives also linked young people's consumption of drugs and alcohol to subsequent acts of violence, suggesting that co-researchers saw these substances as triggering violent behaviours. Therefore, co-researchers framed the choices their peers made amidst large-scale unemployment and poverty (a legacy of apartheid's forced removals) as the last resort, resisting sentiments in popular media of youth in Mitchells Plain as simply lacking "motivation" (Loggenberg, 2013). Previous research also cites gangs, drugs, and limited opportunities for youth as precipitators of violence (Asomugha et al., 2009 as cited in Chonody et al., 2013; Wilson et al., 2006). Young people perceived a lack of opportunities offered to young men in Mitchells Plain, even while holding their peers accountable for their choice to become involved in gang activity.

Kayla: …my so-called friend[s] that kept on telling me that there was nothing more in this world that was left for them so they'd rather be the next

> generation of gangsters that would be alive still (if God willing). (photostory, girl, 2016)

While young women described boys in their community as less fearful of violence in the community; in reality, boy co-researchers were similarly affected by the presence of violence in their lives and expressed concerns and frustrations over their limited agency to change or intervene in community violence in their photostories. Themes of apathy in the community towards violence also emerged in participants' photostories, much like the sense of powerlessness expressed by the youth in Chonody et al.'s (2013) work with youth in impoverished communities in the US. Young men also expressed concern about the desensitisation of community members to violence – such as people going outside to see what was happening during shootings. Much like young women, their responses to violence included fear, anxiety, anger and sadness. The extract below exemplifies the apparent pressure which adolescent boys experience to internalise these feelings and present a façade of competence and fearlessness rather than express their underlying anxieties.

Dean: I will look happy sometimes at school or at home from the outside. On the inside, I'm not because [of] the stuff that happens and what I hear and everything, sometimes it's very stressful for me (boy, photostory, 2017).

Co-researchers seemed to use internalisation of uncomfortable feelings or consciously masking them with positive emotions (emotional suppression) as a coping mechanism. Suppressing emotions may enable them to behave in ways that disavow aspects of themselves which may be shameful in patriarchal societies. This may be consistent with Anderson's (2010) research, in which young men's responses highlighted the difficulties which they experienced engaging in activities such as showing emotion, caring for others, and talking about their feelings because these are typically coded as feminine. Thus, while boys may be attempting to challenge and resist violent hegemonic masculinities; young men may be ill-equipped with the emotional language and coping mechanisms to manage feelings of anger and anxiety. Like their adult counterparts, boys in patriarchal societies may adhere to specific rules to demonstrate aspects of hegemonic masculinities such as being tough, maintaining silence about their problems, and dominating young women (hooks, 2004; Jewkes & Morrell, 2012). This may have far-reaching consequences, as habitual emotional suppression has been

shown to negatively impact people's mental health, physical health, and connections with others (Butler et al., 2003; Chapman et al., 2013; Gross & John, 2003). Young women similarly suppressed difficult emotions to cope and evade judgement but expressed the masking of emotional pain in empowering language as in the extract below.

Amira: Well, everyone knows me – the girl who lives by the saying: "Strong women wear their pain like stilettos. No matter how much it hurts, all you see is the beauty of it." (girl, photostory, 2017).

When the opportunity to leave their households was presented, young women were habitually required to take up less space in the public sphere and censor self-expression through clothing due to the fear of sexual violence. The co-researcher below highlights the lack of positive attention, misinterpretation of sexual availability or discourses of "rapeability" in public evaluations of young women's clothing choices. The focus group discussions revealed that while young women may want attention drawn to their efforts and aesthetic choices (to be seen), this desire is outweighed by the fear of sexual violence.

The emphasis on the depth of the body is one which Oyěwùmí writes as characteristic of modern Western societies. Through westernisation, body forms become considered expressions of an interior (Oyěwùmí, 1997; Grosz, 1994). The sexualisation of young women and the interpretation of their sexual availability based on their modes of dress and physical development may thus be tied to the Western emphasis on the visual (Oyěwùmí, 1997). When the bodies and appearance of young women are read by others as expressive of their psychic interior; pressure is placed on them to regulate and monitor themselves to avoid sexual harassment and violence, even while children's rights to safety ought to be ensured and enforced by the state, community, and families. Rape culture, or a culture in which sexual violence is so normalised it is almost expected, may subsequently be established (Johnson & Johnson, 2021).

Emphasis on safety for girls had harmful impacts on their self-esteem, echoing Gqola's (2021) findings that girls' confidence was worked against when safety became one of the most important considerations explicitly presented to them. In the second extract, the participant highlights how safety concerns and hypervigilance increased as girls grew older. She constructs a past in which she felt childlike and safe, suggesting that areas such as Mitchells Plain have grown increasingly more dangerous to live in for young inhabitants. However, it may be possible that young women's awareness and fear of the dangers in their

communities increased with age and access to relevant information. Co-researchers also exposed how community violence affected their abilities to self-regulate, and the impact of hypervigilance on their daily lives and mental health.

Participant: And you can't wear too short stuff also then it's like you ask to be geraped or so. That's why like us girls we don't feel comfortable anymore wearing dresses or so, because it's like they always look at it with the wrong intention. They don't look at it with the intention, like you're wearing it and you look pretty or so (FG 1, all girls, 2018).

Participant: You become more cautious, you become more scared and you become more worried about yourself and to look out for yourself. Because back then when we were younger it wasn't like this. At that time you could be like a kid, but now you are afraid to be outside (FG 1, all girls, 2018).

Much like the "vigilant sexual subject" of Macleod et al.'s (2015) research, adolescent women in working-class communities constantly adjusted their sense of being, employing strategies to safeguard themselves against sexual violation by using knowledge of personal and public safety (Ngidi, 2022). In the process, fear became a key controlling tool in which violence was entrenched (Msibi, 2012).

Co-researchers imagined alternatives to constant vigilance and fear – and expressed hopes and dreams for safety, freedom and the possibility of a more autonomous existence while simultaneously grieving the reality of their lives in Mitchells Plain. In the extract below, the participant articulates how violence in the community impacted her ability to strive for autonomy and independence safely. Young women expressed resentment against physical restrictions and safety measures which limited their ability to negotiate the transition between childhood and adolescence – particularly dependence-independence conflicts (Macleod, 2003). Like adolescent girls in other South African townships, girls in Mitchells Plain had their spatial and bodily autonomy removed by heteropatriarchal sexual violence and its looming threats (Ngidi, 2022).

Gabby: ….I dream of a better world where women do not have to be afraid. A world where you do not need to question where you are walking in fear of death due to others, but you can't dream forever you have to wake up someday. Those days, I choose to cry because I wake up to a gated home that's locked 24/7 and a family that says they want the best for me but brings down my self-esteem every day (photostory, girl, 2018).

Therefore, there appeared to be barriers in communication between adolescent girls and their parents, who were described as strict, unfair, and curtailing of their freedoms. Although young women displayed awareness of the dangers present in their community, parents who failed to communicate how these risks and their own experiences influenced their restrictive parenting decisions were viewed as unjust and untrusting to their daughters. Nevertheless, much like African American parents in impoverished neighbourhoods, these parents may be adapting their parenting strategies in response to their context. By limiting the influence of violent neighbourhood activities on their children, parents in Mitchells Plain may attempt to enhance their children's developmental outcomes through increased supervision and monitoring (Jarrett, 1997).

Adolescent girls expressed increased levels of fear and guardedness when outside as they grew older and became more aware of crimes like rapes, kidnappings, and shootings; sometimes through narrations of such events that were widely circulated in the community through online platforms and word of mouth. Like other forms of sensationalist media focus, the attention given to crimes against young women discursively constructs working-class adolescents as disempowered, powerless victims (Boonzaier & Zway, 2015). Much like the women in Kaminer et al.'s (2018) research on Continuous Traumatic Stress in South Africa, girls' responses to this risk entailed substantial avoidance behaviours which impacted their daily functioning as students (by staying home when shootings occurred) and contributed to isolation (to avoid potential threat). This limited the kinds of socialising and exploration which young women could engage in and in this manner, the environment shaped the development of conservative or restricted femininities. As Gqola (2021, p.92) notes, "the manufacture of female fear is concerned with regulating women's movement, sexuality and behaviour". Stories that were shared and retold by girls and their family members effectively inspired fear, even though narratives resisting this pathway to regulation exposed that these were not always successful. Young women in the extracts above actively resisted the

discourse of risk that posited adolescent girls as perpetual victims or passive in seeking agency.

Figure 2 There are corners where the gangs smoke and do other stuff (Liam, boy, photostory, 2017)

While participants emphasised violence in the community enacted by individuals and collectives such as gangs, mentions of structural violence showed how governmental and policing responses to challenges in the community upheld the status quo rather than intervening to meet youth's security and recreational needs. Policing efforts were viewed as unjust and echoed sentiments present in other suburbs of the Cape Flats such as Manenberg, where police were seen as ineffective, and responding to different crimes in contrasting ways. In particular, state social services were seen as prioritising the safety of property over that of people – particularly when gang-related activity had taken place (Lambrechts, 2012).

Participant: What I think is because it's gang-related so they take their own time to come. If it wasn't then they would have come ... but that is also wrong because they must look at every situation the same (FG1, all girls, 2018).

Nevertheless, young people expressed wishes for legitimate governance which was able to provide security and development. In this way, adolescents identified as citizens of their community with particular needs and considerations in situ. Like the women in Stephens and Boonzaier's (2020) research, young people in Mitchells Plain distinguished themselves and those living in other communities that were presumed to be better governed and resourced through discourses of "this side" and "that side". Indeed, socio-historical and political struggles associated with race and class are embedded in geographical location and language (Stephens, 2018). The intersections of such factors and identities shape adolescence

in working-class communities and citizenship. In the extract below, actions such as stealing were attributed to a lack of service delivery in certain areas of Mitchells Plain.

Participant: Like this other boy said in my class now the other day that he is going to go to Westridge and steal that people's park because you see in certain areas the government puts nice things in the parks but this side they don't (FG 1, all girls, 2018).

Families and homes did not always represent a safe haven for participants in the study. While adolescents represented home as a site of physical safety, these structures were often sites where community challenges such as alcoholism, drug use, interpersonal violence and strained relations were reflected in the individuals and relationships of their household**.**

The excerpt below illustrates how young people in the community often engaged with care work and older family members in ways that challenged enforced binaries between adults and children. Young men and women who took on "adult" responsibilities such as financial management, childcare, and maintaining households often made up for absent or irresponsible adults in their households, and were central in maintaining functioning households and thus, the communities in which they lived. The provision of this kind of domestic labour, and the wielding of responsibility challenges universalised understandings of adolescence or lifespan development popularised by developmental psychology, such as Erikson's (1968) stages of psychosocial development. These are often critiqued for centring middle-class Western experiences in generating norms for development and discrete stages. Rather than singularly occupying a position of dependence or identity crisis, many adolescents in working-class communities also participate in providing care and nurturance to others while being dependent on others in their household.

Adam: My grandmother drinks every weekend and I used to keep some of her money so that she could have money for supplies when Monday comes. Now I can't help her by doing that anymore because she moved away from us (photostory, boy, 2017).

Similarly, the school was represented as both a haven and a restrictive institution by participants. Institutional structures such as schools played expanded roles not only in fostering intellectual growth and performance in young people but also in safeguarding their

physical and mental well-being—particularly for those with difficult home situations. Shopping malls were highlighted as safe due to the presence of security guards. Churches offered youth a physically safe space, spiritual fulfilment and sources of comfort as in the photostory below. A sense of belonging to a church and other community institutions indeed offered a shield from continuous stress for adolescents in Mitchells Plain (Weber & Bowers-DuToit, 2018).

Participants: Some children attend after classes here, just for after classes. They want to get away from home because of their circumstances at home. It's like there's nothing at home for them to eat, so, and now the children judge him but they don't think of what they're going through, and they're just trying to get away from home (FG 2, all girls, 2018).

Pictures of places in the community were often taken through fences and other erected barriers – even when these structures were ones which participants belonged to or had access to on occasion.

Figure 3 The church is where I go every Sunday. I love church because I love to praise God and he is the God I worship (Kieran, boy, photostory, 2017)

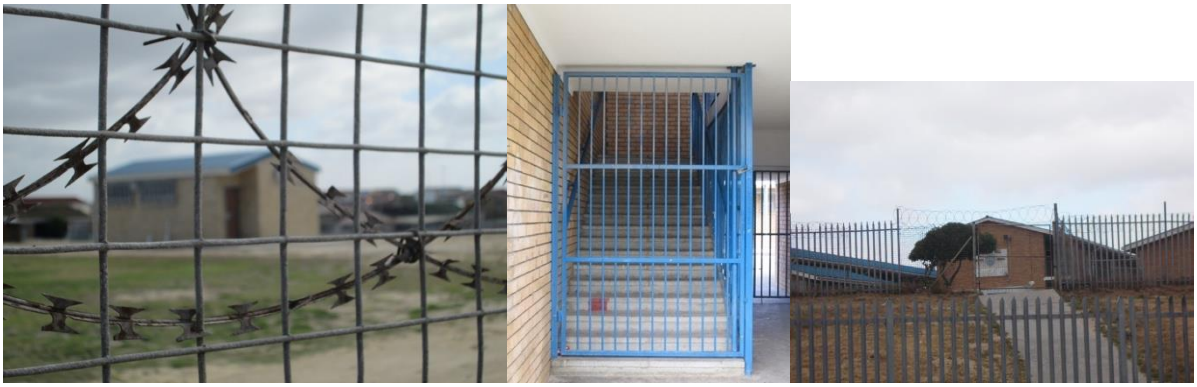

Figure 4 That's how our school kind of looks like prison. There's gates everywhere and no way of escaping. That gate is or never will be open without reasons." (Willow, girl, photostory, 2016)

Schooling was also associated with pressure to perform well academically, and doing so was viewed as a pathway to professional, material and personal success. Pressure from authority figures such as teachers and parents were highlighted as sources of anxiety for youth in Mitchells Plain, who attributed academic underperformance to this stress. Adolescents may have indicated that the pressure for them to achieve was unsustainable and resulted in possible feelings of depression and exhaustion. For young women specifically, regulating sexuality to prevent unplanned pregnancy emerged as a key concern in the following theme – *achieving autonomy.*

Lisa: The reason why people don't do well with their schoolwork is because teachers put pressure on us (girl, story, 2017).

Calls for motivation and initiative may be more effectively exploitative than "whips and commands" (Han, 2017). However, for youth who are pressured to achieve in order to transcend their socioeconomic circumstances and move into better-serviced neighbourhoods, such an emphasis on individual work in the absence of systemic change may encourage the development of "achievement-subjects" who seek success above all, including the companionship of peers and community. Most young people in Mitchells Plain described sources of such pressure as external rather than internal. Nevertheless, the next extract reveals how the wish to achieve financial success, further education, and obtain access to luxurious lifestyles provide other sources of motivation for young working-class people to succeed.

Achieving autonomy

Figure 5 (Kim, girl, photostory, 2018)

Participant: I don't wanna live in Mitchells Plain for the rest of my life, I want a good career… like [to] be wealthy… I want to live a luxurious life. I don't want to be like the people on the corner. I want young people to know there's more in life than just being at home. I want to study further, and I want to make more out of my life (FG, 2016, all girls).

While the aspirations expressed by adolescents in the study initially appeared to centre on luxury and material consumption—such ambitions for social mobility frequently centred around the need for security and self-actualisation through education and employment. Such things may be described as "political goods", which functional modern states are expected to supply. In a specific hierarchy of political goods, the supply of security - particularly human security - is the most important one (Rotberg, 2003). Therefore, youth growing up in communities with longstanding and ongoing violence are particularly failed by the state and marginalised as citizens. Girls expressed a desire to become working, urban, upwardly mobile women, much like the trope of the "new South African woman" who was linked to the post-apartheid growth in women's financial independence and consumer status (Gqola, 2016). Young women's narratives also described marriage and career achievement as routes for providing the experiences and lifestyles which they did not have for their future children.

In light of state failures to provide security, regulate social relationships in the community, and answer the concerns and demands of its young citizenry; many young people in working-class communities turn to individualised and alternative means of obtaining political goods. In the process, adolescents experienced immense pressure to succeed from mentors and teachers, along with the desire to achieve upward mobility to live in safe communities and self-actualise. In this way, the identity development of adolescents in

working-class communities is shaped by their environments and the ongoing presence of violence, which are in turn shaped by national failures to provide security and correct the legacy of apartheid-era laws.

Figure 6 These tough times are steps to your future goals that you want to achieve (Nicole, girl, photostory, 2017)

Participants in the study often represented their hopes and fears simultaneously. In focus groups and photostories, adolescent girls emphasised their aspirations for the future as centred around scholastic, career, and financial success. Like other young women in South Africa, studying was a major thread woven into their aspirations (Jewkes & Morrell, 2012); and good school performance was vocalised as both a pressure they faced as well as a goal. Community violence and teenage pregnancy were both highlighted as jeopardising imagined futures and success. Young women often spoke about estrangement from friends who had made "bad decisions" around drug and alcohol use, sexual relationships, and most markedly, motherhood. In the excerpt below, Kayla's use of the past tense in her story highlights that she is no longer as close to her friends who fell pregnant.

Kayla: Many of the girls that fell pregnant [were] those [whom] I was close to (girl, photostory, 2016)

A binary distinction was made between progressive girls who were actively pursuing their goals and a better future, and those who engaged in sexual activity, drug, and alcohol use. Adolescent girls who fell pregnant were particularly relegated to a zone of "futurelessness", as is vocalised in the excerpt below:

Simone: Once you [are] pregnant then you can forget about your future (girl, photostory, 2016)

This depiction of early reproduction as eliminating the potential of young women echoes popular discourses in South Africa around teenage pregnancy (Macleod, 2003). Even though research on other working-class communities indicates that adolescent pregnancy and birth do not automatically eliminate the possibility of further education and reasonable wage-earning, especially if young women receive help with their childcare responsibilities (Grant & Hallman, 2008; Whyte & Zondi, 1989); adolescent girls expressed fear that teenage pregnancy spelt the end of the possibility for a professional career. In this manner, adolescent girls internalised discourses of risk and identified themselves or their peers as easily influenced. Young women frequently identified the economic risk accompanying early parenthood and partnering with young men who were described as socioeconomically unsuccessful.

By ending friendships with mothering friends, "progressive girls" distanced themselves from such girls, who through sexual activity and motherhood were associated with both advancement into adulthood and denigration—and were thus isolated from their former friends and lives. Pregnant girls were punished for transgressing the child/adult binary and making their sexualities visible to their peers in this manner (Macleod, 2003). By conceiving children and displaying "adult" functions, namely, reproduction—such girls disrupted the "transitional" nature of adolescence (Macleod, 2003). Pregnant young women were simultaneously viewed as lacking personal agency - by virtue of their susceptibility to influence - and as active agents in making poor partner choices. In the focus group excerpt below, the co-researcher implies that pregnant girls perceived their pregnancies as fashionable, echoing broader discourses in schools that view teenage mothers as somewhat contaminating other girls by providing negative role models or influences to other girls (Shefer et al., 2013). This resembles South African literature on teenage pregnancy, which positions the female adolescent as "a passive recipient of external influences" or trends (Macleod, 2003 p. 428)

Participants: Some children are easier to influence with bad stuff… now in *my* community most of the children, most of the teenage girls are pregnant because they see it more like a fashionable thing going and they don't go for a successful guy, they go for the one that sits on the corner// the druggies [laughter]//. Now I'm someone I don't get influenced easily even if people want me to sit on the corner with them, they want to talk to me but then I just ignore them. I walk

away. Now some people think I could be more out there… (FG, all girls, 2016)

In focus groups, young women depicted bad influences as avoidable by choice, if one was willing to suffer the consequences of being viewed as socially inhibited. Absent from this discussion was the role of men in impregnating young women, or the possibility of such pregnancies being the result of coercive sexual acts. Due to their visibility and the stigma against those who breach the normative expectations of school-going young women, these girls bore the brunt of pregnancy (Shefer et al., 2013). Additionally missing from discourses around teenage pregnancy was the role and impact of social and environmental circumstances—such as poverty, limited sexual education and agency, and limited or stigmatised access to sexual and reproductive health services.

While pregnancy was seen as a consequence of decisions made in romantic relationships, girls often internalised and reproduced dominant narratives about teenage motherhood that rendered fathers invisible and put the onus on teenage girls to make better decisions. Little agency was attributed to teenage mothers following pregnancy. As one participant outlined in a story about a friend – familial and community responses to teenage pregnancy, such as facilitating marriage between the young mother and father of the child, can further limit the agency of a mother in shaping her destiny.

Participant: Like I have a friend. She's now nineteen. She got married this year. She was the type of girl that always stayed in the house. But when she got bigger and bigger she started going out, going to parties and on so, but I was friends with her since I was smaller already. So it came after matric, so she now fell pregnant. I still told her that I think she must go for a test because she's vomiting. I was there when everything happened like to her... Always. The child is not a year yet. Toe trou sy mos nou die jaar, but she didn't get married like on her own. That's basically people telling you sy moet trou. So she actually went into a marriage where she doesn't like feel happy. Now it's weird for her. She tells me like if she must ask for him mos now to, what do you call this in the Muslim religion, divorce. Now she is saying she can't ask him for a divorce. He must like divorce for her (FG 6, all girls, 2018).

Youth frequently policed themselves and each other in ways like the adults and institutions surrounding them. At first glance, such adolescents appear to have seized control of their bodies, relationships with peers, and fertility. However, upon closer inspection, it is apparent that they may be reacting to cultural and social pressures which place teenagers, particularly young women, in subordinate positions to people who represent older generations. Gendered experiences and expectations additionally place young women in secondary positions to young men. This may encourage the development of more conservative femininities. These positions – which oppose adults and adolescents – also legitimate the intervention of "mature, responsible, adult" experts in the lives of young people who require this as people "in transition" who are deemed to need help preventing pregnancy and remediating the negative impacts of early childbearing (Macleod, 2009). Pregnant or mothering adolescents were repeatedly blamed or shunned for breaching the child-adult barrier. The extract below reflects how the challenges of parenthood were spoken about as the price which girls paid for early mothering. This may result in narratives where agency and calculated decision-making are attributed to adolescent girls in primary school. Male partners and socioeconomic influences are obscured in such narratives, even when coercion or statutory rape may have preceded the pregnancy, which is more likely among adolescent girls, who are more likely to be involved in age-disparate relationships than boys (Zuma et al., 2022). In this manner, young women who were victims of sexual violence may become alienated from their peers, with little communication about their victimisation (Ngidi, 2022).

Participant: It's almost like for me, she's probably afraid of what I might become or whatever. But the thing is I never told her to go and make a child at a very young age. She was still in primary school. I told her you won't be able to handle a kid because you're still a child. But no, she was mos clever enough, she was brave enough. So whenever she complains about the child I always remind her, remember what you said, you said you will be able to handle the child (FG 6, all girls, 2018).

Young men similarly aspired to succeed, mostly through academic achievement, physical activity (especially soccer) and surrounding themselves with like-minded peers. Adolescent boys appeared to have greater access to hobbies, extra-curricular activities, and opportunities to socialise with peers than their female counterparts in contexts where young women were physically restricted to the home due to increased safety concerns. This may reflect how

boys are encouraged to engage in activities which assert their masculinity, autonomy, ambition, and assertiveness (Muhanguzi, 2011). Co-researchers who had role models whom they could identify with centred them in their photo-stories. The extracts from photo-stories below highlight how adolescent boys' gendered identities were shaped by their contexts, peers, and role models. At school, boys could embody an alternative masculinity that is not marginalised but was praised for both physical and intellectual feats in sports and academia. Much like the "academic boys" of Langa's (2016) research with teenage boys in Alexandra township, these co-researchers could be classified as young men who conformed to school rules and performed well academically. While fathers were frequently absent in young men's discourses on role models, alternative figures, particularly older brothers, offered them templates to follow, assistance with tasks and a listening ear. Boys without role models also aspired to succeed but lamented the lack of guidance in their lives.

Figure 7 Lyle, boy, photostory 2017

Figure 8 Daniel, boy, photostory 2017

Lyle: Recently my brother, who also attends my school, had a valedictory for the grade 12 learners. He is the first child in our house/family to do this. I plan on being the second person. He is an actual role model for me and my younger brother (boy, photostory, 2017)

Involvement in extra-curricular activities and groups, educational aspirations, and close friendships with like-minded peers appeared to help adolescent boys living in Mitchells Plain resist and reject hegemonically masculine behaviours that may place themselves and others in danger. Like young men living in other working-class neighbourhoods in South Africa, boys who prioritised academic achievement in such contexts may have to negotiate being both academically successful and "acceptably male" (Langa, 2016); which was explored in the earlier section on making sense of violence. Nevertheless, teenagers growing up in Mitchells Plain emphasised the value of healthy peer relationships as well as those with authority figures and institutions.

Figure 9: We are all different grades and ages, but we love each other. We don't do wrong stuff like smoke. We keep fit by playing active games like soccer (Kieran, boy, 2017, photostory).

Relationships as resistance

Courtney: One special teacher, two friends (besties) who are my family today. You cannot choose your relatives, but you can definitely choose your family (girl, written story, 2016).

Adolescents in Mitchells Plain highlighted the connections which they formed with each other, their parents, organisations in their community, and nature as important for their wellbeing. Daniels' (2018) primary analysis of the 2018 cohort outlined the importance of creating safe spaces for communication between young men and women in response to participants' appeals for activities and structures that emphasise social inclusion, enjoyment, and the act of bearing witness to each other's experiences.

Non-romantic relations between young men and women can be important in establishing respectful relations between different genders societally. Clarke and UNESCO et al. (2009) have highlighted how this predominantly occurs when students of different genders learn how to relate to each other as "friends, team members, supporters and as equal negotiators" (Clarke, 1997 as cited in Muhanguzi, 2011, p. 722). Therefore, shared activities combined with common goals and ambitions may serve to minimise perceived differences between the genders and foster more egalitarian relations.

Participants: In my community, you might be like friends with them and... They like always think nasty stuff because you're with the boys, with the opposite gender and now they think like you are having sex, you're at that level already. // They always think about the negative, they don't think positive. They won't encourage you, they just bring you down. (FG, all girls, 2018)

Nevertheless, friendships between differently gendered peers were frowned upon due to moral panic stirred by adults in the community. The anxiety about possible heterosexual encounters occurring in such relationships discounted the possibility and benefits of platonic friendships between boys and girls, limiting the opportunity for mutual recognition between differently gendered peers. Therefore, diversely gendered peers often interacted in the romantic arena where terms of engagement were less flexible, patriarchally defined, or often seen as "compromising" young women's futures and respectability.

In romantic relationships, moralising narratives around young women's sexuality reinforced ideas of a woman's value and well-being being tied to the number of sexual partners she engaged with. Much like in sexual education programmes in South African schools, the discourses of exploration or desire were broadly absent from focus groups. This contrasted starkly with narratives of sexuality as violence, victimisation and morality (Fine, 1988; Macleod, 2009). Rather than viewing sexual activity as mutually beneficial or pleasurable for the participants involved, young women were encouraged to preserve their sexual purity as a gift to future suitable suitors through discourses of abstinence.

*Participant***:** … Mommy says you give every person a piece of chocolate. Now when the right person comes what do you have to give? Only a piece of paper. It's nice to have open conversations with my mommy. It helps. (FG 6, all girls, 2018)

Nevertheless, an alternative narrative which explored the kinds of knowledge and wisdom gained through personal experience emerged too. Like young women in Uganda, some girls expressed the advantages of engaging in relationships, including gaining experience in handling future relationships and sexual temptations (Muhanguzi, 2013). One participant reasoned that a romantic experience with someone of her choosing may prevent her from further exploitation by men who were able to use young women's romantic inexperience to manipulate and exploit them in partnership. In this extract, she enters the domain of an experimenter and aspires to use the information obtained to ensure she is advantaged in future romantic relationships. This pushes back against literature which views young women as passive recipients of information from men, rather than as capable of experimenting with ways of being, including in areas of sexual identity or expression (Macleod, 2003). Here, a narrative of romantic abstinence until early adulthood is presented as a cautionary tale for young women whose naivete may leave them vulnerable to manipulation and exploitation by adult romantic partners.

Participant: My cousin, she met a guy, before I mention she's 23—she had no experience of dating whatsoever so… He sweet-talked her, she gave it up, and now she is lost… she's trying to kill herself because he doesn't love her and she – the two of us were very close and she pushed me away now… I'm someone I don't go for "loose". I told my mommy; I told her I want to experience things with a guy because when I'm older then I'm not gonna know what his words are gonna be when he's trying to get what he wants. That's why I need to know and have experiences because look where she… She took a bunch of pills because a guy didn't want her… that's sin! [laughter] (FG, all girls, 2018)

While minimised throughout focus groups, the desire for romantic relationships was expressed by co-researchers. Young women such as the participant above revealed a wish to have a range of heterosexual dating experiences within which they exercised agency and resisted male control. Nevertheless, the participant's desire is directed towards avoiding victimisation at the hands of a hypothetically dominant partner. Adolescent women living in Mitchell's Plain framed sexual activity as something which young men extracted from young women, who concede to their wishes and are vulnerable to feelings of rejection afterwards.

Men are also framed as opportunistic in their courtship of women, and as exercising authority over women when given the chance. Like the adolescent girls in Jewkes & Morrel's (2012) study, such fantasies for young women who were not involved in egalitarian relationships may be a substitute for real power and freedom to explore, particularly given the fears that many of them expressed around men and their reproductive health. The participant's declaration that she does not "go for loose" related concerns about reputation echoed by adolescent women in focus groups across the years of the study. Like adherents to conservative femininities in South Africa, which reflect an overarching cultural model of 'good' young womanhood, adolescent girls in Mitchells Plain experienced pressure to practice abstinence from romantic relationships and sexual interactions as processes in learning how to become 'normal' women (Jewkes & Morrel, 2012). Violence appeared to impact this process or choice of femininity in that avoiding violence and abuse from romantic or sexual partners may motivate young women to adopt femininities which ensured a greater sense of physical safety and possible community approval and protection. Thus, to avert risk, adolescent women were urged to engage in what Foucault (1982) calls 'technologies of the self'. In communities with increased rates of violence, a great deal of self-management may be expected from young people to know themselves and care for themselves in a manner which is cast as positive but often occurs in response to discourses infused with danger and disease (Macleod, 2009). In this way, narratives of sexual activity as a "form of knowledge seeking that creates identity and connectivity" were limited (Holzner & Oetomo, 2004, p. 47). Nevertheless, ambiguities were present as adolescent women grappled with negotiating desire and risk in their romantic lives.

Participant: Like most of the girls they like gangster boys because they know how to treat a girl better. I guess that's what drives them. I have a boyfriend and we [have been] together for eight months now and both of us are in grade 11, and he's soft and so, but I don't feel the need to date a boy that's like a hard boy. They say they know how to treat a girl, but in the meantime, that hard boy hurt the girl or they are cheating and he hurt her… And for me, it's like I don't know why they date hard boys. It's not right, it's just not right. (FG 2, all girls, 2018)

The excerpt above reveals how young women's romantic avoidance of adolescent men who were associated with hegemonic masculinity and its harms – such as violence and infidelity –

allowed room for the normalising of alternative masculinities. In this way, adolescent women resisted oppressive gender relations and identities by employing their limited agency to construct or generate acceptance for alternative masculinities such as the "soft boy" in the extract; much like the "nice guy" described by university-attending women in Talbot and Quayle's (2010) work - who was characterised by sensitivity, consideration, and romantic passivity. Such partner selection and acceptance may also be a safety strategy for young women. As evidenced in the earlier section on *achieving autonomy,* adolescent women's views of gender roles were shown to be more progressive and egalitarian when the conversation was centred around academic achievement and social or community contexts, but relatively subjugated and conservative when dialogue was centred on romantic relationships and family dynamics (Frosh et al., 2002; Talbot & Quayle, 2010). Nevertheless, young women revealed an awareness of these contradictions, and a wish for themselves and other adolescent girls to experience egalitarian power relations in their romantic relationships and increased agency in their family systems. While dating "gangster boys" or "hard boys" was viewed as more desirable, and possibly materially beneficial through access to resources such as transport, gifts, and experiences; these men were also described as physically and emotionally violent towards their partners. Adolescent men who expressed alternative masculinities were described as better partners, although there was limited emphasis on why outside of their relative safety in comparison to hegemonically masculine men.

When attributing the responsibility of avoiding drugs, sexual exploitation and violence to individual adolescents, co-researchers maintained an awareness of the nuances of these challenges. Participants especially resisted attributing blame to individuals when the limited agency or distress of young women from dysfunctional homes in the community was highlighted. In this manner, adolescents were able to subtly identify the pathologies in society or the presence of structural violence. Like the men in Brittijn's (2013) research with young men in Lavender Hill, the girls hypothesised that others succumbed to drug abuse to manage pain emerging from dysfunctional family contexts.

Participant: And I also think girls do sex or do drugs or do boys because the circumstances at home, like the problems, it gets too much to handle and then they just ... to take their minds off of the pain. (FG 2, all girls, 2018)

Like co-researchers in Banyard et al's (2022) research, adolescents discussed central ways in which their thoughts of themselves or behaviours were connected to groups such as peers and family. Participants therefore identified supportive family contexts as protective for young women in contexts where they may be vulnerable to engaging in substance abuse or unequal romantic relationships. While they frequently expressed feelings of frustration or disappointment towards their parents, young people in Mitchells Plain desired open communication with their caregivers, particularly around restrictions placed on their autonomy or behaviour.

Lisa: If the parents don't want us to go through that hard times then they should be open with their children (girl, photostory, 2017)

Even so, structural violence and the difficulties which youth experienced at home or achieving social mobility were internalised by co-researchers as individual failures and possibly, an inherent feature of the places which they came from. This contrasts with dominant views of adolescents as shirking responsibility or avoiding accountability for their actions. This was further explored in the previous section on *achieving autonomy*, which expanded on the pressures which young people experience while living in environments such as Mitchells Plain.

*Dahlia***:** One wrong move we end up back where we came from it seems (girl, written story, 2016)

While the norms of heterosexual relationships in the community were questioned – participants were more likely to refer to alternative masculinities and femininities than the spectrum of sexual orientations. When mentioned, young women embraced friendships with queer women but engaged in a kind of "othering" of lesbian women or relationships by generalizing these relationships (and women) as safer because of a mutual understanding of womanhood. While the co-researcher below expresses a positive stereotype, she may be infantilising and homogenising queer women in her narrative.

Participant: And they know what girls go through. I like gay friends. They're so cute (FG, all girls, 2018).

This reduction of LGBTQ+ people to endearing characteristics may communicate acceptance of queer identities and the challenging of homophobia among adolescent girls in Mitchells Plain. Unlike young men in similar contexts, young women valued friendships with queer peers and did not characterise being gay as against Christian values, perverse, threatening, or contaminating (Langa, 2015). However, the characterisation of queer women as harmless may contribute to a reluctance in LGBTQ+ youth to report or describe experiences of violence or abuse, particularly to services or spaces which are tailored for heterosexual women (Brown & Herman, 2015).

Adolescents also highlighted their relationships with spaces in their communities – using narratives of decay, beauty and generativity to show how people in the community found ways to tend to areas of the community. Recreational areas were frequently captured, but youth highlighted how parks and fields in Mitchell's Plain were dangerous, diseased or neglected as in the excerpts below. Damage to public spaces was often attributed to drug abusers in the community.

Figure 10 The playground in Mitchell's Plain is not that exciting… There is not a lot of grass in the park; it is mostly sand and stones and there is trash everywhere, mostly on the brownish grass (Liam, boy, photostory, 2017)

Recognizing the interactions between youth and the settings in which interventions are offered is a key feature of successful prevention programs targeted at a variety of youth-related problems (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; National Research Council, 2002). Therefore, the relationships which young people have with spaces in their communities - ranging from schools and churches to playgrounds and the fields - ought to be considered for future research or interventions for youth.

When highlighting strengths in Mitchells Plain, co-researchers drew attention to school feeding schemes, community safety initiatives and community work maintaining and

improving physical spaces in their neighbourhoods. Feeding schemes were highlighted as a community good—offering needed nutritional support to children from economically precarious households. Youth also described their community (including the elderly) as more united against violence than other communities, which served to reduce incidents of violence. Frequently captured landscapes and objects in nature drew attention to the natural beauty present in Mitchells Plain. Photographs of tended gardens at their school and building projects, in particular, may symbolise a sort of nurturing taking place in their surroundings and the broader community. Residential green space during childhood has been associated with better mental health and a possibly lowered risk of psychiatric disorders from adolescence into adulthood (Engemann et al., 2019). Research on urban planning and childhood has emphasised the importance of integrating natural environments into urban planning and children's lives although further scholarship is needed to determine the psychological impacts of doing so.

Lyle, boy, photostory, 2017

Kayla, girl, photostory, 2016

When asked to propose interventions which would be impactful in the lives of youth, young women highlighted: recreational activities, active listening to youth, guidance, as well as equipping young people with skills to physically defend themselves from violence in the form of self-defence training. While discourses of resilience have frequently been utilised to highlight young people's abilities to survive and achieve within difficult environments; such wishes highlight the importance of challenging the use of such discourses when they are used to justify the curtailing of resources or programs to youth in working-class communities.

Participant: I would say like things like outings, things to keep them like active and listen to their stories, it's important to listen to their stories [and] give them more advice (FG, all girls, 2018).

Ultimately, offering young people the opportunity to learn new skills, partake in enriching activities, and receive holistic support for their academic and social needs appeared to encourage healthy identity development for adolescents, a sense of empowerment and resilience in the face of challenges or failures.

Courtney: I never achieved or took part in school activities at all. Today I've been in many activities. I had the opportunity to go to parliament to speak in front of other schools. I was never academically strong, but since being in high school and having dreams and goals I want to achieve, I started working hard towards it and the rewards are better every time. I've been baptized, I attend church every Sunday. I'm slowly becoming the person I feared I'd never become (girl, story, 2016).

This theme shed light on how adolescents in Mitchells Plain formed relationships with each other, community institutions and nature in ways which resisted the assumptions made by adult members of the community, countered hegemonic masculinities and showed acceptance for multiple gendered and sexual identities. Young people emphasised their desires for platonic friendships across genders, agency in their romantic relationships, support from their families and opportunities such as self-defence classes, outings and forums to express themselves and be heard. Such interventions may not only reduce incidences of sexual assault but also improve self-esteem and perceived control while decreasing feelings of fear and anxiety (Brecklin & Ullman, 2005; Sinclair et al., 2013). Substance abuse, unhealthy romantic relationships and disengagement from school were highlighted as consequences of chaotic home environments, a lack of support and a lack of opportunities.

Power, difference, and sameness: the role of reflexivity

In the face of modern/colonial attitude and its constant questioning of the full humanity of the colonised, Frantz Fanon prompts researchers to ask themselves the question, "Have I not, because of what I have done or failed to do, contributed to an impoverishment of human reality?" (Maldonado-Torres, 2017, p. 439).

Qualitative research which embraces a decolonial and intersectional approach or "attitude" pays careful attention to the role of power in the production of research, openly acknowledging the researcher's role in co-producing knowledge (Babbie & Mouton, 2007;

Hook, 2004; Maldonado-Torres, 2017; Vähäsantanen & Saarinen, 2012). The traditional relationship between "the researcher" and "the researched" places the interviewer in a dominant position, but the notion of exclusive power is only partially true (Vähäsantanen & Saarinen, 2013). An intersectional approach to the loci of power served as an aid in making sense of how the interviewers and the participants may have asserted power alternatingly based on their gendered, sexual, and class identities along with the enactment of these during the research interview.

The primary researchers' backgrounds and upbringings possessed similarities and differences with the participants of the study that differed from each other along with those of the secondary researcher. Within the research encounter, these shared and differing intersectional identities emerged and shaped the dialogical space—which in qualitative research is one where researchers play an active role in the production of data from interviews or focus groups (Boonzaier, 2014; Riessman, 2008). The secondary nature of this research and its use of multiple sources of data collected by different researchers offers a unique opportunity to observe the dialogical spaces created by different researchers, even when similar research questions or interviews were being conducted.

The primary researcher for the 2018 study, who identified as a "cisgender, woman of colour, and Honours student, from a middle-class setting" acknowledged the way her intersectional identities and positionality as a researcher and graduate of a historically white [4] university may have shaped her interactions with the young women who participated in the focus groups (FG) (Daniels, 2018, p. 11). The excerpt below illustrates the ways this researcher may have invariably reinforced possible perceptions of her expertise and power by reifying discourses which her younger co-researchers learned from older maternal figures in their lives.

Participant: … Mommy says you give every person a piece of chocolate. Now when the right person comes what do you have to give? Only a piece of paper. It's nice to have open conversations with my mommy. It helps.

[4] Historically white universities are defined in this study as a group of universities which were permitted to only admit students identified as white under the National Party's apartheid rule.

Interviewer: Every time that person takes [from] you. It's like getting married. When you have sex it's like getting married. (FG 6 all girls, 2018)

This moment may have possibly deepened the rapport between the co-researchers and interviewer through mutual agreement around shared discourses about young women's sexuality; but simultaneously reinforced regulatory discourses around adolescent women's sexual activity and identities which reified the conservative femininities present, and possibly praised, in the community. Therefore, alternative opinions or expressions of femininity may have been silenced. Similarly, in this instance below – the primary researcher's affirmative to the statement made by a participant does not explicitly repress alternative narratives or contradictory responses to the statement put forward.

Participant: Being the oldest girl you have to be responsible.

Interviewer: It's true. (FG 5, all girls, 2018)

Nevertheless, by not interrogating this statement – or offering up the floor to other co-researchers to contradict it - the researcher subtly limited the co-construction of a broader range of narratives around young womanhood and possible resistance to the burden of care and responsibility that is frequently placed on girls in family units. This may be impacted by the theoretical framework which shaped this research, which while feminist and intersectional – was not decolonial. Further exploration during this exchange may have illuminated how eldest daughters' domestic labour in households and their contributions are viewed as dutiful and responsible and are not labelled as "work". Such a view of young women's household contributions is a legacy of men's labour acquiring exchange value during colonial times while "women's work" was made inferior in a new value system which coded this work as "traditional" (Oyěwùmí, 1997; Rodney, 1972). Nevertheless, this exchange also reveals how seniority interacts with gender in the lives of adolescent youth in Mitchells Plain to determine their familial roles and thus, their gendered identity development. The lack of gendered language when referring to sibling order such as "the oldest" and the "youngest" also highlights the importance of seniority and the privileging of the age of children socially in this community, and not simply their anatomy (Oyěwùmí, 1997). However, it is evident that privilege and responsibility are assigned to adolescent

women and men differently even when they possess similar levels of seniority in family contexts; and that seniority is deeply relational and situational.

Participants: ... because we go home, first clean and then ... // Doing washing. // As the oldest you have to do it.

Interviewer: I was spoilt because I was the youngest. My sister did everything.

Participants: I hate the youngest. [Laughter]. // I'm not the oldest, but my mommy can depend more on me than my brother, because he's like, how can I say, it's complicated, he just wants to be the boss, he just want to be the man, but he's not. (FG, all girls, 2018)

It is important to note that differing research questions and theoretical frameworks utilised in the primary research process may have impacted the nature of the focus groups and discussions; particularly in shaping moments where dialogue was either encouraged or redirected to navigate time constraints.

The primary researcher for the 2016 and 2017 studies, herself an alumnus of the school in which the research was conducted, was an academic at a historically white university which held much prestige in the local context and also possessed a set of intersectional identities which shaped dialogue in different ways. The research encounter below exemplifies a moment where asking adolescent women about their desires and views of themselves in an open-ended manner allowed for responses from multiple participants which contradicted each other and enabled co-researchers to be vulnerable about their difficulties identifying their desires and wishes amidst pressure from others.

Interviewer: So, how do you think about what you want? How do you see yourself in that situation? What do you want? What are your desires? Your hopes your dreams?

Participant 1: So sometimes you can't see what you want because there is so much noise, so much pressure on you.

Participant 2: You study, and you study but you actually don't wanna do that…

Participant 3: Me myself I don't get pressurised like that because I have a close relationship with my mother… we speak about everything and it's my decisions. She tells me if I make mistakes, I must learn from [them]. I choose my friends (FG all girls, 2016)

It is important to reflect on how secondary research still entails an encounter between the researcher and the previously collected data as well as those involved in creating it. This engagement is not direct; but the secondary researcher may engage with the data as both an insider and an outsider to the words, experiences and shared communities and identities which the data reveals. As an older Black, cis-gendered woman with a predominantly middle-class background, my early years growing up in Mamelodi, a township in Pretoria which shares some similarities to the working-class suburbs of Cape Town may offer some nuanced insight into the data and the narratives revealed by these learners, but my later years growing up in middle-class suburbs, and schooling in former model-c schools and a historically-white university position me as an outsider looking in.

The use of narrative techniques allows for transparency regarding how the positionalities of the secondary researcher impacted the interpretation of the data. Therefore, it is particularly important for me to critically reflect on the data analysis process and the co-construction of knowledge it entails.

It is also helpful to acknowledge that the secondary nature of the research enables the secondary researcher to engage with data in an "observer" position, which allows one to witness the research encounter between the primary researchers and co-researchers. While I may not have always been well informed on the moment-to-moment nature of the data collection process, obstacles faced in rapport-building or engaging and eliciting responses from participants, as well as logistical constraints such as time and scheduling conflicts or safety concerns during the data collection process; this position may enable the noticing of processes in the research which hindsight and an alternative position allow for. For example, one of the focus groups in the 2018 study took place while active shooting was occurring in the neighbourhood and co-researchers noted how this limited their ability to safely take pictures in the neighbourhood—thus curtailing the extent of the discussion which took place regarding their photovoice stories. The empathic stance of the primary researcher allowed for a brief discussion on the psychological impact of gang violence in the community to take place spontaneously, allowing co-researchers to shape the research encounter with their

concerns and experiences of community violence even though this did not emerge in their initial photostories.

Participants: ... I only went once this week to school because they were shooting in the morning there by us.

Interviewer: How has the shooting affected you guys, besides not being able to go to school?

Participants: Very emotional because my sister wakes up every night, [and says] "Mommy I had a bad dream that dead people is eating me up". But she wants to stand there by the dead people, look at the blood and all that stuff. She tells my baby brother, go inside, you're going to have bad dreams, but she's the one having the bad dreams.

In this exchange, the primary researcher offered co-researchers the opportunity to speak about the ongoing trauma which young people exposed to frequent violence experience even though this was not part of the set of research questions during this primary study. This empathic stance may be an example of what Maldonado-Torres (2017, p. 439) refers to as a "decolonial attitude of love and understanding" which, by offering co-researchers a chance to shape the research encounter (and knowledge produced) at this moment, may be viewed as an effort to resist research practices which are extractive and asymmetrically beneficial.

In the concluding chapter, a summary of the study findings, limitations, and recommendations for future youth research is provided.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

This chapter provides a summary of the research findings, the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research based on the findings and limitations, and a conclusion.

Summary of findings

Decolonial feminist and narrative approaches informed how this secondary study was conducted. There is a limited number of decolonial feminist research on youth, particularly on the effects of violence on adolescents in working-class contexts such as Mitchells Plain. The scholarship of South African researchers has extensively investigated the relationships between gender, sexuality, violence and youth and their implications for the health and well-being of adolescents (Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Jewkes & Morrell, 2010; Langa, 2010; Macleod, 2009; Ngidi, 2022). Youth studies have employed different approaches, lenses, and methodologies such as psychodynamic and intersectional approaches. Similar to this study, Chonody's (2013) research on violence through the eyes of the youth employed photovoice methodology to understand how young people defined violence and its causes, exploring the intersection between race, poverty and violence. By applying a decolonial feminist framework to the analysis of previously collected photovoice data, this study offers a unique methodological contribution to understanding the gendered and sexual identities as well as lived experiences of working-class youth in South Africa.

The results of the secondary photovoice study were discussed through four core thematic narratives. These themes were guided by young people's articulations around different types of violence in their community, their adaptations to violence or ways of seeking safety, their aspirations for the future and their resistance to the identity-shaping impacts of violence; particularly on their gendered and sexual identities. The exploratory and empowering nature of photovoice research is a strength of participatory action approaches as it offers youth the opportunity to express their perspectives through imagery, words and discussions in a more autonomous manner. This form of participatory action research was therefore able to give adolescents the opportunity to depict and narrate their experiences of growing up in Mitchells Plain; individual and relational understandings of gender-based, peer, and community violence; and how the contexts to which they belonged to influence the development of their gendered and sexual identities. Past and emerging photovoice research has offered similar opportunities (Banyard et al., 2022, Chonody, 2013).

The narratives, photographs and analysis of the everyday lived experiences of the co-researchers' lives unveiled the varying influences on the identity development of adolescents. These included understandings of gender-based, community and structural violence, safe spaces, relationships to institutions and other members of the community, and the role of pressure and ambition in shaping their futures. Such reports were significant as the lives of adolescents living in low-income urban communities in South Africa are irreversibly shaped by the prevalence of violence (Hisberger et al., 2016; Nuttman-Schwartz, 2017). Young people expressed their fears of victimisation, particularly of sexual and intimate partner violence, as well as their hopes for the future and the function of role models in shaping their behaviour and ambitions. This study also unveiled how both young men and women in working-class communities suppressed their distress in response to violence but were differently impacted by the threat of sexual violence. In particular, young women living in working-class communities faced restrictions on their spatial and sexual autonomy that young men did not. This was significant as it affirmed how poverty, living in distressed communities, unequal gender norms and the history and normalization of violence (legacies of colonialism and apartheid) and rape culture form viable environments for the violation of girls in South African townships (Ngidi, 2022). Adolescent girls in Mitchells Plain's gendered and sexual identities were moulded by the threat of violation in their communities, and this in turn influenced how they viewed the areas in which they grew up.

The first two themes emphasized the impacts which various types of violence had on the experiences and identity development of adolescents in Mitchells Plain and their modes of seeking safety from violence and its effects. This highlighted the instrumental role which the presence of gender-based violence had on shaping young women's behaviour and the types of femininities to which they adhered to avoid violence. In particular, the adoption of conservative femininities amongst girls was strongly motivated by fear of violence or reputational damage (Jewkes & Morrell, 2012; Gqola, 2021). In this way, fear was key in regulating how girls dressed, moved, behaved, and entered relationships. Boys and girls sought refuge in similar physical spaces in the community, particularly home, the church and school. These institutions offered much-needed cushioning to youth from ongoing community violence and its effects, along with sources of kinship and spiritual fulfilment (Nuttman-Schwartz, 2017; Weber & Bowers-DuToit, 2018). Even though schoolteachers were associated with immense pressure to succeed by learners (and subsequent anxiety), later themes showed academic achievement to be a common aspiration for youth. Notably, co-

researchers narrated their disapproval of masculinities which tolerated violence and they spoke out against gangsterism and gender-based violence.

Among the most significant findings were the similarities in emotional strategies which girls and boys employed to cope with the damaging effects of community violence, particularly emotional suppression. Both young men and women described the harmful effects of community violence such as increased anxiety, hypervigilance and feelings of sadness. Such experiences are important to note as they may be signs of continuous traumatic stress and the posttraumatic effects of exposure to community violence (Kaminer et al., 2018; Hinsberger et al., 2016). However, for adolescent girls, bodily and spatial autonomy was more restricted in light of the presence of violence; with far-reaching effects including avoidance behaviours in efforts to minimize the chance of victimisation (Kaminer et al., 2018). Specifically, the threat of sexual violence was a distinguishing and silencing feature of young women's everyday experiences (Gqola, 2021; Ngidi, 2022).

Adolescent aspirations for the future were also notable. Youth living in Mitchells Plain relayed similar goals and wishes including academic achievement, more autonomy, further education and financial safety. Young men embraced alternative ways of being men which emphasised educational attainment and were exemplified through role models and peers. The fear of teenage pregnancy and its realities (which adolescent girls bore the brunt of) shaped young women's gendered identities, encouraging the development of conservative femininities. These findings challenged possible gender essentialism that can occur when research is done with girls and boys, which may magnify differences between young men and women or describe these differences as inherent rather than socially and environmentally shaped. However, it may also be the case that the co-researchers shared many values and similarities that led them to participate in this study.

The concluding theme offered insights into how youth in Mitchells Plain show resilience and resistance in the face of chronic exposure to violence. They did so through forming relationships with each other (across genders and sexualities), participating in activities, expressing themselves, connecting with nature and highlighting community strengths. For young women, the desire for friendships across gender lines as well as healthy romantic relationships occurred in response to judgements from older members of the community as well as norms which encouraged abstinence and single-gender interactions. However, girls did not centre sexual activity in expressions of desire for relationships with boys – but emphasised the value of friendship and the presence of safety in romantic interactions. Co-researchers also highlighted their pride in community initiatives such as

school feeding schemes, as well as neighbourhoods in which communities united against violence. This theme informs the recommendations section – which follows the limitations of the study. The recommendations will suggest potentially helpful ways in which to take action in youth-informed or led ways through future participatory action research.

Limitations

This research study may present a few limitations regarding its scope and methodology, as well as the various strengths and weaknesses of the data (Cheng & Phillips, 2014). While questions of power in the research encounter may be applicable to the engagement between the primary researchers and participants, it is important to note that my analysis of data which I did not collect did place me at a distance from the research environment created by the principal researcher and data collector in conjunction with participants. There are also limits to secondary research which aims to facilitate the investigation of new research questions with older data in that the data may not fully answer or "fit" the new question (Heaton, 2004; Hinds et al., 1997;). The secondary nature of this research may have limited the possibility of devising and utilising prompts and focus group questions which more directly answered the research questions put forward in this research paper. Focus group questions or follow-ups which explored racial and class identities were limited. However, emphases on gender enabled co-researchers to openly discuss issues of gender. Therefore, discussions around sexual violence were prevented from being subsumed in narratives about race or class (Moffett, 2006) and the emphasis on gendered and sexual identities allowed for the main research questions to be answered. This research facilitated the elaboration of earlier findings while offering something new and yet cohesive to the data which spanned over several years.

Additionally, the interpretation of data in qualitative research is generally perceived to be contingent on the primary researcher's direct knowledge of the context of data collection and analysis, which is obtained through their own personal involvement in the research (Corti, 2000 as cited in Heaton, 2004). This secondary analysis used ongoing contact with the principal researcher to gain direct knowledge regarding this context to improve the secondary analysis but contact with the second primary researcher was not possible.

All-girl cohorts and focus groups in two years of the study (2016 and 2018) allowed for discussions that may have been silenced in mixed-gender groups. However, the absence of mixed-gender focus group discussions may have missed a possible opportunity to analyse how young men and women share narratives in each other's presence and collaborate over a

shared activity in a “safe space”. While young men’s individual narratives are presented, a gap in relational understandings of their gendered and sexual identity development may have formed in the research through the absence of focus group discussions with boys.

A final limitation was the emerging nature of decolonial feminist research on youth living in working-class areas. This had an impact on forming the foundation of the literature review, which drew on prior narrative, critical and decolonial feminist research on violence (particularly intimate partner violence) and youth in South Africa. Previous narrative and participatory action research done with youth offered key insights which the literature review and analysis benefitted from. While this research aimed to subvert understandings of gender that were shaped by the colonial encounter and its legacy, the categories which co-researchers used at the time of the research were used to represent them in the analysis. While predominantly offering a binary view of gender and age through distinctions between boys and girls as well as adolescents and adults, this research presented insights which challenged assumptions of differences between genders as well as those about teenagers. The study and analysis’ emphasis on gender highlighted the unique impacts of violence, the threat of violence and patriarchal norms on young men and women and their identity formation.

Strengths and benefits

The use of qualitative data collected over several years is a key strength of this research as it offered the opportunity to collate, compare, and draw parallels between the voices of young people situated in one school across three years. By working with youth as co-researchers and employing participatory action research methods, this work amplifies adolescent voices and the application of a decolonial feminist lens humanises young people during the research encounter—resisting research practices which are extractive and asymmetrically beneficial.

Within the field of clinical psychology, practitioners have frequently been limited to working with adolescents individually and as members of family systems. Within these settings, this research offers insights into the environmental and structural determinants of psychological disorders including depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, and PTSD; along with relational challenges which may emerge between adolescents and their peers and/ or caregivers living in environments such as Mitchells Plain. All the same, the insights and assistance of psychologists are sought after in institutional settings such as schools and universities, the public health sector, non-governmental organisations, and other systems deeply concerned with the well-being and success of adolescents. This mini-dissertation

could shape the interventions and advocacy efforts of psychologists working with young people from Mitchells Plain and other working-class communities which many young people live in and navigate more broadly. By highlighting the impacts of community settings and violence on the mental health, relational, gendered and sexual development of youth in Mitchell's Plain, this research offers a nuanced understanding of the factors which may shape adolescents' identities and behaviour.

Recommendations for further research

This study offered great insight into the adolescent identity development of the co-researchers and how this was shaped by various factors in their communities, particularly violence. However, I believe and would recommend further decolonial feminist research with youth using methods such as participatory action research and narrative techniques.

As this study and others have shown, safe spaces ought to be created for adolescents to reflect on their subjective meanings, feelings, and emotions around what it means to be a boy or girl (Langa, 2016; Muhanguzi, 2011; Ngidi, 2022;). However, such spaces could include mixed-gender dialogues and offer room for broader understandings of gender which do not reproduce binaries or leave colonial assumptions about gender unchallenged. There is a small but growing body of literature that highlights men's resistance to dominant forms of masculinity and focuses on men's vulnerability to other men and women or the constraints of hegemonic masculinity (Shefer, 2016). Research with youth can offer crucial insights into how to nurture non-violent masculinities and non-conservative femininities at critical points as well as foster healthy relations between people of different genders.

Additionally, considering the increasing role of technology (through popular media and social media) in generating and shaping youth cultures, research questions which explore the influence of media in the development of gendered and sexual identities may be key in expanding notions of community into virtual spheres. Further research may explore the interaction between global forces and trends along with local community contexts in the development of hegemonic and alternative masculinities and femininities.

Youth involvement in photovoice channels young people's desire to exercise autonomy and creatively express themselves while documenting their lives (Wang, 2006). Further research with youth on their experiences in working-class communities that identifies their specific needs and views on present forms of intervention and problem-solving is warranted. Such research may even incorporate the piloting of interventions into photovoice

research, such as family-based or institutionally-led interventions aimed at addressing the harmful effects of exposure to family and community violence (DeVoe et al., 2005).

Conclusion

"War traumatises, patriarchy maims, religious abuse isolates, racism humiliates, poverty does what it does, and in the end, it's always the children who pay." - Warsan Shire

Adolescents living in Mitchells Plain told stories which were beneficial in challenging dominant narratives about youth in South Africa, particularly those living in working-class neighbourhoods. For the co-researchers, narrating their lives through pictures and shared stories, as well as participation in photovoice exhibitions was beneficial in promoting critical dialogue and knowledge about issues affecting the community as well as reaching key community members (Wang, 2006).

The use of a decolonial feminist lens allowed for a reading of young people's stories that did not essentialise their gendered and sexual identities but foregrounded their understandings of victimisation to and the perpetration of violence – which were nuanced rather than binary (Shefer, 2016).This theoretical framework offered the chance to contest assumptions of townships or their inhabitants as inherently violent (Langa, 2010), but rather as shaped by their environments which are in turn moulded by historical legacies and different types of violence. Most importantly, it offered young people in Mitchells Plain opportunities to contest ill-informed assumptions about their motivation (or lack thereof), their attitudes to violence, and the effects of violence - even as youth displayed their resilience through a secondary analysis of data collected over several years. This adds a unique contribution to the methodology used to study youth and violence and builds on the growing body of decolonial feminist studies on youth and violence.

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Appendix A: Confidentiality Agreement for Secondary Research

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Youth in Mitchells Plain photovoice study

I, _____ the secondary researcher, agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all audiotapes and documentations received from Professor Floretta Boonzaier related to her research study on youth in Mitchells Plain, I agree:

1. To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be inadvertently revealed during the transcription of audio-taped interviews, or in any associated documents. This will be done, in part, by concealing the identities of the research participants (using pseudonyms) in the process of generating the secondary research project unless otherwise instructed by participants themselves.

2. To not make copies of any audiotapes of the transcribed interviews texts, focus group texts or photographs unless specifically requested to do so by the researcher, Professor Floretta Boonzaier.

3. To store all study-related audiotapes and materials in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession, and to refrain from using cloud network storage with compromised security

4. To return all audiotapes and study-related materials to Professor Floretta Boonzaier in a complete and timely manner, as agreed upon if in physical form

5. To delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive and any back-up devices following the completion of my Master's Thesis, according to the University of Cape Town guidelines for Master's Thesis submission

6. To not publish or rework any parts of the transcribed audiotapes or photographs and captions unless in conjunction with the primary researcher, Professor Floretta Boonzaier and with written approval from the primary researcher and the appropriate and necessary credit given to the primary researcher and the National Research Foundation in any publications

I am aware that I can be held legally responsible for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audiotapes and/or files to which I will have access.

Secondary researcher's name (printed)

Mokgadi Marishane

Secondary researcher's signature Signed by candidate

Date 4 June 2020

Researcher's signature Signed by candidate

Appendix B: Ethical Approval

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

REPORT OF THESIS COMMITTEE

Student Name: __Mokgadi Marishane_____

Student #: ___**MRSMOK002**_____

Degree: _____MA Clin Psych_____

Title (as proposed): Understanding youth experiences in Mitchell's Plain: a narrative photovoice investigation

_____

_____

Supervisor: __Floretta Boonzaier _____

Co-supervisor: __Skype Chirape_____

Committee members: ___ Debbie (Chair)

___ Wahbie Long _____

___ Maxine Spedding_____

_____

WE:

1. Approve the proposal, and recommend that the student continue with the research.

2. Approve the proposal, and recommend that the student may continue with the research. However, we recommend that change(s), as noted below, be incorporated in the research, to the satisfaction of the supervisor.

3. Approve the proposal in terms of its ethical implications. If necessary, explanatory notes appear below.

4. Find the proposal unsatisfactory, for the reason(s) listed below. The student is hereby requested to re-present the proposal to a departmental thesis committee by _____.

5. Would like the student to re-submit the proposal to the panel after addressing the issues raised in the proposal meeting (listed below). The student does not need to re-

present the proposal to the committee. Ethical approval will also be postponed until the revised proposal is reviewed.

NOTES:
The panel recommends that the student makes it very clear in their thesis write up how their research is novel, i.e. using a novel corpus of data (the three datasets that have not been combined previously) and asking a different research question to previous research conducted with parts of this dataset, to make it clear that this is not just a re-analysis of previously analysed data.
It is also recommended that the student pay careful attention in their write up to specific recommendations for how the findings can be translated/applied into possible interventions that will benefit the school/community.

Appendix C:

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Department of Psychology

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

13 March 2014

Dr Floretta Boonzaier
Department of Psychology
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch 7701

Dear Dr Boonzaier,

I am pleased to inform you that ethical clearance has been given by an Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty of Humanities for your project, *The gendered and sexual lives of young people in South Africa: A participatory project.* The reference number is PSY2014-002.

I wish you all the best for your study.

Yours sincerely,

Signed by candidate

Johann Louw PhD
Professor
Chair: Ethics Review Committee

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,

Signed by candidate

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

Appendix E: Poster for 2018 photo-story exhibition