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**Youth Sexuality And HIV/AIDS In A South African Urban Township:
A Critical Realist Approach.**

by

TERRY-ANN SELIKOW



A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate
Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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in

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Dedication

To those who speak with squirrels and who speak the truth to power. Doing the latter “is no Panglossian idealism : it is carefully weighing the alternative, picking the right one, and then intelligently representing it where it can do the most good and cause the right change” (Said, 1994); doing the former represents being in touch with humanity and with nature, and following your heart in good faith; and it is a prerequisite for the latter.

Abstract

In this research I use a case study of youth in an impoverished township, Alexander Township (Alex) to explore youth sexuality in the context of the HIV / AIDS epidemic in South Africa. I pose two interlinked questions; “What are the predominant sexual practices amongst Alex youth?” and “What methodological and conceptual framework offers the most comprehensive approach to understanding and explaining sexuality?” These two questions are intrinsically linked as, in order to understand youth sexuality, it is imperative to have a rigorous methodological and theoretical framework, and in order to develop theories and methodologies of sexuality, it is necessary to test them against empirical data.

I draw on critical realist methodology and critical theory to develop an approach I refer to as a Critical Realist Approach; the term “approach” signifying the integration of critical realism and critical theory. I combine this methodology and theory with a method described as interpretive structuralism.

I argue the models of youth sexuality based on bio-medical research are of limited use and that youth sexuality needs to be understood in a context that takes account of the internal environment (symbolic) as well as the external environment (physical and material). This is best done by using a CRA that recognises the biological aspects of sexuality and incorporates aspects of poststructuralism.

I demonstrate that issues such as gender, hegemony, power, language and agency and structures are central in explaining youth sexuality. I maintain that youth sexuality develops in particular contexts which shape sexual practices. Drawing on Gramsci's notion of commonsense, I show that although youth have some "scientific" understanding of HIV / AIDS, their awareness of HIV / AIDS is partly derived from everyday experiences and is infused with myths and misunderstandings. I illustrate that abstaining from sex, being faithful, and using condoms raises a number of challenges for youth in Alex as it is an environment where sex has become a symbolic and material resource, transactional sex is rife, violence is ubiquitous, a range of myths exist about sexuality and a language that promotes high risk sexual activity prevails. I conclude the thesis by looking at practical implications that arise from the research about ways to reduce the risk of HIV / AIDS.

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Benjamin (now ten); for endless pleasure, constant emails; giving me reason to hope and understanding that sometimes I was sad because “Canada is the opposite of Africa, cold and white; not green and blue and all the colours of Africa.”

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List of abbreviations / glossary

Alex: short name for Alexander Township.

Amagents: term that was popular in the seventies for a respected gangster.

ANC: African National Congress.

ANCYL: African National Congress Youth League.

Borgwa: derived from bourgeoisie, to dress in a particular way.

Bra/ bro: brother.

Bua: speak.

CASE: Community Agency for Social Enquiry.

Cherrie: girlfriend who is one of a man's many girlfriends.

Comrade: person involved in the anti-apartheid struggle.

COSAS: Congress of South African Students.

COSATU: Congress of South African Trade Unions.

Dagga: marijuana.

DET: Department of Education and Training, the schooling authority for black South Africans.

Ghetto guy: male from Alex.

Eish: common township expression of exasperation or surprise or to confirm something.

IFP: Inkatha Freedom Party.

Ingagara: concept to express highly respected male in the township; the epitome of a "real" man.

Isithipa: the opposite of an ingagara; a nerd.

Iteye: term to express women who are perceived as promiscuous.

Just now: anytime from a few moments to a few hours.

Kasie: short for location, areas which were designated for black South Africans under apartheid, also commonly known as townships.

Klap: to hit someone.

Lobola: a form of “payment” (as money or often as cattle) that is made by the husband’s family to the wife’s family prior to marriage

Lovelife: one of the biggest (but controversial) media campaigns in South Africa aimed at preventing HIV / AIDS.

Makwapheni: a roll on deodorant or secret girlfriend, another word for cherrie.

Makosha: prostitute.

Mhkuku: shack.

MK: Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the African National Congress.

Model C school: previously white school.

Neh: hey.

NYC: National Youth Commission.

Quarter: a cheap meal bought at a spaza, consisting of hollowed out bread, usually filled with curried meat or “slap” (greasy) chips.

Regte: a serious or steady girlfriend.

Sharp: nice / good.

Skelm: crook or person involved in dubious behaviour.

Spaza: tuckshop in township where cigarettes, newspapers, hot chips, coldrinks, and hot food can be bo

Tata ma chance: take a chance, derived from the slogan from the South African lottery, “Tata ma chance, tata ma million” (Take a chance, take a million).

Tsotsi: villain or thug.

Taal: language.

Vat en sit: from Afrikaans, literally translated means “take and sit” and refers to the process whereby a man and woman establish a home together but do not get married.

Voetsek: go away.

Wena: you (a Sotho) word.

Young Lions: the young activist in the ANC Youth League.

CHAPTER ONE: OPENING CHAPTER

1. INTRODUCTION

This research is a critical realist case study of youth sexuality in the context of the HIV / AIDS pandemic in South Africa. It is based on interviews with 70 youth¹ in an impoverished urban township Alexander (Alex) in Johannesburg, South Africa. I define sexuality as being closely connected to gender and masculinity and femininity and as being partly characterized by whom a person has sex with, in what way and under what circumstances (Aggleton, 2000). I pose two key interlinked questions in this research.

The first question is primarily empirical in nature and asks

- what are the predominant sexual practices amongst Alex youth?

The second question is geared towards methodology and theory and asks

- what methodological and conceptual framework offers the most comprehensive approach to understanding and explaining the above youth sexuality?

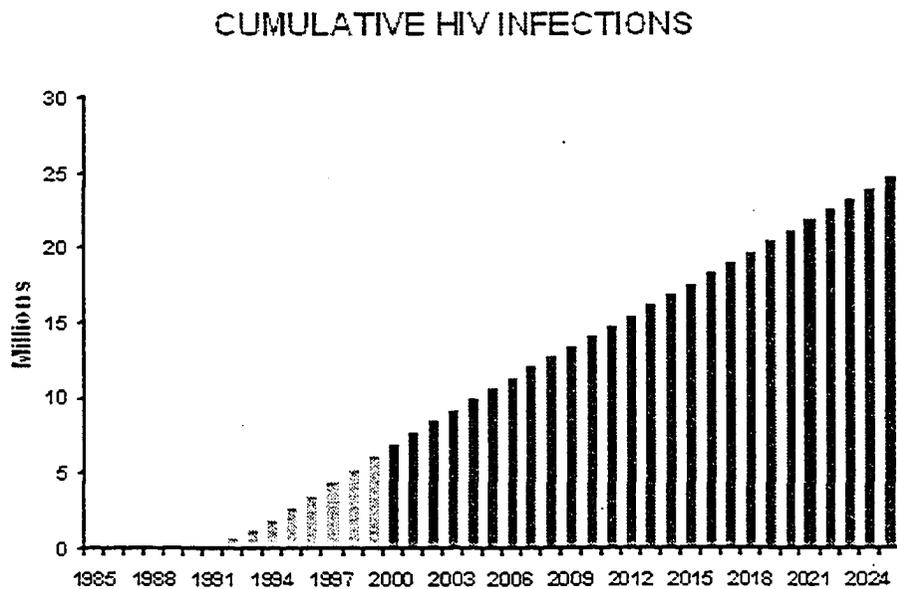
These two questions are intrinsically linked as, in order to understand what the predominant sexual practices are and why they emerged, it is imperative to have a rigorous methodological and theoretical framework, and in order to develop theories and methodologies of sexuality, it is necessary to test them against empirical data. Arising out of this research, I look at practical implications and make suggestions about ways to reduce the risk for youth of contracting HIV / AIDS.

¹ From here on, when I refer to the youth I interviewed in Alex; I shall use the term “Alex youth” or “youth,” rather than the longer and clumsy, but more accurate, “the youth I interviewed in Alex.”

2. THE PROBLEM

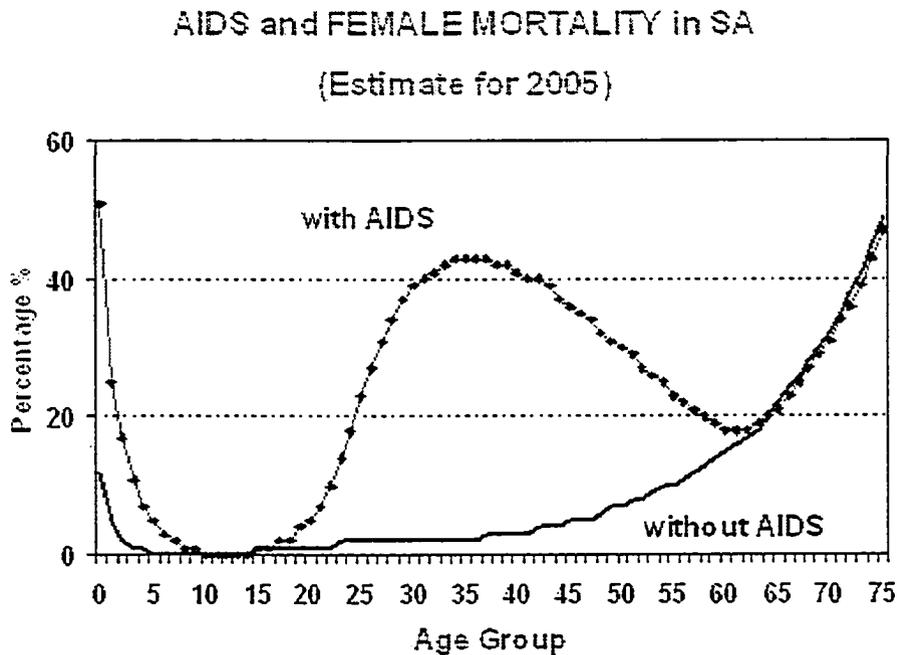
Although the HIV / AIDS statistics in South Africa are in dispute, it is generally agreed upon that the HIV / AIDS rates are unacceptably high with devastating consequences (Barnett, Prins and Whiteside, 2004, p. 21). For example The National Department of Health study (2004) is based on data from the sexually active population and therefore shows a higher prevalence rate (27.9% of the population) while the The Nelson Mandela / Human Sciences Research Council study (2002) is based on data from the whole population (including very young and old people who are less at risk for infection), hence their overall prevalence rate is lower, 11.4%. The Actuarial Society of South Africa (ASSA) estimated that in July 2002, there were 6.5. million people in South Africa living with HIV / AIDS (the population in South Africa is estimated to be 46.6. million) (www.assa.org.za).

The graph below is taken from the Actuarial Society of South Africa and indicates the growth in the number of HIV infections in South Africa.



Source: ASSA

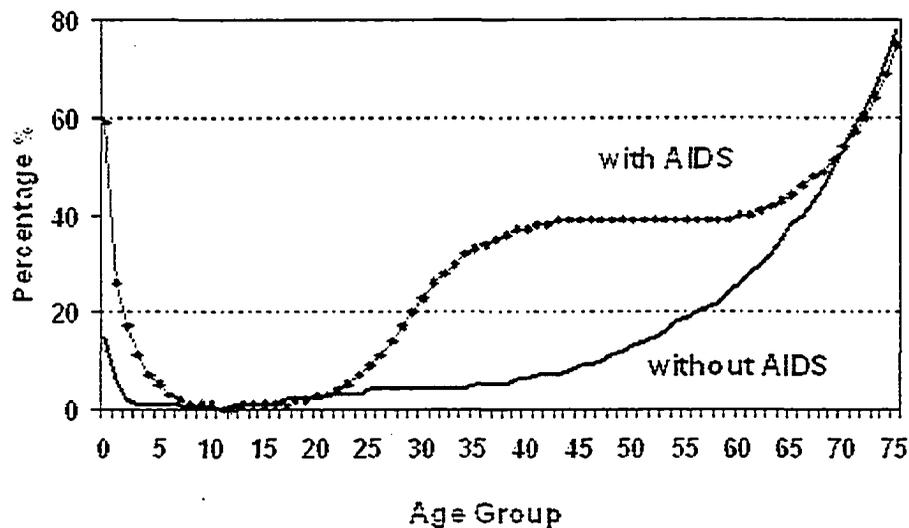
The gender imbalance amongst youth between 15 to 24 years old is striking, with 21.6% of females in this group being infected and 5.8% of men (approximately four infected women for every infected man) (www.assa.org.za).² The graphs below indicate the gendered nature of the epidemic.



Source: ASSA

² This trend is replicated throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, where women account for 57% of all those people living with HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS, 2004).

AIDS and MALE MORTALITY in SA
(Estimate for 2005)



Source: ASSA

HIV infection is also spread unevenly amongst the population groups in South Africa and the Nelson Mandela / Human Sciences Research Council Study (2002) estimates that 10.2% of Africans (black South Africans) are infected, compared to 6.3% of the Coloured population, 3.2% of the White population, and 0.3% of the Indian population. Moreover, the study indicated that HIV is spread unevenly according to type of locality. In urban formal settlements 9.3% of the population was infected, in urban informal settlements 20.2% of the population was infected, in tribal localities 7.0% of the population was infected, and on farms 8.6% of the population was infected. Hence, the fact that my study is based on youth in an urban informal settlement is significant.

3. BLACK YOUTH

The South African National Youth Commission Act (1996) defines youth as people between the ages of 14 – 35 (National Youth Development Policy Framework, 2002-2007). The upper age limit is higher than the international definitions (16-24) because of the impact of apartheid on black youth, namely black youth

- lived in poverty and there were excessively high rates of unemployment;
- were subjected to inferior education designed to equip black youth with manual jobs,
- experienced frequent disruptions in their schooling due to political unrest;
- made many sacrifices by playing a central role in the struggle against apartheid, particularly during 1976 to 1990;
- were exposed to and / or participated in torture and violence;
- engaged increasingly in abuse of substances; and
- experienced high levels of STIs (sexually transmitted infections) and unplanned pregnancies.

In the post apartheid era, despite efforts from the government, the majority of black youth are still marginalized by a range of factors including psychological, economic, political and social factors (Everatt and Jennings, 1996, p. 3; Everatt, 2000, pp. 4 – 29) and they remain the most vulnerable group in relation to poverty, crime, employment, education, housing and health (Collins and Stadler, 2001; Everatt and Sisulu, 1992; Naidu, 2001). This vulnerability is mirrored in the statistics on HIV / AIDS and STIs amongst youth.

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

My research is significant for a number of reasons

- in South Africa there is one of the highest rates of HIV infection in the world, particularly amongst youth³, with a high emotional, social and economic cost;
- in Africa the main method of HIV transmission is through heterosexual intercourse and as many as a third of youth are sexually active (Abt. inc, 2001);

³ This trend is not unique to South Africa and globally, for a number of reasons ranging from physiological to psycho-social reasons, youth are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection (Dowsett et al., 1997; Moore, Rosenthal and Mitchell, 1996, pp. 1-15). Indeed, half of all the new HIV infections world-wide occur among people aged 15 to 24 (Watts and Garcia-Moreno, 2000, p. 6).

- sex is a normal part of adult activity and HIV / AIDS is not transmitted by a “deviant” behaviour that can be eradicated;
- young people’s sexual behaviours are not entrenched and interventions need to be aimed at youth before their sexual patterns become established;
- a cure for HIV / AIDS is not likely in the near future and even in the event that a vaccine is discovered, it is unlikely that it will be financially accessible to the entire population, and
- as discussed below, research into HIV / AIDS and youth sexuality in South Africa has been inadequate.

In light of the above it is imperative to focus on sexual practices and how to modify high risk sexual practices to lessen the chance of HIV infection and understanding youth sexuality is increasingly important for all those involved in the prevention, caring for and treatment of HIV positive people, including health practitioners policy makers and educators.

4.1. INADEQUATE RESEARCH

Historically there has not been much research into HIV / AIDS and youth sexuality in the South African context (Delius and Glaser, 2001, pp. 1-2). Although research into black youth has been conducted, particularly since post 1976 (after the Soweto uprisings), much of this research has focused on the militarised nature of youth, how they have been politically organised, and the socio-economic problems they face (Marks, 1993, p. 3). Moreover, the rise of HIV occurred in the context of a major political transition, instability, political violence and the threat of civil war, and such factors, and the protracted negotiations prior to the democratic elections, distracted attention, energy and resources away from the AIDS epidemic (Marais, 2000).

The HIV / AIDS epidemic compelled researchers to focus on sexual behaviour and the literature has focused on the following trends to explain the high prevalence of HIV / AIDS amongst South African youth

- the vulnerability of young women to HIV / AIDS due to cultural, socio-economic, political and physical factors and violence against women;
- the blurring of traditional ways of attaining manhood and of the hegemonic construction of masculinity whereby risky sexual behaviour is a way of gaining status and where multiple sexual partners are the norm;
- youth as a stage of risk taking;
- men's negative attitudes to condoms;
- the fact that women have little access to resources such as education and employment so that sex has become an important resource that is traded for both subsistence needs as well as conspicuous consumption;
- youth's knowledge, beliefs and perceptions of HIV / AIDS, including myths about HIV / AIDS, the view that male sexuality is uncontrollable and that males need sex from multiple partners and the use of tradition to justify sexual practices; and
- the nature of HIV / AIDS and the fact that HIV is often an invisible disease due to the fact that it can be asymptomatic and that many people deny being HIV positive due to the stigma attached to this illness.

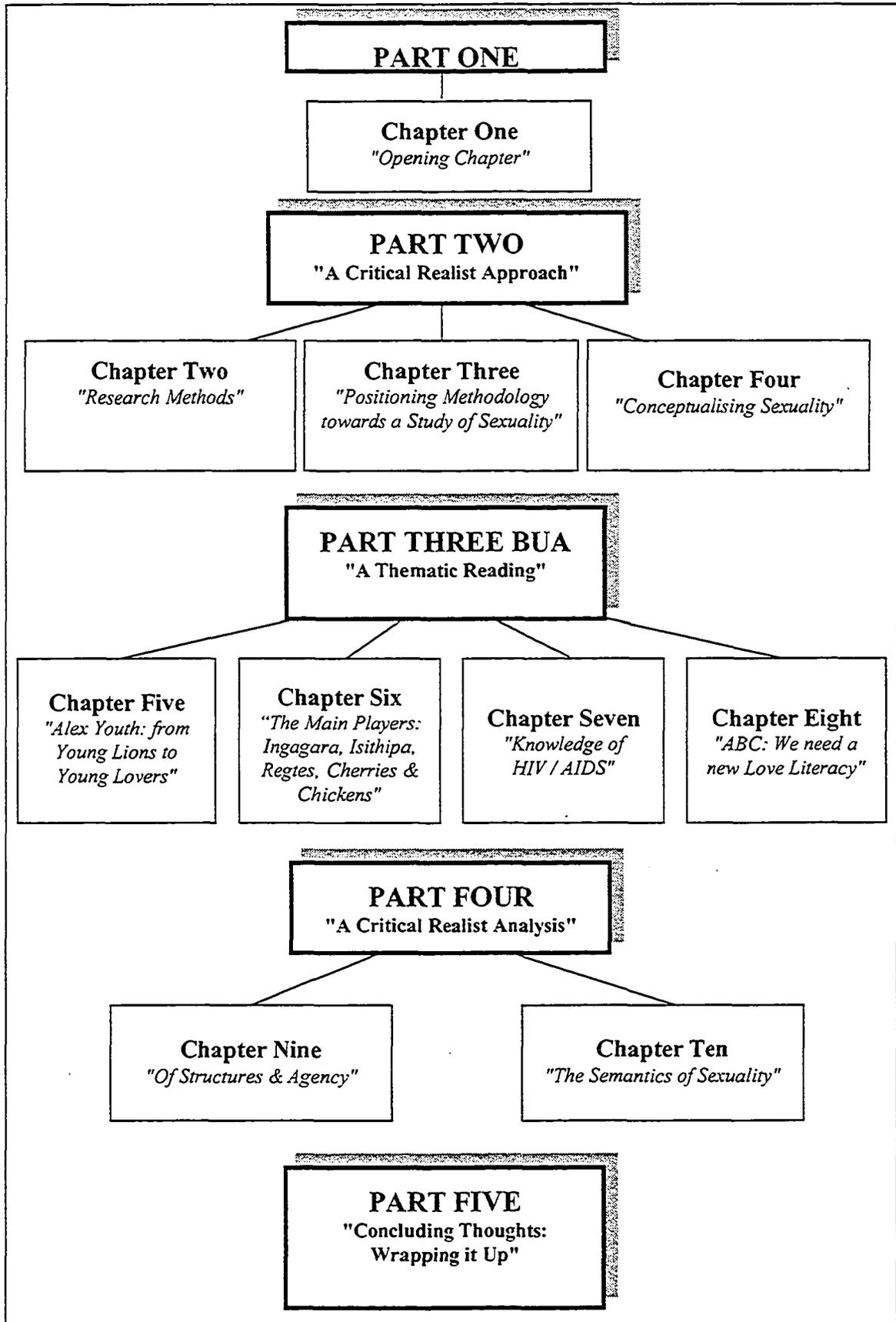
Many studies focusing on the above issues have produced useful work and insights into HIV / AIDS, however, research into youth sexuality has been inadequate on two main counts. One, many studies are descriptive and lack explicit theories and methodologies. Two, many South African studies examine individual sexual behaviour (which can be measured and quantified), rather than sexuality, and are based either implicitly or explicitly on the bio-medical model, and, as I shall elaborate on further, this model has a number of inherent weaknesses.

In light of the above, my research moves beyond descriptive studies and the bio-medical model and focuses on sexuality, rather than sexual behaviour. Moreover, my work is explicitly located within critical realist methodology and critical theory and I use a critical realist approach (CRA) to understand youth sexuality in an impoverished urban

township in South Africa. As such, I take account of the complex nuances of the local but I do not forsake theory and methodology. I rely on methodology and theory to read my data and in turn I use my data to “test” theories and methodologies.

5. STRUCTURE OF DISSERTATION

The dissertation is divided into five parts. In part one, chapter one, I introduce the study and in chapter two I explicate the research methods. In part two, I develop a critical realist approach. Part two consists of two chapters. In the first of these chapters, chapter three, I detail my methodological premises and in the second chapter of part two, chapter four, I provide a theoretical context for the research. Part three of the dissertation is entitled “Bua” (the Sotho word for “speak”) and is comprised of four chapters based on the substantive literature of HIV / AIDS and interviews with Alex youth. Part four is an analysis of part three and consists of two chapters. Part five concludes the dissertation by focusing on practical suggestions derived from the research. The structure of the dissertation is represented on the following page.



PART ONE:

CHAPTER ONE, “OPENING CHAPTER.”

In chapter one, I define the focus of my research, my approach and argument and I outline the structure of the dissertation.

PART TWO: A CRITICAL REALIST APPROACH (CRA).

CHAPTERS TWO, THREE AND FOUR.

In part two of the dissertation I outline my critical realist approach which consists of my research methods based on interpretive structuralism, a critical realist methodology and a theoretical framework largely derived from critical theory. I have consciously called my framework a critical realist “approach” to signify that it is based on both a critical realist methodology as well as critical realist theory. While often critical realist methodology and critical theory go hand in hand, this is not always the case and / or even when critical theory is drawn on, methodology is often not made explicit. A strength of my research is the explicit focus on both theory and methodology, and the term “approach” captures this conceptual paradigm.

Chapter Two: Research Methods.

In chapter two I present the methods of my research, focusing on the technicalities of the research. I reject positivistic approaches and I argue for an intensive research design geared towards social theorizing where social explanation is understood as more complex than law like regularities. I adopt a hermeneutic–structural approach. As such, I focus on interpretations, meanings and perceptions (hermeneutic approach) and I locate these within broader macro systems (structural approach). I use qualitative research techniques and I collected my data by conducting semi-structured interviews with individuals and with groups. As my aim was not to generalize to the rest of the population, I used purposive sampling, a form of non-probability sampling, whereby each member of the group is seen as significant. I did not view data analysis and data collection as separate stages and on-going analysis informed what data to collect. I stopped interviewing when I had a number of integrated themes and when additional interviews were not adding more information to my set of themes; data saturation. In this chapter I also outline issues that pertain to ethics and trust.

Chapter Three: Positioning Methodology: Towards a Study of Sexuality.

In chapter three, "Positioning Methodology: Towards a Study of Sexuality," I juxtapose the competing methodologies used in the study of sexuality. I explain that the term methodology differs from the term methods, as, while the latter refers to my ground level approach to my research, methodology is the philosophical construction of knowledge and is primarily concerned with epistemology, ontology and normative issues.

I argue that although positivistic methodologies and their bio-medical frameworks are the dominant approaches to HIV / AIDS, these methodologies are inadequate and flawed. My main criticism of these models is that they approach sexuality as mainly determined by biological processes and hence they undermine the material and cultural aspects of sexuality; the core issues in my research.

I explain that within social constructionist approaches, there are two approaches, one based on extreme social constructionism and one more moderate. Extreme social constructionism manifests as poststructuralism and, in its most extreme form, as postmodernism; and moderate social constructionism is aligned with critical theory. Common to both social constructionist approaches is the negation of universal and biological understandings of sexuality, however, unlike extreme social constructionism, moderate social constructionism acknowledges that there is an inherent sexual desire which is then constructed and reconstructed in relation to the material and cultural environment.

I argue that while postmodernist approaches reduce sexuality to a discursive construction, poststructuralist methodologies, with their emphasis on the role language plays in the mediation and constitution of society, can be usefully read with a critical realist methodology. I take up the challenge of reading poststructuralism with critical realism, maintaining that a critical realist ontology and a relativist epistemology allows for an approach to sexuality that takes the biological, symbolic and material into account; thus

transcending the impasse between biomedical approaches with their emphasis on the biological and extreme social constructionism and their preoccupation with language.

Chapter Four: Conceptualising Sexuality

In chapter four “Conceptualising Sexuality,” I outline my theoretical approach. Drawing primarily on critical theory, I position myself in relation to the key conceptual issues that weave my research together. These conceptual issues are gender and sexuality, hegemony, power, language and structure and agency. I argue that it is important to understand how masculinities and femininities operate (albeit in different ways) to increase the vulnerability of men and women to HIV / AIDS. I purport that a critical realist approach has overcome the stalemate between determinism and voluntarism as it does not pose agency in opposition to structures. Indeed, rather than asking the dualistically phrased question of “structure versus agency,” a CRA asks, “how are actions enabled and constrained by structures?” As a CRA conceptualizes actions as occurring within structures, it is able to understand how actions are constrained by structures, and it is also able to explore how humans act to reproduce and transform structures (agency). I draw on Hall’s politics of articulation to take account of the useful insights of both Althusserian structuralism and the concept of interpellation, as well as Gramscian culturalism and the concept of hegemony. I maintain that hegemony allows an understanding of how ideology is not reducible to one domain but rather operates via the material, social and cultural. I argue that hegemony functions via a continuous process of coercion and consent, and that control is never total. This is because within commonsense there are always contradictions and ambiguities, and because human beings are creative agents who can (and do) resist hegemony. I maintain that power is a central component in analyzing youth sexuality and I propose that Foucault’s conception of power read with a Gramscian conception of hegemony offers a valuable framework for understanding how the balance of power favours men. This understanding of power entails asking questions about how power operates at a concrete day to day level via the symbolic and material; however this micro-physics of power needs to be read within a context of macro structures of power. Moreover, this conception of power rejects a top down “master slave” analysis of power leaving room for resistance and seeing power relations as

dynamic rather than static. I propose that any analysis of sexuality needs to take account of how language partly constitutes and mediates reality but that this does not mean that sexuality should be reduced to the discursive. I argue that although language is “real” (in the sense that it has a material effectivity), it is only one moment of social practice and it exists side by side with other moments of social practice. I conceptualise social practice as existing in three domains; cognitively embodied practices, linguistically embodied practices and corporeally embodied practices. I advocate a materialist reading of language whereby language is always produced and received within a pre-existing material and symbolic environment.

PART THREE: BUA.

CHAPTERS FIVE, SIX, SEVEN AND EIGHT.

Part three of the dissertation is a thematic reading of my data and is entitled “Bua,” the Sotho word for “talk.” It consists of four interlinked chapters, chapter five, “Alex Youth: From Young Lions to Young Lovers;” chapter six, “The Main Players: the Ingagaras the Isithipas and the Regtes and Cherries;” chapter seven, “Knowledge of HIV / AIDS;” and chapter eight, “ABC: We Need a New Love Literacy.”

Chapter Five: Alex Youth: From Young Lions to Young Lovers.

In chapter five, I set the scene for the research by sketching the material and social context of Alex youth. The title of the chapter, “Alex Youth: From Young Lions to Young Lovers,” is indicative of the fact that today’s youth are not as politically inclined as the young lions of the 1970 and 1980s, but rather they invest much time and energy in defining and enacting their sexual identities. This takes place within a context where overcrowding, unemployment, poverty and high levels of violence and crime are ubiquitous and where there has been an increase in consumerism and materialism. Moreover, although many traditional beliefs still exist, traditional institutions associated with sexual socialization have declined; and neither schools nor families fulfil the role of sexual socialization. Further, many people who might have been positive role models for youth have left Alex for better living conditions and criminals are role models. Youth, who had high expectations about their opportunities in a post-apartheid South Africa, are disappointed and discouraged by the fact that further education and jobs are still not

within their reach. In addition, young men have to find new ways to attain manhood and status as they can no longer do so through the traditional routes. I argue that within this milieu, an extreme culture of risk taking, *tata ma chance*, has developed and sexuality has taken on an increasing significance, with sex being both a symbolic and material resource.

Chapter Six: The Main Playas: The Ingagaras, The Isithipas, The Regtes and Cherries.

In chapter six I introduce the main “playas,” or ideal type sexual identities; the *ingagara*, the *isithipa* and the *regte* and the *cherrie* and “what they want.” I illustrate that youth construct male sexualities as two extreme opposite categories, the *ingagara* and the *isithipa*. The *ingagara* is a “real man” and is epitomized as a man who has many girlfriends, a good car, is fashionable and has access to money, usually through crime. At the other extreme, the *isithipa* is a man who does not have many girlfriends, is not fashionable and may have a job or be in an institution of higher learning. Women are divided into two main categories, the *regte* who is the long term girlfriend and may be the mother of an *ingagara*’s child and the *cherrie* (also referred to as the *makwapheni*) who is a “back up girlfriend” and who is second best and for fun, sex and status. I argue that while men engage in multiple relationships with women primarily for status and sex, women primarily engage in sexual relationships with men for economic rewards. Indeed, in a context where women have limited access to resources, the theme of “men for money,” for basic subsistence or for conspicuous consumption, runs throughout the research, with women’s “pay back” being sex. Hence, as masculinity is intertwined with sexuality, sex has a symbolic value for men and it is a material resource for women; creating a sex exchange economy. I illustrate how within these relationships, the conditions of exchange are not equal, with the balance of power favouring men. I demonstrate that many women remain in relationships with men who are not faithful to them, some women remain in relationships and ask their boyfriends to use a condom with cherries, and other women leave relationships. I conclude the chapter by focusing on the double standards that operate in Alex with regard to sexual relationships whereby men who have multiple relationships are held in high regard but women who have multiple relationships are given derogatory names.

Chapter Seven: Knowledge of HIV / AIDS.

In chapter seven I interrogate youths' understanding and awareness of HIV / AIDS. I argue that youth obtain information about HIV / AIDS from a wide variety of sources but they primarily rely on friends for information despite the fact that youth's knowledge of HIV / AIDS is infused with myths and misunderstandings. These myths and misunderstandings relate primarily to modes and symptoms of infection, a cure, testing, high risk partners, AIDS as an invention and the existence of HIV / AIDS. I illustrate that youth's understandings of HIV / AIDS is partly derived from everyday experiences and partly derived from scientific discourses, hence these understandings are often contradictory. In light of this I maintain that notions of awareness about HIV / AIDS would be usefully conceptualized using Gramsci's notion of common sense. I demonstrate that knowledge about HIV / AIDS, and even knowing an HIV positive person, does not necessarily transform sexual practices, and I argue that this is because sexual practices always occur in a complex social milieu and changing sexual behaviour cannot be understood in a cause and effect way.

Chapter Eight: A.B.C. : We Need A New Love Literacy.

In chapter eight, "A.B.C.: We Need A New Love Literacy," I extrapolate from the previous three chapters and I look at the implications of youth behaviour for the A.B.C. approach. I observe that abstinence is a difficult option for four reasons. One, young people maintain that youth who do not engage in sexual relationships are crazy or cursed by bad luck. Two, for a range of reasons it is important for youth to be involved in relationships and within relationships sex occupies an important place. Third, youth believe that it is a biological necessity that males engage in sex, and fourth, violence undermines the idea of abstinence as many women believe that as they might be sexually violated, they may as well have sex. In relation to the "B" in the A.B.C., I argue that despite the multitude of campaigns in South Africa that call for monogamy, both males and females engage in multiple relationships. As I argued in chapters five and six, the hegemonic masculinity in Alex is characterized by multiple partners for men and this is a central explanatory factor in why "being faithful" is not adhered to. As well, in these two chapters I illustrated that women have many "needs" that are met by men and often these requirements cannot be met by only one man, hence women often have multiple sexual

partners. Furthermore, there is a myth that men have an inherent need for sex from multiple partners. Although youth have some sense that multiple relationships increase the risk of contracting HIV, this understanding co-exists with ideas that undermine this awareness. For example, youth do not take their partners previous sexual history into account and they believe that if they have known someone for a long time they can trust them. In the final part of this chapter, I argue that although condoms are widely available, they are not used regularly. I illustrate that condom usage varies with both regtes and cherries and that women have very little decision making power with regard to whether a condom is used. This is partly due to the physical power of men and partly due to the transactional element in most sexual transactions. I demonstrate that condoms are not neutral objects and that decision making about condoms is partly predicated upon the symbolic meanings attached to sex whereby a condom is associated with casual sex and condomless sex with love and trust. Although males sometimes choose to use condoms with cherries, it is highly unlikely that they will use a condom with a regte.

PART FOUR:

CHAPTERS NINE AND TEN.

In part four of the dissertation, I use the CRA developed in part two to read the data presented in part three. In chapter nine, "Of Structures and Agency," I focus on the material structures that enable and constrain youth's choice and in chapter ten, "The Semantics of Sexuality," I move to explore the symbolic realm and I focus on the use of day to day language and how this impacts sexuality.

Chapter Nine: Of Structures and Agency.

In this chapter I focus on the structures that constrain and enable youth's sexual practices. Analytically structures are conceptualised as external (material and biological) and internal (symbolic and linguistic), and in this chapter I focus primarily on external structures as in the following chapter I explore the symbolic by focusing on the day to day language used by youth.

I begin the chapter by focusing on agency and awareness. Agency is not only the ability to act as one would choose to regardless of structures, but it is also the necessary

knowledge. Therefore I argue that it is necessary to interrogate notions of knowledge and awareness of HIV / AIDS. While knowledge of HIV / AIDS is necessary, it is a weak determinant of sexual practices, and I maintain that approaches such as the bio-medical approach that over-emphasise knowledge as a determinant in sexual practices, have an inadequate understanding of awareness. I argue that a Gramscian conception of knowledge and awareness is more appropriate than positivistic and quantitative approaches which are common in bio-medical models. The Gramscian notion of common sense replaces a “yes /no” understanding of awareness with a more complex and nuanced understanding of youth’s awareness of HIV / AIDS. It recognizes that there is more than one discourse and that discourses co-exist, conflict and compete with each other. Moreover, although one discourse becomes hegemonic, as common-sense is contradictory and fragmented, and partly derived from everyday experience, the scientific discourse will never completely over ride youth’s conceptions of HIV / AIDS. Thus, regardless of how much knowledge is channelled to youth, it does not automatically translate into a scientific awareness. Hence, the “knowledge equals agency” equation needs to be challenged.

In the next part of the chapter, section two, I illustrate the centrality of a realist ontology that acknowledges realities that may exist independently of human perceptions and understandings. In section three of the chapter I illustrate that while youth’s perceptions of HIV / AIDS are central, regardless of these perceptions, there are realities, such as HIV (the transitive dimension), which can lead to death irrespective of the terms used to describe it (the intransitive dimension).

I then focus on the centrality of material structures in understanding sexuality and I illustrate how the *tata ma chance* logic can be best understood as partly emanating from the existing material realities of the township.

In section four of this chapter, I reintroduce the concept of intertextuality. I demonstrate that to understand why a particular sexual practice becomes dominant, it is necessary to

locate sexual practices within pre-existing structures as sexual practices are always produced in specific contexts.

I explore structures and power in section five of the chapter. I argue that women's choices are seriously constrained by external structures and by the physical and economic power that men exert over them. A focus on the material elements of power is an acknowledgement that sexual practices are not purely determined by discursive constructions. Moreover, I illustrate that to understand the power dynamics inherent in sexual relationships, it is important to move away from abstract conceptions of power and to rather look at how power functions through social practices on a day to day basis. In this regard, Foucault's micro-physics of power is useful, however I contend that the micro-physics of power needs to be read with a Gramscian conception of hegemony that recognizes the broader structural or macro workings of power. Such an understanding of power allows a focus on the day to day but it recognises that these local power relationships take place within a context where patriarchy may be institutionalized so that some forms of power function as structuring and overarching principles.

In section six of this chapter I propose that despite the constraints imposed on women, women's actions are not determined by structures and women do exercise a degree of agency. To illustrate how women exert agency I explore three possible responses to unfaithful men. These are the hegemonic response (women who remain in the relationship, "accept" that their boyfriend is having sex with other women and continue to engage in condomless sex with their boyfriend); the negotiated response (women who remain in the relationship and "agree" to condomless sex with their boyfriends on condition that it is stipulated that they are the right one. They "understand" that their boyfriends will engage in sex with other women and they plead with their men to use a condom with other women); and the oppositional response (women who leave the relationship).

In section seven I focus on how men's choices are constrained. I demonstrate that the ingagara identity is, in part, a response to the pre-existing structures in Alex where

traditional ways of attaining manhood and status are limited. In the final section of the chapter, section eight, I briefly focus on the reproduction and transformation of structures and I illustrate how both men and women are instrumental in the reproduction of the conditions that encourage high risk sexual practices.

Chapter Ten: The Semantics of Sexuality.

In chapter ten, I use a CRA to language to explore youth sexuality. I argue that humans have inherent sexual drives, and that although sexual acts are experienced via the physical body, sexuality is made sense of through available discourses and it is partly constituted in language; hence the necessity of focusing on the day-to-day language of Alex youth.

Drawing on the work of the later Foucault, I demonstrate how youth's bodies are linguistically classified and coded with particular types of sexualities being ascribed to particular bodies. I maintain that to understand sexuality, it is useful to challenge essentialist and biological notions of identity and to focus on how identity is discursively constructed. I look at how sexual identities are performative, i.e. what youth do at a given time, rather than a universal who youth are. The focus on what youth "do" at a given time helps explain how youth can have conflicting identities. Youth's identities are based on the construction of differences and I illustrate how the dominant masculinity of ingagara is constituted in opposition to the subordinate masculinity of isithipa. Binaries are used to fix the seemingly mutually exclusive ingagara and isithipa identity, so that language is used to repress alternative versions of masculinity. I also demonstrate how, through binaries, language operates to establish and maintain a normative order in Alex as oppositional concepts are positioned so that one set of values and meanings is privileged over the other. In this way, the cherrie is seen as a woman who is for sex and fun, while the regte is seen as a woman who is suitable for a long term relationship and being the mother of a child; and the ingagara is perceived as the "top dog," while the isithipa is seen as the inferior masculinity.

I show how the use of metonymy is a further mechanism whereby language creates and recreates sexual practices. I also illustrate how through the process of interpellation, women are hailed into particular subject positions. I explore how metaphors are used to justify the view of male sexuality as uncontrollable and violent and how market language is used to promote the idea of women as objects to be possessed. I argue that the “language of biology and tradition” is used to reinforce myths about male sexuality and to obscure the partially socially constructed nature of sexuality.

In investigating how power operates in part via the symbolic, I show how connotations reinforce the normative order whereby male promiscuity is valorised but females who are perceived to be promiscuous are demeaned. I illustrate how power operates at a discursive level by excluding those who do not conform to the dominant discourse.

I argue that poststructuralists undermine the role that shared meanings play in creating and maintaining sexuality. I demonstrate that the reproduction of sexual patterns of behaviour is facilitated by figurative language which become shared codes for youth. I also claim that the use of language is not as arbitrary as poststructuralists posit, but rather, it is rooted in material and cultural structures. I argue that while language influences sexual practices, it does not determine sexual practices. I posit that language functions to reproduce sexual patterns; but language is also a potential arena of resistance and transformation. However I caution that even when language seems empowering, semantics can be mere words whereby new words simply describe old behaviours.

PART FIVE: CHAPTER ELEVEN.

I conclude the dissertation with chapter eleven, entitled, “Wrapping Up,” where I focus on the implications of my research for practice.

INTRODUCTION TO PART TWO: A CRITICAL REALIST APPROACH (CRA)

Part two of the dissertation consists of three components, chapter two (research methods), chapter three (methodology) and chapter four (the theoretical framework). In part two of the dissertation I outline my critical realist approach (CRA). I use the term “critical realist approach,” with “approach” being adopted to signify the combination of my research methods, my theoretical framework and my methodology. Critical realism as a philosophy and methodology does not align itself to any substantive theory (Fairclough, Jessop, Sayer, 2002, p. 1), and, as such, not all critical realist methodologies draw on critical theory and *visa versa*. Moreover, critical realist methodologies and theories do not dictate research methods, and, as such, it cannot be taken as a given that research based on critical realist methodology and critical realist theory uses particular research methods.

The term “approach” in “Critical Realist Approach” underscores that my conceptual framework entails three interlinked parts, namely

- my method: based on interpretive structuralism and intensive research design (chapter two); and
- my theoretical approach: derived primarily from critical theory (chapter three); and
- my methodology: based on critical realism (chapter four).

The term CRA brings together the above three components, and offers a framework that can guide further research into sexuality.

CHAPTER TWO RESEARCH METHODS

1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I describe my research methods. These are the technicalities or ground level approach to my research, and chapters three and four detail the methodological and theoretical approach to my research. Although influenced by philosophical concerns, research methods are primarily a “practical matter” (Sayer, 1992, p. 4) and, as critical realism is not prescriptive about methods (Yeung, 1997), I have selected my research methods based on what would be the most practically adequate method given my particular research question (Morrow and Brown, 1994; Sayer, 2000). This being said, as outlined in the following chapter, I reject positivism for a range of methodological reasons. Moreover, research designs that are rooted in positivism tend to focus on measurable quantifiable data⁴ such as knowledge, attitudes and practices, and do not capture the complexities of sexual behaviour.

2. GROUNDED RESEARCH AND LOGIC IN USE

I used grounded research whereby the research design is not specified in detail prior to the research and “who and what” is to be studied is decided as the process unfolds (Sayer, 1992, p. 244; Sayer, 2000, p. 20). Grounded research adopts a “logic in practice” approach rather than a “reconstructed logic” approach. The latter is common in quantitative research and explains the technical research procedures in a step-by-step manner. Logic in practice does not discuss methods in overly technical and standardized terms and is a cyclical process rather than a rigid linear fixed set of steps (Neuman, 2000, pp. 122-124).

⁴ This does not imply that there is no need for large scale quantitative or survey based HIV / AIDS research, indeed, such techniques of data collection are important, particularly to collect base line data.

3. EXTENSIVE AND INTENSIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

I adopted an intensive research design rather than an extensive design. These terms should not be confused with the concepts “qualitative” and “quantitative.” While the latter are variations of techniques to collect data, extensive and intensive refer to deeper conceptual issues (Morrow and Brown, 1994, p. 38; Sayer, 1992, pp. 241- 251).

Extensive research is often survey based and is usually quantitative and considers a few issues and general patterns from a large number or a representative sample. In contrast, intensive research is usually qualitative and examines a large number of properties from a small number of cases (Morrow and Brown, 1994, p 250; Sayer, 1992, pp. 242-243; Sayer, 2000, pp. 20-22). Intensive research can be characterised by its orientation towards social theorising (as opposed to social engineering), its hermeneutic structural approach and its unique conception of causality (Morrow and Brown, 1994).

While extreme interpretive approaches neglect causation and explanation, at the opposite end of the spectrum, positivism proposes causal universal law like regularities and underplays meanings (Morrow and Brown, 1994, p. 165). Critical realism overcomes this impasse by adopting a structural hermeneutic approach that focus on the symbolic, meanings, perceptions, semantics and practices within systems and structural relations (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999, p. 75; Morrow and Brown, 1994, pp. 24, 212-213; Sayer, 1992, p. 4; Sayer, 2000, pp. 13, 143).

When contrasting Bhaskar’s work to positivism and to hermeneutics, Bhaskar argues that to study social practices (like the hermeneuticist and unlike the positivist) it is necessary to begin with the actors’ understandings however (unlike the hermeneuticist and like the positivist), he maintains that social science can contest these understandings. Moreover, he posits (like the positivist) that social explanation can be causal, and (like the hermeneuticist), that it can be interpretive. However, unlike these two groups, he does not maintain that causality and interpretivism need to be mutually exclusive (Collier, 1994, p. 167).

Critical realists also transcend the impasse of the opposition between nomothetic (context independent and usually associated with quantitative analysis) and idiographic (unique and context dependent and usually associated with qualitative) explanation (Calhoun, 1995, p. 9; Morrow and Brown, 1994, pp. 55-57). Nomothetic research maintains that patterns found in large populations can be generaliseable but they err by focusing at a surface level on causal processes and variables which they portray as indicative of general laws. On the other hand, idiographic approaches err as they focus solely on interpreting meaning systems and fail to locate the embeddedness of specific events in broader systems of structural relations. As well, they reject explanatory theorizing about causality.

Unlike nomothetic and idiographic research, critical realism recognises that broad quantitative studies are not necessarily theoretical and that local studies can be theoretical. Indeed critical realists argue that theory should not be equated with generalisability and regularity as theory is concerned with conceptualisation, which is not the same as regularity (Morrow and Brown, 1994, p. 137; Sayer, 2000, pp. 132-140). Moreover, critical realists transcend the nomothetic – ideographic polarisation by rejecting correlational notions of causality that seek regularities and by rather looking to a more complex conception of social explanation than law like regularities (Fairclough, Jessop and Sayer, 2002; Morrow and Brown, 1994, p. 45). Moreover, they argue that while the regularity clause should not be disregarded, this does not mean we should do likewise with causation (Sayer, 2000, p. 97). Indeed, the distinction between the real and the actual, as discussed in the following chapter, allows a unique understanding of causality that is very different from the regularity one proposed by positivists. For realists:

Causation is not understood on the model of regular succession of events, and hence explanation need not depend on finding them, or searching for putative social laws. The conventional impulse to prove causation by gathering data on repeated regularities, repeated occurrence, is therefore misguided; at best these might suggest where to look for candidates for causal mechanisms. What causes something to happen has nothing to do with the number of times we have observed it happening. Explanation depends instead on identifying causal

mechanisms and how they work, and discovering if they have been activated and under what conditions (Sayer, 2000, p. 14).

Critical realism puts less emphasis on quantitative methods for discovering regularities and rather focuses on methods of establishing the qualitative nature of social objects and relations on which causal mechanisms depend (Neuman, 2000; Sayer, 1992, pp. 3-4). Importantly, realist analysis recognizes “the contingency of social structures” hence avoiding “the errors of structuralism” (Sayer, 2000, p. 42). Moreover critical realists also avoid determinism because, although a cause is responsible for producing change, something may be possible but may not actually happen (Huberman and Miles, 1998, pp. 192-193; Sayer, 2000, pp. 93-97). At the same time, while being cautious of over and pre-determination, Sayer (2000, p. 95) observes, “We don’t need to throw out any notion of determination and flip over into imagining that anything can happen, anywhere.” Moreover, still drawing on Sayer (1989, pp. 163-4), “Without causality any concept of responsibility, agency or freedom is meaningless, for we can only be responsible for what we can influence.” Given, critical theory’s emphasis on transformation and emancipation, this is a significant point.

4. THE CASE STUDY

This research is a case study. Case studies are usually associated with intensive designs involving an in-depth analytical examination of a single case or limited set of cases. This is in marked contrast to the logic of enumerative induction used by the large aggregate approach or longitudinal approach where data are collected about many cases so that patterns can be established.

Case studies are useful when the aim is to connect the micro level to the macro level of large-scale social structures and processes (Neuman, 2000, pp. 32-33). Although it can be argued that a limitation of the case study approach is its inability to generalize to broader populations, as this is not the aim of this study, it need not be seen as a weakness. Theorization provides the basis for generalizations to other cases and related secondary research on HIV / AIDS.

The case study comprises youth in Alexandra Township, and the choice of a case study underscores my contention that although there may be a range of commonalities in relation to sexuality and HIV / AIDS, site specific research is important. This being said, while the micro context is of key significance, it needs to be read against macro narratives so that the trap of both nomothetic and idiographic research is avoided.

In my research it was not imperative to have a particular research site; rather, in order to set delimitations, a site with some geographical boundaries was required (Glesne, 1998, p. 28). I chose Alex as it has large numbers of young people and an above average rate of HIV prevalence (estimated at 40% more than the average for Gauteng)⁵. Moreover, Alex is close to where I lived in South Africa, Orange Grove, and I had a good research contact in Alex, Eugene Cedras. The latter is important as, in addition to a number of “gate-keeping issues,” due to the violence in Alex I needed to be escorted into the township.

4.1. ALEXANDRA TOWNSHIP⁶

In this section I present a brief contextualisation of Alex (See Appendix A for images of Alex). Alex is in the north-eastern part of Johannesburg and is 13 kms from the centre of Johannesburg. It is a popular location, because of its close proximity to shops, facilities and work. It is surrounded by wealthy suburbs, main roads, and a zone of light industry. Old Alexandra is bordered by the Jukskei River to the west, by recent middle-class housing developments on the East and Far East Banks, and a highway.

⁵ There are approximately 800 AIDS orphans in Alex (Siegfried, 2004, p. 14), a number indicative of the high prevalence rate of HIV in Alex.

⁶ Information comes from the Mission Statement of the Alexandra Renewal Project: Overall Proposals (April 2002); Alexsana Kopano Educational Trust (undated); Gauteng News Reports; Isserow and Everatt (1998); Mail and Guardian (various publications); Stavrou, 1993; The Star (various publications).

4.2. A BRIEF HISTORY⁷

Alex has been a residential township since 1912 and it has been the home to many great political and cultural leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Wolly Serote and Hugh Masekela. After the Second World War, “squatters” were sent to live in Alex leading to what is now known as “shack living.” In the 1940s and 50s Alex was commonly known as “Dark City” because of gangsterism, crime and lack of electricity. After the National Party came to power in 1948, freehold title was abolished in Alex and some families were removed but the majority stayed as tenants of the government.

In the 1950s, like the rest of South Africa, Alex was the site of widespread political turmoil. During the height of the period of forced removals of black South Africans in the 1950s and 1960s, the Alex community managed to resist being removed. However in the 1970s, and again more recently in 2001, some residents were relocated against their will.

During the 1980s there were long school boycotts and a popular war was waged against the administration and police. During this period, and particularly during the township uprising of 1984-1986, civic organisations and affiliated local structures grew in number and strength encouraged by the ANC’s call for “power to the people” and call to make “townships ungovernable.” Under the national state of emergency Alex leaders and activists were arrested and civic organizations were undermined.

Despite the political turmoil, the 1980s were also a period of development and during this time some streets were tarred for the first time and schools, new houses and approximately fifty blocks of flats were built. During this time influx control began to weaken precipitating the massive influx of people, including many “illegal” immigrants, into Alex.

⁷ Health and disease are related to factors associated with the physical environment such as unemployment, homelessness, unhygienic circumstances, prostitution, crime, a high school drop-out rate, social unrest, widespread poverty, civil conflict and political violence, migrant labour, poor health and the oppression and brutalisation of women and children (Coombs, 2000; Gilbert and Walker, 2000; Grundlingh, 2001, p. 23; Parker, Dalrymple and Durden, 2000, p. 2), all factors characteristic of Alex.

Prior to the 1994 democratic elections, Alex erupted in violence with tension between the Inkatha Freedom Party supporters (IFP) (who mainly occupied mine hostels) and the African National Congress (ANC) supporters. As part of the ANC government's urban renewal strategy, 1.5 billion rand⁸ will be invested in the Alexandra Renewal Project to transform the area in an attempt to get rid of the legacy of poverty, unemployment and poor infrastructure (Gauteng Government Report, 2001; Maphumulo, 2001).

5. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

To collect my data the primary research technique I used was intensive interviewing with semi-structured individual and group interviews⁹. Burgess (1984, p. 138) is of the opinion that in order to collect rich, detailed information, "interviews" should be "conversations with a purpose" rather than rigidly preconceived, structured standardized interviews. In such "interviews," he argues, identical questions are not necessarily asked and the interview can vary from group to group or participant to participant. Moreover, extreme standardization of questions would not be appropriate for intensive research, as questions need to be interactive and need to respond to individual participants and their unique circumstances. In addition, as Sayer (1992, p. 245) observes:

⁸ Rand is the South African currency and one rand is equivalent to approximately five Canadian dollars (although this fluctuates).

⁹ Up until the 1930's the clinical interview and life history were the key methods in the study of sexuality. In the 1940s and 1960s, the survey questionnaire and field work were introduced. While the 1960s and 1970s saw the introduction of laboratory observation and experimentation, the 1970s also witnessed the popularity of the ethnographic approaches and a preoccupation with female and gay sexuality. In the 1980's researchers turned their attention to sexual violence such as rape and child abuse. Moreover, the HIV / AIDS epidemic, as well as the increasing political visibility of gays and lesbians, and the reassertions of puritanical sexual morality during the 1970s and 1980s, contributed to an increased and renewed interest by social scientists in sexuality and a range of new methods were used to study sexuality (Connell, 1987, pp. 47-54; Parker et al., 2000, pp. 1-2; Vance, 1991, p. 875; Weeks, 2000, pp. 126, 146).

... with a less formal, less standardised and more interactive kind of interview, the researcher has a much better chance of learning from the respondents what the different significances of circumstances are for them. The respondents are not forced into an artificial one-way mode of communication in which they can only answer in terms of the conceptual grid given to them by the researcher. This also enables the researcher to refer to and build upon knowledge gained beforehand about the specific characteristics of the respondent, instead of having to affect ignorance (*tabula rasa*) in order to ensure uniformity or “controlled conditions” and avoid what might be taken as “observer-induced bias.”

Although I had a number of concerns from the literature and from my own involvement in education about issues that I wanted to explore in my research, I also left leeway for my “conversational partners” to bring their specific needs and concerns into the interviews. Indeed, as Rubin and Rubin (1995, p. 11) purport:

Each conversational partner is an individual who has concerns and interests of his or her own and responds in a distinct manner to the researcher... . The researcher has to customize what is asked to each interviewee. This approach contrasts with that of the survey researchers, who to find out how widely held some small bit of opinion data is, must ask the same questions of everyone. Asking everyone the same questions makes little sense in qualitative interviewing where the goal is to find out what happened and why, in rich individualistic terms.

Furthermore, Root (1988, p. 137) maintains that we should give up textbook methods of collecting data and give respondents power by letting them “tell their own stories in their own words.” Not only is this empowering for those being interviewed, but it inspires confidence and loyalty, which are important aspects in an interview situation.

5.1. GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

I conducted both group and individual interviews. The group interview or focus group provided a level of data gathering not available through the process of individual interviews (Fontana and Frey, 1998, p. 53) and it was a very useful exploratory technique. Group interviews can be data rich, flexible, and stimulating for respondents, helping them to recall and elaborate over and above individual responses (Rubin and Rubin, 1995, p. 140).

In group interviews it is more difficult to establish a personal relationship than in an individual interview. The interviewer’s skills must be good because of group dynamics,

the fact that the group format may prevent respondents from discussing sensitive topics, and, as well, “group think” can be a possible outcome (Fontana and Frey, 1998, p. 55). As such, Fontana and Frey (1998, p. 55) list a number of specific skills needed by group interviewers, namely encouraging full participation, not allowing domination, keeping the group orderly, and being sensitive to group dynamics. As I had conducted many group interviews and workshops over the years I was well prepared for carrying out group interviews. To overcome the possible limitation of group interviews and to triangulate, interviews were also conducted with individuals.

As I do not speak Zulu and as my Sotho skills are very rudimentary I conducted interviews in English, the participants’ second language. Although I recognized that participants could not articulate their views as well as if they had spoken in their home language, as I had worked closely with township youth for seven years I was sensitive to their grammar and “youth talk” and meanings. Eugene Cedras also played a key role in clarifying meanings, and participants and I reached an agreement that if they struggled to say something in English they could say it in their home language. In group interviews when there was a difficulty another member of the group translated, and, in individual interviews, anything that was said in Zulu or Sotho was translated by Eugene after the interview. Where I felt meanings were unclear to readers of the dissertation who may not be familiar with township English, I inserted clarifications and translations of what youth were saying. These clarifications appear in square brackets, [], in the text where I have used youth quotations.

6. INTERVIEWING AS AN ITERATIVE PROCESS

Rubin and Rubin (1995, p. 47) maintain that:

Design in qualitative interviewing is iterative. That means that each time you repeat the basic process of gathering information, analyzing it, winnowing it, and testing it, you come closer to a clear and convincing model of the phenomenon you are studying. In the early stages of the interview, design emphasizes more the gathering of many themes and ideas; toward the middle of the research, you concentrate more on winnowing to limit the number of themes that you explore. In the final stages, you emphasize more the analysis and testing of your understanding as you put themes together, begin to form theories, and run them by your interviewees and critical readers in the field. In the early interviews, you

actively solicit a wide variety of ideas, themes, and explanations and try not to limit how interviewees respond to your concerns.

Following this advice, during the end of April and beginning of May 2001, to provide a sense of what theoretical issues to explore, I “cast my net” as widely as possible and I conducted three broad pilot group interviews in Alex, with ten to fourteen youth per group. Based on the themes that emerged from the interviews I read extensively and based on the readings and initial analysis I narrowed and redefined my research and devised my semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix B for examples of questions). This process of interviewing and analysis continued throughout the research. Indeed, data analysis and data collection are not separate stages, and on-going analysis informs what data to collect. As Huberman and Miles (1998, p. 186) note:

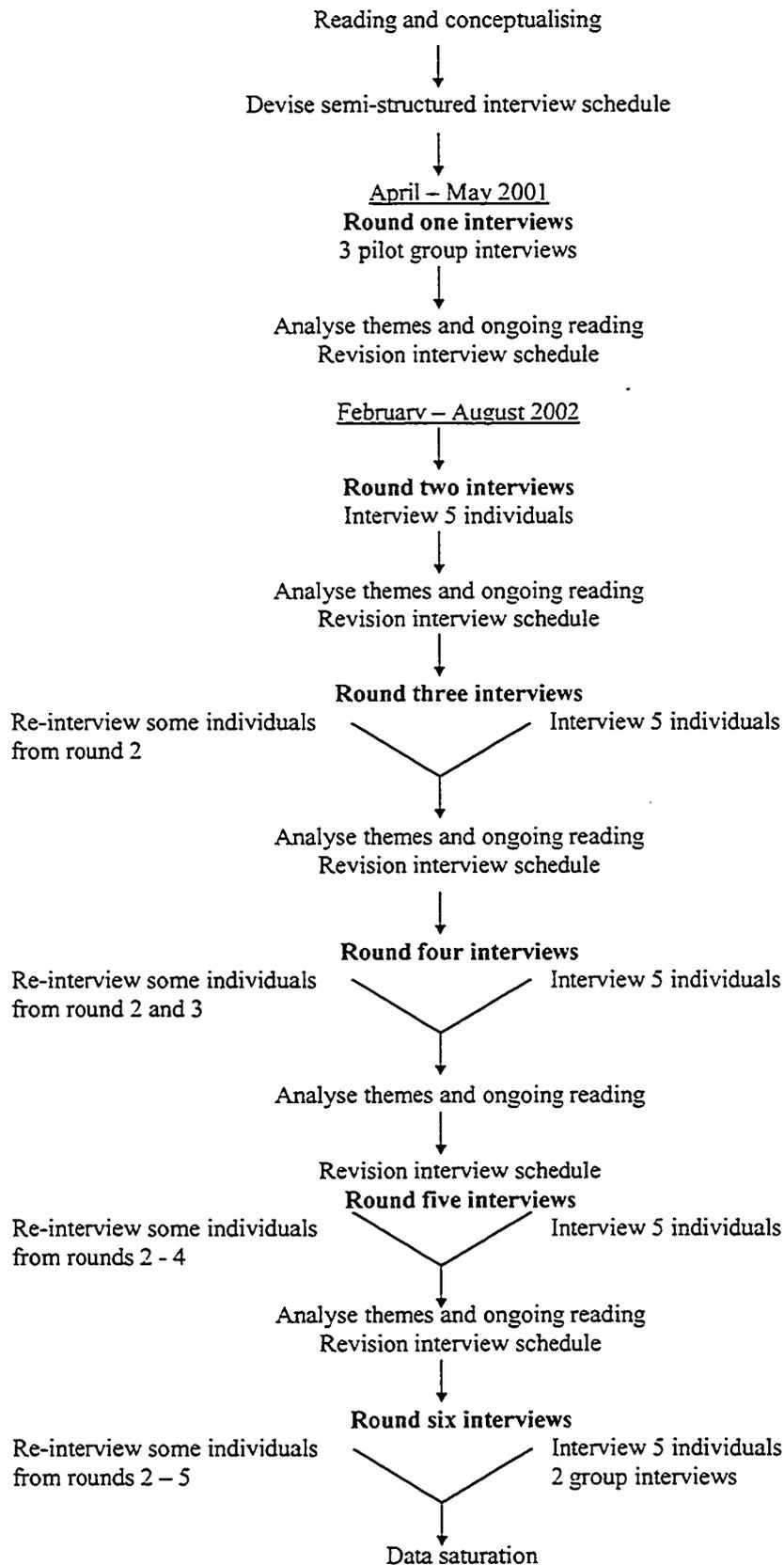
... the research is iterative, a succession of question-and-answer cycles – that entails examining a given set of cases and then refining or modifying those cases on the basis of subsequent ones ... inductive and deductive analyses are mixed. When a theme, hypothesis, or pattern is identified inductively, the researcher then moves into a verification mode, trying to confirm or qualify the findings. This then keys off a new inductive cycle.

After completing each interview I examined the scripts and emerging themes and this guided subsequent interviews. I continuously checked my understandings with participants and one or two critical friends as well as Eugene. My decision to stop interviewing was based on time constraints and was also influenced by the fact that I had a number of integrated themes and that additional interviews were not adding more information to my set of themes; data saturation. This continuous design allowed me to be flexible as well as organized (Rubin and Rubin, 1995, pp. 46-48, 226). Such an approach is consistent with critical realism as theory is not fitted onto data and neither does theory emerge solely from data but there is a constant interplay between analysis and data collection (Neuman, 2000, p. 419; Yeung, 1997, p. 63). It is important to recognise that in such an approach researchers do not conduct research as *tabula rasa*, rather:

Researchers carry into their research the sensitising possibilities of their training, reading, and research experience, as well as explicit theories that might be useful if played against systematically gathered data, in conjunction with theories emerging from analysis of these data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 167).

In February to August 2002 I returned to South Africa and conducted more focus groups as well as individual interviews. I carried out two more group interviews, so that all in all there were five group interviews, two “males only” groups and one “females only” group and two groups with both females and males. In total I interviewed 60 youth in focus groups. I conducted twenty interviews with individuals, ten males and ten females, with two or three follow up interviews for some participants where issues I further probed and explored some issues in depth. Interviews lasted for two hours or more and were tape recorded with the permission of participants. Most of the interviews were carried out in Alex, with the exception of three interviews, where participants and I met at a road house just outside of Alex. The remainder of the interviews were conducted in Eugene’s house in Alex, in the homes of youth, or in schools. All interviews took place on the weekend as Eugene works during the week and due to the dynamics and dangerous nature of Alex, it was necessary for him to escort me into the township.

FIGURE 2.1 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS



7. INTERVIEWS AND INTERPRETATION

In discussing interviews, Fontana and Frey (1998, p. 47) note the difficulties relating to the fact that there is always a “residue of ambiguity, no matter how carefully we word the questions and report or code the answers.” Moreover, as Rubin and Rubin (1995, pp. 81-87) observe, qualitative interpretations aims for subtlety of meaning. They continue that the researcher does not need to eliminate inconsistencies, but to show how and why contradictory understandings exist. As well, when interviewees present different points of view about the same issue, it is important for the researcher to motivate why she chose a particular version or interpretation over other interpretations or versions. This is in line with judgmental rationalism, as I shall explain in the following chapter. As well, in the next chapter, additional aspects pertaining to issues of interpretation and research will be covered expansively. At this time however, it is germane to make two points in relation to interpretation. One, for the researcher, discourses are open to many interpretations which are often dependent on the amount of context information included. As such, interpretations are never conclusive but are rather dynamic and open to new explanations (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, pp. 272-280). Two, analysing discourses involve making inferences about inferences (Jaworski and Coupland, 1999, p. 13), so that it is necessary to draw a distinction between meanings inferred by observers and meanings inferred by participants.

8. SAMPLING, REPRESENTIVITY AND VALIDITY

I did not adopt positivistic criteria of validity, reliability and objectivity but rather, in line with a critical realist approach, I focused on creating spaces for multiple voices, uncovering hidden structures, praxis and the historical situatedness of findings (Guba and Lincoln, 1998, p. 213). I used purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling strategy. This is useful for obtaining a range of responses and ideas when the aim is not to generalize to the rest of the population (de Vaus, 1986, p. 68). Unlike extensive research, where the researcher is only interested in individual members in so far as they are representative of the population as a whole, intensive research is interested in each member of the group and not merely their representivity. In intensive studies individuals

are often not typical and may be selected one by one as the research basis unfolds as the issue of whether they are a representative sample does not drive intensive research (Sayer, 1992, p. 244; Sayer, 2000, p. 20). As such, in intensive design “representative” is not used in the typical sense of the word but this should not be seen as an apology as Sayer (1992, p. 249) observes:

While there is certainly often a problem of “representativeness” arising from the over-extension of concrete (intensive) studies, we must avoid the absurd dogma that no study of individuals, in the broad sense, is of interest except as a representative of some larger entity. Proponents of extensive methods sometimes argue that intensive research fails to produce “objective results” because its results are not representative (i.e. not replicated elsewhere). But providing there is no pretence that the whole population is “represented,” there is no reason why an intensive study should be less “objective” (i.e. uncorroborated) about its particular subject matter than an extensive study. And although at the level of concrete events the results may be unique, in so far as intensive methods identify structures into which individuals are locked and their mechanisms, the abstract knowledge of these may be more generally applicable, although it will take further research to establish just how general they are. In some cases the unusual, unrepresentative conjuncture may reveal more about general processes and structures than the normal ones.

In the context of Sayer’s (1992, p. 249) argument, I did not attempt to achieve representivity in the traditional sense of the word or to include all potential configurations of variables (Glesne, 1998, p. 29) however, I did aim to obtain a balance by eliciting different views based on key distinctions and distinguishing characteristics of people (Rubin and Rubin, 1995, p. 69). As such, while I did not include all possible stratification criteria in selecting participants, for example socio-economic status and educational level, I did use gender and age as criteria for selecting participants. I also recruited people who resided in different parts of Alex, and I recruited some youth from the church to see if there were any significantly different trends amongst church goers. As well, drawing on the work of Glesne (1998, p. 29) and Patton (1990, p. 173), I combined both typical case sampling and extreme or deviant case sampling. The former aims at being illustrative (though not definitive) of what is “normal,” and the latter draws on cases that are unusual in some way and was used to recruit males who did not fit the dominant construction of masculinity. Although I initially anticipated that interviewing youth from church groups might reveal a different sub-culture, this was not the case as epitomized by group five:

F1: People who are going to church are worse.

M1: They are hypocrites.

M2: No, one thing I will tell you about the churchgoers and non-churchgoers, we are all from the township ... most of the guys and girls, we are the same, the same, because we live here in the ghetto, we sleep ghetto, we drink ghetto, we wake up ghetto, we school ghetto, whatever else is happening...

F2: The only difference is that on Sundays, you wake up, you go to Church and the others don't.

For the pilot interviews conducted during March and April 2001, youth were selected by Eugene using snowballing techniques. He used three different starting points. One, he asked youth on the street where he used to live to participate. Two, he recruited youth from the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL), and three, he selected students from the Congress of South African Students (COSAS). For the remainder of the interviews I asked Eugene to find youth who fitted particular characteristics, for example a female in the age group 18-25.

Initially I had only intended to interview youth between 18 and 25 years of age but after meeting Dali at a party in Alex and telling him about my research and listening to his insights, I decided to include youth from 26-35 in my sample and ended up interviewing five males between the ages of 18 and 25 and five males between the ages of 26-35. We could only find one female between the age of 26-35 in the brief time before my departure from South Africa and so the female group was primarily youth between the ages of 18-25 years of age. In the first focus group males were between 18 and 35 years old but in all other groups they were between 18 – 25 years old. The older youth had all been activists in the ANC. I asked youth to choose their pseudonyms, and their names and ages are reflected in the table below.

Table 2.1. Names and Ages of Youth I Interviewed

| | Males | Females |
|--------------|---|--|
| 18-25 | Kwena (19) Mpho (25) My-Nigger (19) Jijobest (23) Themba (24) | Lerato (18) Thandi (21) Innocentia (19) Kideo (21) Dineo (23) Sibongile (23) Nozipho (23) Voyakazi (23) Nokuthula (18) |
| 26-35 | Tebogo (28) Dali (35) Vusi (27) Nkululeko (35) Tsepo (31) | Zandile (35) |

Validity, like representivity, was also not used in the traditional sense but was used in the relaxed sense in that what was said was probable, reasonable and most likely true (Huberman and Miles, 1998, p. 186). To be sure, critical researchers reject external validity because “The ability to make pristine generalizations from one research study to another accepts a one-dimensional cause-effect universe” (Kincheloe and McLaren, 1998, p. 288). As observed in section three, critical realists reject this simplistic view and rather argue that things can have causal powers even if not exercised and that causation can produce change even when there are not regularities hence jettisoning the equation that regularities are essential for explanations (Fairclough, Jessop and Sayer, August 2002, p. 5).

9. WHO CONDUCTS THE INTERVIEW

It is important to consider to what extent the personal characteristics of the interviewer influence the interview process (Babbie, 1989; Burgess, 1984, p. 106; Fontana and Frey, 1998, p. 59). Burgess (1984, p. 107) argues that the researcher should be the one to conduct the interviews, because of their knowledge of the research and because during the interview the process of data analysis, interpreting and decoding begins. However, despite the benefits of the researcher doing the interviews, there can be difficulties in translating language, jargon and cultural mores when the researcher comes from a different group. As such an insider is useful (Fontana and Frey, 1998, p. 59) hence my research assistant, Eugene Cedras, who is from the community, assisted in some of the initial interviews. Moreover, as Neuman (2000, p. 125) observes, combining data from multiple interviewers is less likely to be biased. Despite the advantages of an insider conducting interviews, interviewing across class, gender and ethnic barriers offers its own advantages. One such advantage is that if the researcher is from a similar context to the interviewees, participants may assume she knows what they know. However, if the researcher is an “outsider,” they are more likely to explain what they perceive as taken-for-granted answers (Rubin and Rubin, 1995, p. 111). Rubin and Rubin (1995, p. 171) elaborate on this point by positing that:

To those in the cultural arena, what the researcher wants to learn may seem bizarre. A cultural interview is a little like asking a fish what it is like to live in water, that is, what it is like to live in taken-for-granted, daily environment. Can one fish explain water to another fish? Fortunately, it is usually clear that you are not another fish, that you are an outsider and may not know or understand things.

Although Eugene conducted a few of the initial interviews, it was necessary for me to do the second interviews with the individuals Eugene had spoken with as I had a better idea of what I needed to probe and to follow up. However, Eugene and I had many conversations about the research and interviews and he was a valuable colleague, offering different perspectives on what youth had said and locating some of the interview data within the historical and political context of Alex.

10. GAINING ACCESS AND TRUST

Eugene was key in gaining access to the community. As Glesne (1998, p. 39) maintains:

It helps to know an insider who is familiar with the individuals and the politics involved who can advise you in making access decisions. Successfully traversing the often sensitive territory of your research field may require not only your own good sense, but also that of an experienced insider who may work with you as a research collaborator.

Gaining trust and establishing rapport is an essential part of the research process (Fontana and Frey, 1998, p. 59). Given South Africa's apartheid history, gaining trust in a township is not easy and many township people are tired of being researched and not getting immediate rewards (or any) from the research. Not being a community member and being white, as well as the logistics of being out of the country for the main duration of my research time, might have made it difficult to gain trust. Having Eugene, a community member and activist, as my research assistant helped to establish trust and youth did not show any reluctance to talk with me, and in fact asked to participate in more interviews, particularly group interviews where males could be in the same group as females. As there are very few whites in Alex township, people may have been curious about what I was doing in the township but I was made to feel very welcome.

Although I did not do participant observation as such, I attended various community events such as a christening, a funeral and an after tears party (the party that takes place after a funeral) and I also spent a considerable amount of time driving around Alex looking for participants and "hanging around" at the spaza shop and soccer field while waiting for participants to arrive, so that I was not an unfamiliar sight in Alex.

11. ETHICS

Ethics is fundamental to a critical theory methodology (Guba and Lincoln, 1998, p. 215, Punch, 1998, p. 159). The research and its aims, purposes, as well as what would happen to the data, was clearly explained to respondents by myself in English and by Eugene in Zulu or Sotho. The information was also printed out and given to participants.

Respondents were encouraged to ask for clarification about the nature and purpose of the

research (Burgess, 1984, p. 107). Moreover, respondents were given the right to refuse to answer any questions and / or to terminate the interview at any point. Participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality at all stages of the research (Fontana and Frey, 1998, pp. 70-71; Neuman, 2000, p. 93) (See Appendix C for letter to youth). The formal and official ethics review form for the Faculty of Education, University of Alberta was approved on 19 April 2001.

12. RECORDING AND TRANSCRIBING

Burgess (1984, p. 107) advises that interviews should be recorded so that there is an accurate record of the interviews, and so that the interviewer can concentrate fully on the interview and develop rapport. Participants said they felt comfortable with interviews being recorded and interviews were recorded and transcribed.

13. INTERVIEW AS THERAPY

As Burgess (1988, p. 144) and Glesne (1998, pp. 92-93) observe, some interviews serve as therapy allowing participants a useful opportunity to talk about themselves. This seemed to be the case in my research and when I asked participants how they felt about the interview and if they learned from it, a common response was:

It was educational, fantastic; we do need more of such discussions. This was our first discussion of this nature ... talking about AIDS. I think we must start our own group. Go to schools because some of us are not working. It was quite interesting. Vision and talk about AIDS builds a nation.

14. CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have explained the research techniques that I used. In sum, I used grounded research so that, in as far as possible, I did not impose a research design on participants but used a more organic approach to research. My research was a case study and was based on a structural interpretive approach within an intensive research paradigm.

I interviewed youth in groups and I also conducted individual interviews. I used semi-structured interviews and developed questions that responded to the unique needs of participants. My interviewing and data analysis operated in an iterative way and after

interviewing, I would analyse data prior to embarking on the next set of interviews so that analysis informed what data to collect. In line with my critical realist approach, I did not use conventional criteria of sampling, representivity or validity.

In the above chapter I described my ground level approach to my research, and in the following chapter I focus on the methodological aspects that underpinned my research.

CHAPTER THREE

POSITIONING METHODOLOGY: TOWARDS A STUDY OF SEXUALITY¹⁰

1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I focus on the critical realist methodology that underpins this research. Methodology is the overall strategy of constructing specific types of knowledge and is justified by a variety of metatheoretical assumptions. In the following sections I describe the three competing methodologies in the study of sexuality; positivism with its associated bio-medical frameworks, poststructuralism (and its extreme variation postmodernism) and critical realism. Although in this chapter I shall not enter into the domestic debates within these bodies of thought, it is important to note that within each paradigm, there are internal debates and competing views around specific issues.

I argue that the most appropriate methodology for the study of sexuality is a critical realism that appropriates certain aspects of the bio-medical model and aspects of poststructuralism. I combine this methodological approach with critical theory and I call this approach a critical realist approach.

2. WHAT IS METHODOLOGY AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

The term methodology is different from the term methods. While “methods” refer to procedures or techniques for conducting research (e.g. surveys, participant observation and interviews) (McGuigan, 1997a, p. 1; Morrow and Brown, 1994, p. 36; Stones, 1996, pp. 70-71), “methodology” is the philosophical construction of knowledge and it is primarily concerned with epistemology, ontology and normative issues (Morrow and Brown, 1994, p. 36). Epistemology focuses on how we come to know the world and theories of knowledge. Ontology is what there is to be known or the conception of what exists in the world (Bryant, 1995, p. 7; Morrow and Brown, 1994, p. 54). The research methods and design used in this study were detailed in the previous chapter.

¹⁰ Selikow, 2003a.

Methodology, whether explicit or implicit, is a central component of all research and shapes all aspects of research (Guba and Lincoln, 1998, pp. 195, 218; Kincheloe and McLaren, 1998, p. 265; Sayer, 1992, p. 2) and impacts practice. As well, sexuality is a politically and symbolically contested domain (Cartledge and Ryan, 1983, p. 1; Vance, 1991) and many of the new ways of discussing and exploring sexuality have been made possible not only by social struggles but by methodological and theoretical ones (Weeks and Holland, 1996, p. 7).

3. MEDICAL AND SOCIAL APPROACHES

Most initial research into sexuality was developed from a medical perspective (Caceres, 2000, p. 245, Weeks, 2000, p. 4; White et al., 2000, p. 8) and much research into sexuality has reproduced the theoretical and methodological approaches common in biomedicine (Caceres, 2000, p. 245) namely, bio-medical and essentialist approaches. As Parker et al. (2000, p. 4) claim:

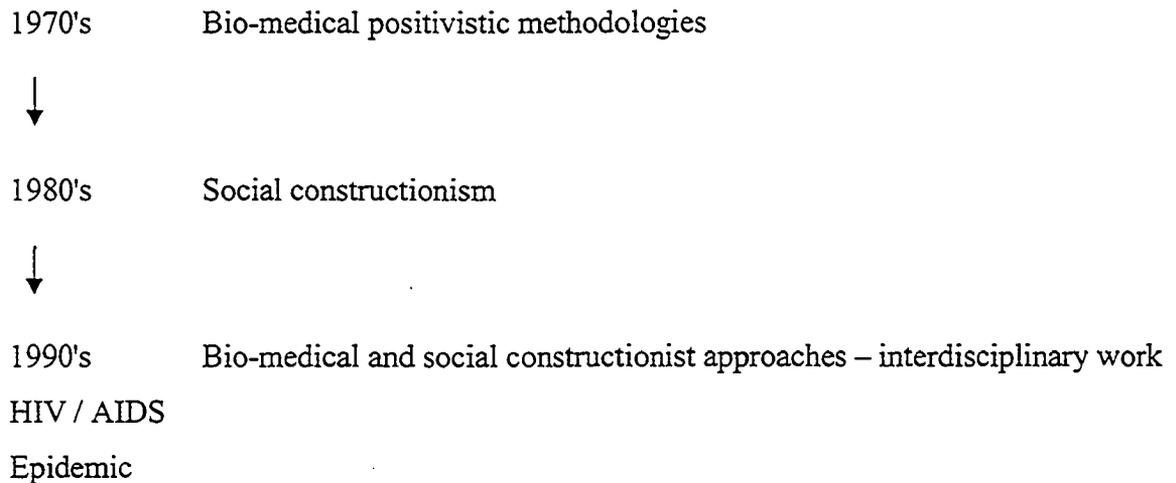
Perhaps because the experience of sexuality seems so intimately linked to our bodies, it was relatively easy to relegate the subject matter of sexuality to the realm of the biomedical sciences, where it became the focus for obscure medical tomes and arcane psychiatric practices.

Although positivism and its biomedical approach dominated methodologies on sexuality up until the seventies, in the late 1980s there was a move away from bio-medical approaches to postpositivism or social constructionist approaches (Parker et al., 2000, p. 1; Weeks and Holland, 1996, p. 4)¹¹. Although social constructionists emphasised the demedicalization of sexuality, the HIV/AIDS epidemic contributed to the remedicalization of sexuality and resubjugation of sexuality to the biomedical gaze. Ironically, the epidemic also facilitated interdisciplinary approaches to the study of sexuality. Today, the bio-medical model remains the dominant model to understanding sexuality (Caceres, 2000, p. 253; Parker et al., 2000, p. 3; Vance, 1991) in both the West (Nettleton, 1995) and in South Africa (Gilbert et al., 2001; Kelly, Parker and Oyosi,

¹¹ In the 1990s sexual health and the body became a prominent focus of researchers and there was a change in focus on who was studied with a move from studying the other, the insane, the neurotic, the queer or the criminal to any and all people (Parker et al., 2000, pp. 1-2; Vance, 1991, p. 875; Weeks and Holland, 1996, pp. 5-7; Weeks, 2000, pp. 126, 146).

2002, p. 19), however it is not unchallenged (Crewe, 1997, p. 967), with its most vociferous opponents working from within social constructionist methodologies.

Figure 3.1.
The Study of Sexuality:
Medical and Social Approaches.



4. POSITIVISM AND THE BIO-MEDICAL MODEL

Below I summarise the main tenets of bio-medical models and I then outline their weaknesses, although I do not go into detail about the variations within this approach.

The biomedical model is based on the following assumptions

- mind – body dualism: the mind and body are treated separately;
- mechanical metaphor: there is the assumption that, like a machine, parts of the body that are dysfunctional can be repaired;
- technological imperative: due to the above assumptions, the merits of technological interventions are sometimes overplayed;
- doctrine of specific aetiology: it assumes that every disease is caused by a particular identifiable agent;
- cure focused: its orientation is on cure rather than prevention;
- rational decision making: it is based on the premise that human beings are rational decision makers who, once well informed, will not jeopardise their health or engage in behaviour that may reduce how long

they live (Freund and McGuire, 1999; Gilbert et al., 1996; Hart, 1996; Hausser, 1997, p. 237 and Nettleton, 2001); and

- a biological focus rather than a sociological one: it approaches sexuality as mainly determined by biological processes such as anatomical differences, genetics and instincts and as predetermined, uniform, fixed and unchanging (Edwards, 1997; Leavitt, 1991; Rubin, 1998; Vance, 1991; White et al., 2000, p. 19).

4.1. CHALLENGES TO THE BIOMEDICAL MODEL AND ESSENTIALIST MODELS.

During the past two decades, the biomedical model has been criticised on a number of counts as discussed below.

4.1.1. Neglecting Key Sociological Concerns.

As Altman (1995, p. 97) observes, “Few areas of human life are as socially shaped as sexuality, although few are as often discussed as if they were biologically determined.”

Indeed, the main criticism of the bio-medical model is its biological deterministic approach, which neglects the construction of sexuality within its social, historical, material and political context (Adler and Qulo, 2001, p. 303; Hauser, 1997; Nettleton, 1995, p. 5; Shoveller et al., 2004, pp. 473-487). As the bio-medical model takes sexuality as natural, it cannot explain variations in sexuality or the fact that cultural forms are not replicated in the exact same ways (Cornwall and Lindsifarne, 1994a, p. 3). Indeed, biomedical models do not take heed of important sociological concerns such as culture, language, power, ideology, structures and human agency; central concepts in my research.

4.1.2. Pathologizing Sexuality

Not only do bio-medical approaches ignore the social, but they tend to pathologize sexuality (Kelly, Parker and Oyosi, 2001, p. 19). The focus of early research into sexuality was on “abnormal sexuality,” and, although there was a shift away from this, in about the 1980s, the HIV / AIDS epidemic lead to a renewed focus on sex and pathology.

4.1.3. A Misguided Focus On Individual Rational Behaviour

Bio-medical models are underpinned by the idea that sexual behaviour is based on rational¹² individual behaviour. Their model is premised on the assumption that once individuals are presented with adequate knowledge about HIV, they will avoid high-risk sexual activities to protect their future health. However, much research has demonstrated that knowledge is necessary, but it is insufficient to effect behaviour change (Gilbert and Walker, 2000, p. 4; Marais, 2000, p. 15; Mitchell, 1998, p. 105; Parker, Dalrymple and Durden, 2000, p. 3). Not only do bio-medical theorists presume that people are rational actors but their theories are premised on the (sometimes implicit) notion that there is one objective definition of what rational behaviour is, and most often, this rational behaviour is defined by the educator / scientist. With regards to sexuality, the rational behaviour anticipated by those working within the bio-medical model is that once youth know about HIV / AIDS and how to prevent it, they will not engage in high risk sex. However, this has not been the case, and I suggest that this understanding of “rational” has an inadequate understanding of rational as subjective and relative. Although weaker versions of rational choice theory take into account that individuals act according to “subjectively rational” beliefs (Shilling and Mellor, 2001, pp. 164-184), and this goes some way towards resolving the above problems with rational choice theory, there are a number of additional problems with rational choice theory.

The notion of rational behaviour assumes that women have complete choice affording too much agency to individuals and underemphasising structures and power. Rational choice theory embodies methodological individualism as it focuses on individual acts and choices without paying sufficient attention to social relations, social groups and social structures (Fay, 1996, p. 31). Rationality is heavily criticized by Bhaskar in *The Possibility of Naturalism* (1989b) as:

(psychologically) either trivial or false, and (sociologically) irrelevant since social relations pre-exist and do not express rational agency. Human agents are located in and both empowered and constrained by social structures (plural), which often place inconsistent demands on them (cited in Collier, 1994, p. 159).

¹² Weeks (2000, p. 16) argues that sexuality often defies “rationality” as it is interlinked to such a wide range of issues such as reproduction; relationships; erotic activities; intimacy and love.

Moreover, by exaggerating the powers of human reason” the “four limits to rationality” are ignored. These are: unintended consequences; unacknowledged conditions; unconscious motivation; and tacit skills (Collier, 1994, p. 160). In addition to the above problems pertaining to rational choice theory, the critique of rational choice theory is in line with the rejection of the Enlightenment view of the rational, conscious, unified subject. While weak versions of rational choice theory are less inclined towards extreme voluntarism, as they recognize that individual’s beliefs may be “distorted” and that individuals may not always have sufficient knowledge to make “rational” choices, the focus is usually on not having enough information, and it is this lack of information that interferes with an individual’s capacity to exert agency and to make “good choices.” While adequate knowledge is a prerequisite for decision making, which is a central component of agency, by only focusing on access to information, not enough emphasis is placed on ideology, hegemony, structures and power, and how these constrain agency and choices. In addition, there are a number of definitional and conceptual problems with the very notion of rational behaviour. According to rational choice theory, a “rational action” is the best way of satisfying a person’s desires, given his / her beliefs. However, this can then become a rather teleological argument as any action can be defined as rational in as far as it follows from ones’ beliefs and desires. Even if one shifts the definition of rational from looking at actions to asking questions about whether “beliefs / desires” are “rational,” rational choice theory is still flawed. Further, although we have some degree in choosing our actions, we have less choice over our beliefs and desires. As such, beliefs and desires can’t be defined instrumentally as the rationality of actions is. While I have not offered a comprehensive critique of rational choice theory, and it is not my intention to do so here, it is necessary to problematise this theory in the context of research into HIV / AIDS and youth sexuality.

4.1.4. Methods

Biomedical models, with their positivistic methodologies, are limiting as they tend to rely on surveys which are often based on knowledge, attitudes and practices (Caceres, 2000, p. 253) and quantifiable data which focuses on counting acts rather than attempting to

understand meanings (Caceres, 2000, p. 245; Vance, 1991, pp. 880-881) and how meanings and social practices are enabled and constrained by structures.

4.1.5. Politics And Epistemology

Politically and epistemologically, positivistic biomedical models are based on the myth of developing an “objective” understanding that will enable detached, neutral, (most often First World, Caucasian, heterosexual males) to predict and control sexual behaviour¹³. Moreover, positivistic methodologies with their search for “truth” have ignored the intrinsic relationship between knowledge and power within the arena of sexual research (Caceres, 2000, pp. 256-257; Parker et al., 2000, p. 3; Yardley, 1997b, p. 4). Indeed, as Caceres (2000, p. 257) concludes, it is only when we position ourselves as political actors who acknowledge that knowledge is a contested field that is crucially related to power and practice that we can become “more concretely focused on the development of better possibilities of life and sexual health for all...” This normative challenge to use research to enable a better society is in line with critical theory’s commitment to emancipatory knowledge.

5. POST-POSITIVISM: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

Beginning in the 1980s it was recognised that positivistic bio-medical models were inadequate in explaining sexual behaviour (Hausser, 1997, p. 235; Mitchell, 1998, p. 105; Weeks, 1995, pp. 34, 144; Weeks and Holland, 1996, p. 4) and postpositivistic methodologies such as social constructionism came to the fore (Caceres, 2000; Gilbert and Walker, 2000; Gogna and Silvina, 2000, p. 117; Kelly, 2000, pp. 10-11; Kelly, Parker and Oyosi, 2002, p. 9; Mitchell, 1998, p. 105; Parker, Dalrymple, and Durden, 2000, p. 6; Thomson and Holland, 1998, p. 65; Webb, 1997; Wilton, 1997, p. 45).

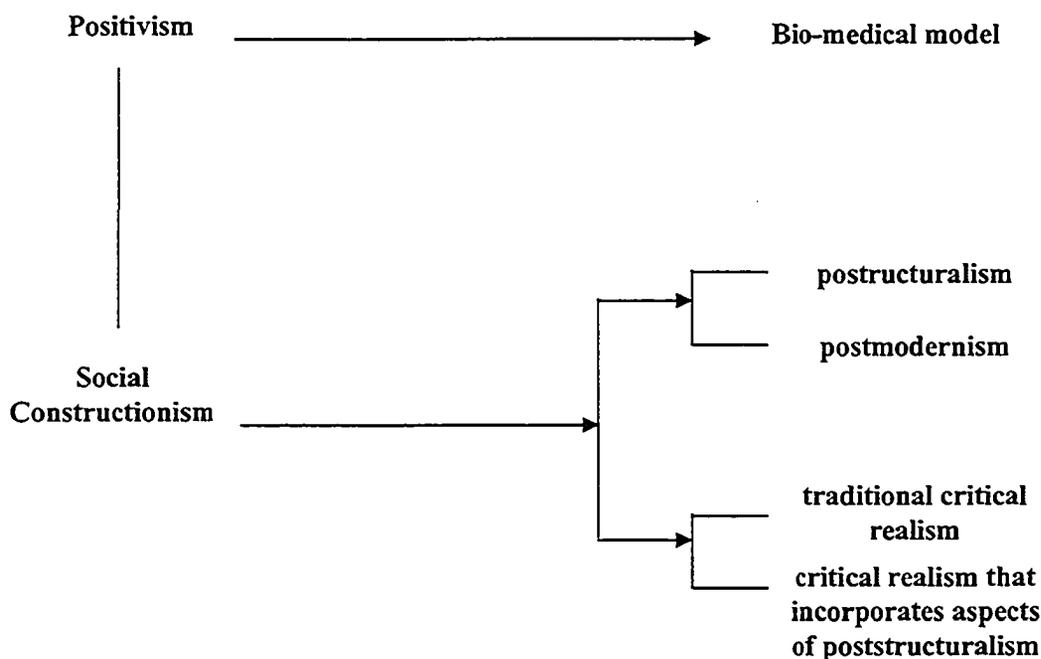
Social constructionism exists in a variety of forms. As reflected in the schematic diagram below, the two key methodological approaches in social constructionism are poststructuralism (existing in its most extreme form as postmodernism) and critical

¹³ A central claim of critical theory is that the positivistic nature of the social sciences is not accidental but is part of how society is controlled (Morrow and Brown, 1994, pp. 39-40). For a detailed critique of positivism by critical theorists see Morrow and Brown (1994) chapter three; Outhwaite (1987) chapter one and Stirk (2000) chapter four.

realism. The differences within and between these approaches are discussed in the following sections.

Figure 3.2.

The two main approaches of social constructionism



Common to all social constructionist models is the rejection of positivism and the negation of universal, biological, transhistorical and transcultural definitions of sexuality. Rather, social constructionists argue that sexuality is mediated by historical, political, social and cultural factors, hence sexual behaviour can only be understood by considering the social context of sexual practices (Altman, 1995, p. 106; Gilgen et al., 2000, pp. 81, 121, 151; Kimmel and Messner, 1998; Rubin, 1998, p. 149; Tiefler, 2000, p. 82; Vance, 1995). Despite these commonalities, there is a lack of consensus about what is socially constructed. While radical social constructionists argue that there is no inherent, essential, undifferentiated sexual impulse as a result of physiological functions (Vance, 1991, p. 878), more middle-ground constructionism posits that there is an inherent sexual desire which is then socially constructed in relation to culture. The former approach is epitomised by extreme poststructuralism and postmodernism and the latter by my critical realist approach.

5.1. POSTSTRUCTURALISM / POSTMODERNISM

In the 1970s and 1980s poststructuralist¹⁴ and postmodernist¹⁵ methodologies became influential. This period has been described as the crisis in the social sciences and the study of sex was not exempt from this crisis (Gagnon and Parker, 1995, p. 8). Although poststructuralists and postmodernists have a number of common concerns (Morrow, 1991, p. 31; Smart, 1996, p. 399) and in some instances the terms are used interchangeably, they are not synonymous. Poststructuralism, unlike postmodernism, was a theoretical movement and a new form of analysis, and not a claim that society had entered a new postmodern epoch or that anything in the external world had dramatically changed to necessitate a new theory (Calhoun, 1995, p. 114; Outhwaite, 1996, p. 96; Rosenan, 1992, p. 3). Smart (1996, p. 399) suggests that poststructuralism prepared the ground for the postmodernist project, and interfaces with it, while Morrow and Brown (1994, p. 128) suggest that postmodernist theory represents the most radical form of poststructuralism, the position I adopt.

I now look at some of the core trajectories of poststructuralism and postmodernism and the criticisms of these approaches.

5.1.1. Epistemology And Ontology

In direct contrast to positivists, poststructuralists and postmodernists are anti-foundationalist and reject the correspondence theory arguing that it is not possible to establish underpinnings of knowledge which are certain as there is no adequate means for representing “reality,” and there is no assured way of knowing (Barrett, 1999, p. 116; Morrow and Brown, 1994, p. 76; Rosenan, 1992, pp. 110-111; Skinner, 1998, p. 275).

¹⁴ Poststructuralism grew in a climate where there was a declining interest in structuralism which had prevailed in the 50s and 60s. Poststructuralists like Derrida, Foucault and Baudrillard, while all having different approaches, criticized structuralist approaches because of their focus on deep hidden underlying structures, their detraction from agency and their grand theories of truth (Ashley, 1991, pp. 78-79; Kellner, 1997; Outhwaite, 1996, p. 96; Skinner, 1998, p. 271).

¹⁵ Postmodernism is associated with Lyotard, Derrida, Foucault and Baudrillard, some of the same thinkers associated with poststructuralism.

5.1.2. Linguistic Turn: Meaning and Interpretation

The epistemological and ontological stance of poststructuralism and postmodernism is partly based on the linguistic turn, which refers to the privileging of language and discourse in the constitution and mediation of social reality (Outhwaite, 1996, p. 87). In this regard it is argued that there is no possibility of access to reality that is not mediated by language and that language itself is relative. For example, Derrida argues that there can be no fixed or certain interpretations as signifiers do not lead to absolute signifiers, but are deferred to new signifiers. Hence, knowledge is language-bound so that “truth” changes with language and is hence arbitrary. Moreover, this means that there cannot be an ultimate meaning but rather there are multiple meanings, each being equally valid (Skinner, 1998, p. 275; Smart, 1996, pp. 401-402). Indeed, it is maintained that all interpretations are equally valid hence modern science should not be more privileged than any other narrative, be it astrology, intuition or poetics (Skinner, 1998, p. 273).

5.1.3. Truth And Power

Poststructuralists and postmodernists posit that in the context of multiple realities, the notion of “truth” involves choosing which in turn involves a value system and hierarchy (Norris, 1990, p. 169) and, as such, power is always implicated in notions of “truth.” Foucault (1972) is best known for his views on knowledge, truth, and power, arguing that it is impossible to separate truth from power and visa versa. He posits that the “truth” that we experience is structured by the power relations in different epochs, hence, regimes of truth structure our understandings. Lyotard (1984) argues that the idea of truth is designed to silence those who disagree, and “truth” is therefore associated with power. He maintains that science is no different from other language games and it cannot legitimise any forms of knowledge, let alone itself. Moreover, like Rorty, he argues that “performativity” and not truth should be the ultimate criteria for knowledge. In this type of pragmatism the truth of a theory or interpretation is not understood through some direct correspondence to reality but rather through its practical application. (We could of course ask “Works for whom? How do we know if something works? What criteria, and whose, can we use to decide what works? Is it true because it works? Or, does it work because it’s true?”).

To be sure, for poststructuralists and postmodernists, power is always implicated in truth. They posit that as there is no way to represent "reality" and no method to know "reality," there can be no truth outside of representations of it. This being said, it is important to remember that while postmodernists reject notions of "truth" and epistemology, some poststructuralists acknowledge that language implicates truth, but they do not put forward extreme linguistic relativism. Nor do they totally reject reason but rather, they restate epistemological concerns and maintain that the rules of "reasoning" of modernists need to be debated and scrutinised as does the idea of a universal truth (Popkewitz, 1994, p. 4; Rosenan, 1992, pp. 77-80, 109; Skinner, 1998, p. 276). Although postmodernists are sceptical about traditionally validated knowledge, they do not posit alternative epistemologies (Skinner, 1998, p. 273), but maintain that each person is entitled to his / her version of truth and that truth needs to be re-conceptualised in relation to the personal, local and community rather than a truth out there waiting to be discovered. As discussed below this focus on daily life is also a rejection of grand theory and a call for local and small narratives.

5.1.4. Reject Grand Narratives: Incredulity To Metanarratives

Lytard (1984, p. 489) is well known for his claim that "The grand narrative has lost its credibility, regardless of what mode of unification it uses, regardless of whether it is a speculative narrative or a narrative of emancipation." Poststructuralists and postmodernists reject universal global all encompassing worldviews as being transcendental totalising meta-narratives that anticipate all questions and provide predetermined answers that reduce multiplicities into unity. Moreover, they argue that such totalitarian explanatory frameworks are forms of domination as they pose as ultimate truths and become canonical forms of domination (Bailey, 1994; Bauman, 1997, p. 192; Foucault, 1977, pp. 80-84; Poster, 1995, pp. 49-50; Seidman, 1998).

Hence poststructuralists and postmodernists call for the "splintering" of grand stories (Peters and Lankshear, 1996, p. 2) so that they can be replaced by localised, particularised knowledge (Foucault, 1977, pp. 80-84; Outhwaite, 1996, p. 87; Usher,

Bryant and Johnston, 1997, p. xvi). For example, Foucault's concept of genealogy aims to replace totalizing theories with microanalysis so that "subjugated knowledge" or local discontinuous knowledge that has been excluded from the hierarchy of the unitary body of science can be given a voice (Foucault, 1977, p. 82). Of particular significance to this study, poststructuralists and postmodernists replaced the Marxist metanarrative of class with a more fragmented view of society, putting sexuality and gender firmly on the agenda (Garnham, 1997, p. 57; Hall, 1992, p. 282; Nelson et al., 1992).

5.1.5. Method

Poststructuralists and postmodernists are post-positivist rejecting models based on the natural sciences. They argue that no particular method is better or more "scientific" than any other method and therefore they have "an anything goes stance." They are concerned with feelings, intuition, imagination and other forms that the "scientific" methods reject (Rosenan, 1992, pp. 9-117).

5.1.6. Critique Of Postmodernism

Although poststructuralism and postmodernism have made important contributions to social theory, they have a number of weaknesses related to some of the same limitations of idealist epistemologies and ontologies (Pilgrim and Rogers, 1997, p. 37; Rosenan, 1992, pp. 111-115). In the sections below, I set out the central criticism of poststructuralism and postmodernism.

5.1.7. Science Is Not Possible

The extreme idealism and solipsism of postmodernism means science is not possible (Outhwaite, 1996, p. 91). As Outhwaite purports (1987, pp. 19, 31, 38) in putting forward "The Realist Alternative" a la Bhaskar, for science to even be imaginable, the world, by necessity, must be composed of real things and structures that exist and act independently of humans:

No serious account of knowledge can begin without the assumption that "to be" is more than "to be perceived." And no theory of science is conceivable without the assumption that what we are pleased to call laws of nature operated in the same way as they do now before humans evolved and a fortiori before they began to do science. It is when one thinks about it, an odd philosophy of science that ignores such considerations (Outhwaite, 1987, p. 19).

5.1.8. No Understanding Of Harsh Day-To-Day Reality

It is argued that the lived reality of postmodernist intellectuals is not characterised by the violence, terror, and degradation of an “obviously existing reality” related to poverty, starvation, AIDS, drugs, and gang warfare, and, it is only because of this that these intellectuals can engage in the idea that reality is entirely a mental construction (Rosenan, 1992, pp. 111-115).

5.1.9. Overemphasis On The Discursive At The Expense Of The Real

Although the postmodernists’ over-emphasis of the discursive dimension was partly a reaction against the reductionist materialism of the bio-medical model which primarily focused on the “reality” of biological issues to the neglect of cultural and symbolic issues, the postmodernists’ exclusive focus on socio-cultural issues has led to the neglect of the body and physical dimension of health and illness (Yardley, 1997b, pp. 9-10). As Rubin (1998, p. 149) has argued:

The new scholarship on sexual behaviour has given sex a history and created a constructivist alternative to sexual essentialism. Underlying this body of work is an assumption that sexuality is constituted in society and history, not biologically ordained. This does not mean the biological / capacities are not prerequisites for human sexuality. It does mean that human sexuality is not comprehensible in purely biological terms. Human organisms without human brains are necessary for human cultures, but no examination of the body or its parts can explain the nature and variety of human social systems. The belly’s hunger gives me clues as to the complexity of culture. The body, the brain, the genitalia, and the capacity for language are necessary for human sexuality. But they do not determine its content, its experience, or its institutional forms. Moreover, we never encounter the body unmediated by the meanings that cultures give to it.

5.1.10. Undermining Of All Epistemological Claims And Lack Of Judgmental Rationalism

The methodological relativism¹⁶ of postmodernism is problematic as, while texts are open to a degree of interpretation, it is always possible to offer a perspective as to why one explanation is more preferable than another. Rosenan (1992, p. 122) gives the example

¹⁶ According to Morrow and Brown (1994, p. 77), ironically, in its most extreme form, postmodernism shares deep assumptions with the very positivism it criticises, i.e. the belief that to be worthy of the name, knowledge must be absolutely certain; reflects the foundationalism that lies at the origins of positivistic science.

that *The Communist Manifesto* is open to some interpretation but some explanations are more appropriate than others, for example it is clearly not about how to play basketball regardless of interpretation. As epistemological claims are merely seen as systems of representation; postmodernism lapses into extreme methodological relativism with no basis for choosing between conflicting interpretations and hence no basis for knowledge claims or critical judgements (Calhoun, 1995, pp. 116-123; Pilgrims and Rogers, 1997, p. 37; Rosenan, 1992, p. 124).

5.1.11. No Political Or Normative Stance Or Vision For The Future

Although postmodernists express a concern with social inequality, their relativism makes it impossible to defend a particular political or moral view, as all views are seen as equally valid (Norris, 1997, pp. 1-11; Popkewitz, 1999, p. 141; Seidman, 1998; Smart, 1996, p. 401). Moreover, as postmodernists argue that norms and values should be expunged from intellectual discourse, they cannot put forward a vision and proposal for a better future (Poster, 1995). This leads to apathy and nihilism so that postmodernists “flight from foundationalism is at the same time often a flight from politics” (Giroux, 1988, p. 61). Indeed postmodernists face the challenge of the incongruence of embracing relativism and trying to combine it with challenging oppressive and objective realities (Rosenan, 1992, pp. 111-115) so that social theory does not become “an esoteric, elitist, and eccentric interest of marginal academics” (Turner, 1996, p. 13).

5.1.12. Under Emphasis Of Shared Meaning

In extreme deconstruction, the plural realities and exaggeration of the free play of signifiers, where all systems of shared meaning are disregarded, undermines the role of speech and language and shared understanding in everyday communication (Gottdiener, 1995, pp. 23-24; Pilgrim and Rogers, 1997, pp. 37-38).

5.1.13. Metanarratives

In relation to the “end of metanarratives,” at least three charges have been laid. First, the incredulity associated with metanarratives is not new. Second, the very thesis of the death of metanarratives is itself a metanarrative; and third, there are different orders of all narratives, including grand narratives (Smart, 1996, p. 404). To avoid having to choose

between the binary of universal and local, Bailey (1994, p. 113) argues that we “need to move beyond the objectionable features of traditional conceptions of totality, rather than issuing a total ban on all large scale narratives.” While a key part of the post-modern project was to fragment macro-analytical concepts this focus on complexity and denial of classic analytical concepts has led to “fragmentation” and, as Walby argues (1992, p. 31) has “gone too far, resulting in a denial of significant structuring of power, and leading towards mere empiricism.”

5.1.14. Lack Of Method

A further criticism of postmodernism is their disregard for methods¹⁷. To be sure, although scientific knowledge is constructed this does not mean that it is totally arbitrary and hence postmodernists should not dismiss methods but should rather adopt a pluralist stance (Morrow and Brown, 1994, p. 157).

5.1.15. Lack Of Theory

Postmodernists, in arguing that each person is entitled to his / her version of truth, not only relativise truth, but they also “detheorise” truth so that it becomes a substantive focus on daily life, local knowledge, detail, and direct experience but has little or no theoretical basis (Rosenan, 1992, p. 83).

5.1.16. Ignore Contributions Of Modernism

A major problem with postmodernism is that they have rejected all notions of modernist conceptions of social theory, not only functionalist ones, and, as such, have “thrown out the baby with the bath water” (Pilgrim and Rogers, 1997, p. 37), failing to acknowledge the contributions of critical modernism. In many ways the postmodernist tradition can be seen as a direct (if at times excessive) response to modernist theory (Torres and Mitchell, 1998, p. 10). This may suggest a rather crude move on the part of the postmodernists considering that since the 1970s critical theorists had begun to take seriously some of the

¹⁷ Even though poststructuralists and postmodernists reject “methods,” there are at least three “methods” that can be identified within their paradigm. These are introspective or anti-objectivist interpretation, deconstruction and genealogy (Poster, 1995, p. 72; Rosenan, p. 118; Smart, 1995, p. 402).

considerations raised by postmodernists¹⁸ (Morrow and Torres, 1995; Smart, 1996, p. 305).

5.2. THE CHALLENGE

Despite the weaknesses of postmodernism and poststructuralism, they offer many useful insights and challenges to modernist theory (Ashley, 1991; Pilgrim and Rogers, 1997, p. 37; Rosenan, 1992, p. 3; Smart, 1996, p. 397). For example, they served as a counter to some extreme forms of rationalism and have sensitised social theory to issues such as desire, sexuality and the irrational (Outhwaite, 1996, pp. 96, 97) and the linguistic turn. Indeed, Morrow and Torres (1995, p. x) challenge the critical modernist project for its defensive reaction against postmodernist tendencies, which blinds it to some of the very questions it must address in order to sustain its own claim to self-reflexivity. In this regard, Giroux (1997, pp. xii – xiii in Peters, 1997) argues:

... the current backlash against postmodernism, resonates of a kind of reductionism that is both disturbing and irresponsible in its refusal to engage postmodernism in any kind of dialogical, theoretical debate. Many of these left critics often assume the moral high ground and muster their theoretical machinery within binary divisions that create postmodern fictions, on the one side, and politically correct, materialist freedom fighters on the other.

A great challenge of modern social theory is recognising the weaknesses of poststructuralism and postmodernism and integrating their useful aspects with the modernist tradition (Calhoun, 1995, pp. xi, xii, xvii; Best and Kellner, 1991; Kushner and Morrow, 2003, p. 32; Morrow and Brown, 1994, pp. 23-29, 63; Torres, 1995, p. 2) and it is to this challenge that I now turn with a focus on sexuality.

6. A CRITICAL REALIST APPROACH

There are two main strands of critical theory, one more aligned with traditional modernism and one that recognises the problems with extreme postmodernism, but draws on "... many of the positive achievements of poststructuralism without buying the

¹⁸ The critique of the modern project and skepticism about the Enlightenment leading to freedom and equality originated long before postmodernism. For example, to name but a few theorists, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Simmel, Weber and Adorno expressed disillusionment with Western philosophy and problematized the modern project, in different and sometimes contradictory ways, long before the existence of "postmodernism" (Calhoun, 1995, pp. 396-397).

problematic package sold as postmodernism” (Calhoun, 1995, p. xvii¹⁹), the approach I adopt.

6.1. ONTOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY IN CRITICAL REALISM:

Although ontology and epistemology are closely connected, to conflate the two is not legitimate and is contrary to realism (Scott, 2000, p. 14). As such, while recognising their close links, I will discuss them separately.

6.1.1. Ontology

Although, critical realist methodology is pragmatist and constructivist with regard to epistemology, it has a realist ontology. Indeed postpositivist methodological pragmatism and pluralism as epitomised by postmodernism leads to incoherence unless it adopts a realist ontology and rejects ontological scepticism (Morrow and Brown, 1994, pp. 78, 136; Outhwaite, 1996). Outhwaite (1987, pp. 19-20) argues that a critical realist ontology makes science possible and describes realism as:

... a common-sense ontology, in the sense that it takes seriously the existence of the things, structures, and mechanisms revealed by the sciences at different levels of reality. The realist assumption is merely that the existence of such entities is not to be constructed as a heuristic assumption, but as a truth-functional assertion like any other, even though we may not yet, and never finally, know whether it is true or false.

6.1.2. Stratified Ontology

Realists have a stratified ontology, which operates according to a division between the real, the actual, and the empirical. The real is important on two levels. First, it is whatever exists (natural or social) whether or not it is an empirical object and irrespective of whether we happen to understand it. Second, it is the realm of objects, their structures and powers (physical or social) and their capacity to behave in certain ways and causal liabilities or passive powers which may (or may not) lead to certain kinds of change. The actual is events; it is what occurs when the powers are activated and what they do. The empirical refers to experience or observation (Sayer, 2000, p. 12; Scott, 2000, p. 14; Stones, 1996, pp. 29-30). A key implication of this ontology is that it is possible that

¹⁹ Indeed, Calhoun (1995) in his book on Critical Theory, draws on a wide range of thinkers such as Bourdieu, Foucault, Haraway, Smith and Taylor, as well as the theorists more obviously associated with critical theory such as Horkheimer, Marcuse, Adorno and Habermas, refusing to accept a “simple dualistic opposition” between postmodernists and modernists.

powers exist unexercised so that what is known to have happened or has happened does not exclude what could happen or could have happened. While the nature of the real does not pre-determine what will happen, it does constrain and enable what happens (Sayer, 2000, pp. 11-12). Structures may generate events but may not; and this, coupled with agency, means that critical realism is not deterministic. As Collier (1994, p. 9) observes, the idea of unexercised powers is not a mysterious magical notion, but, simply put, it means that “can” does not equal “does.”

6.1.3. Intransitive And Transitive

Drawing on Bhaskar’s distinction between “intransitive” and “transitive” objects of scientific knowledge helps move beyond the dichotomy of empiricism and subjectivism as epitomised in the debates between positivism and postmodernist relativism (Morrow and Brown, 1994, pp. 78-79). The intransitive dimension is formed by the objects of science that we study, and the transitive dimension are the theories and discourses which can also be seen as objects of study. This distinction means that we should not conflate the world with our experiences of it. As Fairclough, Jessop, and Sayer (August 2002, p. 9) argue, to conflate language with everything is “discursive imperialism” and it eliminates the distinction between transitive and intransitive, producing the epistemic fallacy of strong social constructionism. The epistemic fallacy is the view that “statements about being cannot be reduced to or analysed in terms of statements about knowledge” (Bhaskar, 1978, p. 36 quoted in Collier, 1994, p. 76).

When the transitive dimension changes, this does not mean the intransitive dimension changes (Sayer, 2000, p. 11). While the notion of transitive objects is contrary to the view of positivists, the concept of intransitive objects – the idea that things exist and act independently of our descriptions and interpretations - is in direct contrast to extreme postmodernists (Outhwaite, 1987, pp. 46-47)²⁰. Unlike ontology, which is relatively enduring, epistemology is transitive (Scott, 2000, p. 15).

²⁰ Outhwaite (1987, p. 47) continues that it should be clear that such a principle must be modified for human actions and social structures, where the agents’ conceptions are not external to the facts described but constitute, at a minimum, part of the reality of those facts.

6.2. EPISTEMOLOGY

Critical realism has a relatively open stance towards epistemology (Outhwaite, 1987, p. 37; Sayer, 2000, p. 32) and offers a “third way” between positivistic empiricism and postmodernist relativism (Sayer, 2000, p. 2). Like postmodernism, it rejects foundationalism, objectivism, and the positivist correspondence theory of truth, however it does not resort to extreme postmodern relativism or subjectivism (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999, p. 34; Outhwaite, 1996, p. 92; Sayer, 2000, pp. 47, 68).

Although critical realists propose a view of reality outside of discourse, they recognise the complexity of scientific redescription and reject theory neutral observation (Outhwaite, 1996, p. 92). Moreover, for critical realists, not only is reality mediated by linguistic, theoretical and textual forms, but explanations are relatively incomplete, imperfect, approximate, revisable and contestable (Sayer, 1992, p. 232; Stones, 1996, pp. 20-21). This “incompleteness” is not only for epistemological reasons, but also for ontological reasons as the research “objects” are undergoing both continuous historical evolutionary change partly attributable to the double hermeneutic (Sayer, 1992, p. 234)²¹. As such, critical realists argue for epistemic gain rather than truth (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999, p. 34), although “truth” remains a regulative ideal (Outhwaite, 1987, p. 40).

6.3. THE LINGUISTIC TURN

Although critical realist theory has a realist ontology, it recognises the linguistic turn and the centrality of language and discourse in the mediation and constitution of social reality (Morrow and Brown, 1994, p. 24; Outhwaite, 1996, p. 87) but, unlike postmodernism, rather than calling all forms of scientific inquiry into question, it tries to find new ways for reaffirming the basis for the credibility of scientific knowledge (Outhwaite, 1987, p. 13).

²¹ Critical theory recognises the double hermeneutic (Giddens, 1987) of social inquiry so that social structures are understood as preconstituted by humans. A central implication of this is that the subject matter of the research can change their behaviour based on their knowledge of it, so that society is in constant flux (Morrow and Brown, 1994, pp. 9, 156; Sayer, 2000, p. 17).

Critical realism focuses on both external (material, biological and environmental) and internal (symbolic and semantic arrangements), allowing a conception of sexuality as simultaneously a material, social and cultural phenomenon, as well as a biological one (Treichler, 1992, p. 65). In this way, critical realists overcome the divide between socio-cultural / discursive and physical (a divide that has characterised the debate between postmodernism and positivism). Sayer (1992, pp. 29-44) argues that critical realists avoid being both “vulgar materialists” and “vulgar symbolic interactionists” so that the construction of meaning and its reciprocal relationship to the material environment is acknowledged. As Sayer (1992, p. 35) purports, “Social beings live neither on bread alone nor on ideas and symbols alone,” and understanding both material and symbolic and semantic arrangements is a key component of this research.

6.4. JUDGMENTAL RATIONALISM

Although rejecting foundationalism, and arguing for epistemic relativism (the world can only be known through available discourses), critical realism does not accept postmodernist judgmental relativism (the idea that we cannot decide which discourse is better). To be sure, judgmental relativism is defeatist and anti-realist, making any form of practical evaluation impossible (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999, pp. 34, 136; Sayer, 2000, pp. 47, 68). Rather, critical realists argue that the admission that all knowledge is fallible does not mean that all knowledge is equally fallible or equally practically adequate as, although the world is known under different discourses, some are better than others (Collier, 1994; Sayer, 1992, pp. 2, 43, 68, 69; Sayer, 2000, pp. 2, 40-72; Stones, 1996, pp. 13 - 40). Indeed, we can look at “the best available evidence” while recognising that data are collected and analysed under different circumstances by different communities (Scott, 2000, p. 24). As such, there is no one correct way to access objectivity, nor only one objective (truthful) account or interpretation but some methods may be better than others and some accounts may be better than others, and there are limits to what texts can mean (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999, p. 67). As Stones (1996, p. 20) puts it, “One can still make the effort to get at the real while understanding all the obstacles in the way.” While knowledge is situated and not neutral, this does not mean that science should not “strive” for some type of “objectivity” as a regulative ideal (Sayer, 2000, p. 90).

6.5. INTERPRETATION AND SHARED MEANING

The above critical realist epistemology has implications for traditional notions of “objectivity” in research. Unlike postmodernists, who see very little shared meaning and who believe that each person has their own “reality,” critical realists recognise that texts are open to interpretation but argue that, despite this, there is shared meaning. Indeed, Gadamer’s (1975) notion of fusion of horizons, acknowledges the multiple readings and meanings of texts to reconceptualise notions of objectivity and bias while recognising the contextuality of texts and interpretations as well as shared meanings (Scott, 2000, pp. 18–9, 24–25).

6.6. METHODS

Critical realism, with its flexible stance towards epistemology is open to a wide range of methods. Working within intensive design I use interpretive / hermeneutic structuralism which bridges the divide between interpretivist and structuralist paradigms (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999, p. 75; Morrow and Brown, 1994, pp. 24; 212–213; Sayer, 1992, p. 4; Sayer, 2000, pp. 13, 143). Methods were discussed in detail in the previous chapter.

6.7. NON EMPIRICAL METHODS

Critical theorists argue that aspects of methodology which are non-empirical should be made into explicit components of the research process (Morrow and Brown, 1994, p. 76; Sayer, 2000, p. 53). In this regard, they differ from both positivists and postmodernists. Positivists hold that “subjectivity” or non-empirical factors should be eliminated from the research process. Critical theorists reject this as a positivist “dream of a purely historical decontextualised, formal and invariant social theory [which] fails to understand the essential historical character of social inquiry” (Morrow and Brown, 1994, p. 238). Critical realists also criticise postmodernist radical interpretism, which holds that because of non-empirical factors, subjectivity and values, and hence relativity, no research is possible. Non-empirical aspects operate, inter-alia, on a number of important levels, the three which I shall focus on being: self-reflexivity as an applied practice; the contextualisation of research; and normative theorising.

6.7.1. Self-Reflexivity As An Applied Practice

Critical realists maintain that, rather than trying to suppress insider knowledge, such reflexivity should be seen as a positive resource. Moreover, reflections on values and the research process must be as explicit as other so-called “rational” procedures so that they may be subjected to the same kind of scrutiny as other methodological procedures (Calhoun, 1995, p. 19; Morrow and Brown, 1994, pp. 231, 237-8).

6.7.2. The Contextualisation Of Research

While not resorting to extreme relativism, critical realist theory draws on historicist argumentation acknowledging the context and conditions in which particular research findings are produced (Calhoun, 1995, p. 11; Morrow and Brown, 1994, p. 236; Sayer, 2000, pp. 53-55). According to Calhoun (1995, pp. 35-36, 85-86), historicism places emphasis on the historical understanding and analysis embedded in critical theory, namely: a critical engagement and “denaturalising” of the theorist’s contemporary social world, recognising that the existing state of affairs is a product of some actions but does not exhaust all possibilities, and offering positive implications for social action based on alternative possibilities; the recognition that the production of theories is a historical phenomenon, and, as such, a critical account of the historical and cultural conditions (both social and personal) on which the theorist’s own intellectual activity is shaped is necessary (this is in contrast to positivist theory which does not attempt to make explicit the act of theory construction within theory); a continuous critical re-examination of the constitutive categories and conceptual frameworks of particular ideas, including their historical construction in particular frameworks; and an acknowledgement that theories exist in historically and culturally limited discursive fields in relation to other theories, and are not self-sufficient statements of their meanings. As such, critical theory argues for the historical specificity of theoretical categories, recognising that categories used in theoretical discourse are often adequate only to specific historical epochs, and therefore, theoretical work cannot be strictly cumulative (nor can it ever be completed) or deductive. Such a position acknowledges the limited vantage points provided by all theorists, as well as the immanence of theoretical categories in the world of practice; and an ability to engage with previously and currently posited explanations in order to not

only establish their strengths and weaknesses but to also show the reasons behind their blind spots and misunderstandings, and demonstrate the capacity to incorporate their insights on stronger foundations rather than rejecting some views as “false” in opposition to views which are seen as “true.” As such, theories need to be seen as one of many alternatives on which choices are made on epistemic gain and not absolute truth.

6.7.3. Normative Theorising: Critical Emancipatory Knowledge

Critical Theory is an emancipatory endeavour and inextricably links normative theory with social theorising; indeed it has as its explicit aim to identify exploitation and oppression, and not only to explain (what is), but to offer possibilities for transformation (what ought) (Calhoun, 1995, p. 9; Gibson, 1986, p. 2; Morrow and Brown, 1994, pp. 11, 52, 148-9; Poster, 1989, p. 3; Sayer, 1992, p. 43; Sayer, 2000, pp. 18, 58). This is in direct contrast to both positivists and postmodernists. Indeed, positivism aims to be objective and value-neutral, claiming normative theorising should be a distinct activity from social theorising. At the opposite end of positivistic type objections to normative theorising, postmodernists have rejected normative theory on the grounds that it fails to see the situational character of knowledge, and, as such, is implicitly universalising and authoritarian (Sayer, 2000, p. 175).

Although critical theorists put forward alternative visions and proposals for practical interventions to obtain a more desirable society, they do not aim to dictate blueprints for the future, as they do not aspire to predict. As well, they recognise the complexities of putting forward alternatives as what is “wrong,” and what is more desirable is not always obvious or agreed upon, specifically in the context of cultural diversity (Morrow and Brown, 1994, p. 257; Sayer, 2000, pp. 161-2). As sexuality has historically been, and continues to be, a politically contested area, this is a significant point.

6.7.4. Critical Realism As Distinctive From Ideology

Due to the above stance, critical theory is often accused of being too ideological to be a “proper science.” In this regard, Morrow and Brown (1994, p. 26) argue that critical theory, although having a strong ideological content, is distinctive from ideology in that it attempts to keep ideology in check by its commitment to analyse and transform society.

Furthermore, Sayer, (2000, p. 172) and Morrow and Brown (1994, p. 27) argue that the fact that ideological assumptions are made explicit is not a weakness but a strength because they can be subjected overtly to rational debate and justification like any other part of a theory. While they do not claim objectivity for critical theory, by necessity there must be a degree of autonomy as this is necessary for honest intellectual endeavours. However, at the same time, it is assumed that no research is ideologically neutral, and, as such, forms of research guided by critical emancipatory interests are justified.

7. CONCLUSION

The task of this chapter has been to outline my methodological approach. I argue that the most appropriate methodology for studying youth sexuality is a critical realist methodology that appropriates certain aspects of bio-medical models and certain aspects of poststructuralist thought.

Critical realism has a realist ontology and therefore takes account of biological and physiological factors and material factors. In addition it is aware of the importance of the symbolic domain and it therefore overcomes the division that has characterised the debates between positivism and postmodernism and the dichotomy between objectivism and subjectivism and structuralism and interpretism.

In conclusion I advocate a methodology that acknowledges that neither the bio-medical model nor poststructuralism should be totally dismissed but aspects thereof should be used hand in hand with a critical realist methodology. In the following chapter I explore the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of the research, which together with a critical realist methodology is termed a critical realist approach.

CHAPTER FOUR : CONCEPTUALISING SEXUALITY

1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I detailed my critical realist methodology and in this chapter I outline my theoretical approach to youth sexuality which is based on critical theory.

Critical theory emerged in the 1930s and has its origins in the Frankfurt school. Since then it has been through radical changes and today it exists in various forms. Although critical theory is not a homogenous body of thought, common to critical theorists is their conceptualization of the word “critical.” The use of the word “critical” in critical theory should not be confused with the commonsense understanding of this word and should not be read in the pejorative; rather, “critical” refers to an analysis of society that aims to uncover beliefs and practices that impose limits on human freedom. To be sure, critical theory is concerned with ideology, power, structures and oppressive forces as well as understanding the reproduction and transformation of society. Importantly, critical theory assigns a key role to human agency and is an emancipatory theory in that it is a vision for realizing a better society embedded in the idea of understanding “what is” and then working towards “what ought” (Calhoun, 1995, pp. 13, 35-36; Kushner and Morrow, 2003, p. 37; Morrow and Brown, 1994, pp. 6-7, Usher, 1997b, p. 23).²²

In what follows, I outline the five key conceptual issues that I use to understand youth sexuality. These are gender and sexuality; structure and agency; hegemony; power and language. Rather than summarising the mass of literature that exists in relation to these issues, I focus on concepts germane to my study. Although I work within critical theory, I do not focus on domestic debates within critical theory and I complement critical theory by using concepts from other paradigms, an approach that is encouraged by critical theory (Bronner and Kellner, 1989, p. 2). Finally, although I make reference to various

²² Critical theory can be closely aligned with feminist concerns. For example, a normative concern, a focus on how domination in gender relations are produced, transformation and reflexivity of the research process (Kushner and Morrow, 2003, p. 36).

theorists, it is the concepts and not the theorists themselves which are of primary importance in this chapter.

2. SEXUALITY AND GENDER

Sexuality appeared as a subject for serious study at the end of the nineteenth century (Weeks, 2000, p. 4), firmly located within bio-medical sciences. Today there are many approaches to both the study of sexuality (Ruehl, 1983, p. 212; Weeks and Holland 1996, pp. 6-7)²³ and to gender, and I do not intend to reproduce the lengthy and intricate debates on gender and sexuality. Rather, in what follows, I shall provide a conceptual framework for my research.

2.1. DEFINING SEXUALITY

The term “sexuality” is not easy to define. The difficulties in definition arise from the fact that first, sexuality has always been a politically and symbolically contested domain (Cartledge and Ryan, 1983, p. 1; Vance, 1991). Second, sexuality is so intertwined with a vast range of both public and private issues, encompassing reproduction, relationships, erotic activities, intimacy, love, pleasure, advertising, medicine, art, literature, sin, danger, violence and disease (Cartledge and Ryan, 1983, p. 1; Ruehl, 1983, p. 212; Weeks, 2000, p. 163; White et al., 2000, p. 11). I shall use the definition of sexuality provided by Aggleton (2000a) who draws a useful distinction between gender and sexuality, while recognizing that they are both intimately linked. According to this definition, gender is about how males and females behave in ways that are associated with masculinity and femininity respectively, and sexuality is more specifically defined (at least in part) by whom a person has sex with, in what way and under what circumstances. Moreover, both gender and sexuality are strongly influenced by prevailing norms and values and they are often perceived as naturalized.

In addition to definitional difficulties, the exact nature of the relationship between sexuality and gender inequality is a complex and controversial issue. A key area of

²³ For a historical account of the study of sexuality see for example Connell and Weeks (1998, pp. 179– 196), Foucault, (1980a), Gagnon and Parker (1995), Weeks (1985) and Weeks and Holland (1996, pp. 5-7).

contention is whether the social control of women through sexuality is the outcome of gendered power inequalities or its purpose. While some feminists concur that men's economic and social power over women affords them more power in their sexual relationships with women, others argue that sexuality is a central mechanism in producing and maintaining unequal power relations (Richardson, 1997, p. 152).

I maintain that although gender and sexuality are closely linked, we should not reduce the study of sexuality to the study of gender (Rubin, 1998, p. 170). However, unlike Rubin (1998, p. 170) who argues that an autonomous theory and politics specific to sexuality must be developed, I agree with Gagnon and Parker (1995, p. 8) and maintain that gender is a larger framework in which the study of sexuality needs to be located.

In South Africa, a focus on gender and power is timely as pre 1994, in the context of national liberation, the gender question had been subordinated, and it is only fairly recently that gender has been placed on the agenda (Marais, 2000, p. 52). Moreover, in South Africa, within the category of youth, females are the most vulnerable to HIV / AIDS (Coombs, 2000).

2.2. WOMEN

In the early stages of the HIV / AIDS epidemic, women as a general category were not given much attention (Roth and Fuller, 1998, p. 1) and only certain groups of women were clearly visible in HIV / AIDS discourses. These groups of women were generally portrayed as "women at risk" and were represented as women sex workers, black African women, women who injected drugs, and "promiscuous" women, with a focus on the dangers these women posed to others (Richardson, 1996, p. 164). Today there is a burgeoning body of literature pertaining specifically to HIV / AIDS and women (Amaro, 1995; Weiss and Gupta, 1993; Worth, 1989; Wyatt, 1994). Indeed, there is an increasing awareness of the inextricable link between gender inequality and vulnerability to HIV / AIDS (Baylies and Bujura, 1995, p. 194; Gilbert and Walker, 2000; Hoosens and Collins, 2001; Hunter, 2001, p. 1; Kelly, Parker and Oyosi, 2002, p. 9; Marais, 2000, p. 52; Tallis, 2000, p. 59; Wilton, 1997, p. 44) and how this manifests on many levels, including the physical, material, institutional, political, psychological, ideological and cultural

(Aggleton, 2000, p. 4; Baylies and Bujra, 1995, p. 194; Becker, 2001, p. 1; Gilbert and Walker, 2000, p. 14; Gruhndling, 2001, p. 27, Gilbert and Walker, 2000; Hoosen and Collins, 2001; Hunter, 2001, p. 1; Ndiaye, 2000, p. 57; Parker, Dalrymple and Durden, 2000, p. 16; Rees, 1998, pp. 44-49; Strebel, 1996; Tallis, 2000, p. 59; Wilton, 1997, p. 44).

2.3. BRINGING MEN INTO THE EQUATION

Since the 1990s, internationally there has been a growing recognition of “men’s studies” (Morrell, 2001, p. 4; Robinson, 1996, p. 118). This focus is important in developing an understanding of how gender operates to oppress (albeit in different ways and with different effects) both women and men, and how gender can increase the vulnerability of both women and men to HIV / AIDS (Aggleton, 2000, pp. 4-5; Jewkes et al., 2003.)

2.4. ESSENTIALISM VERSUS UNIVERSALISM

Key to understanding gender and sexuality is the issue of differences and of common experiences, phrased as the question of whether the concepts of “woman” and “man” have “essential” or “universal” meanings that are common across all cultures. Nicholson (1998, p. 292) sums up the debate succinctly, “In short, was ‘gender,’ or the social construction of what it meant to be a ‘woman’ or ‘man,’ to be understood as containing both homogenous and heterogeneous elements or as being heterogeneous through and through?”

2.4.1. Differences And Commonalities Amongst Women

By the late 1980s, although the majority of feminists agreed that differences among women were more extensive than had been acknowledged in the past, many still maintained that, despite these differences, there existed commonalities which gave unity to the concept “woman.” In response to such claims it has been argued that a woman’s race, class, ethnicity, age, sexual preference and physical condition impact on experience, hence the concept of “woman” needs to be fragmented to accommodate this (Putnam Tong, 1998). Judith Butler (1990) is perhaps best known for her critique of “woman” as possessing any “essential” or unitary meaning. In Butler’s view, gender is performatively constituted; it is what you do at a given time rather than a universal “who you are.”

Consequently, she argues that gender is not a fixed attribute in a person but a fluid relation among socially constituted subjects under different contexts. In essence, she argues that some configurations of gender have become hegemonic and that the idea of woman as unitary acts to legitimize certain behaviours and delegitimize others, thus reinforcing the heterosexist status quo (Butler, 1990; Gauntlett, 1998). Other theorists, for example Bordo (1990, p. 142), have rejected anti-essentialism as it acts “to delegitimize a priori the exploration of experiential continuity and structural common ground among women.”

Nicholson (1998) argues that it is difficult to resolve the anti-essentialist versus essentialist debate. This is because while essentialists minimize differences amongst women, allowing women from privileged backgrounds to universalize their own experiences, anti-essentialists undermine feminist politics because they do not allow any generalizations about women. She concludes by arguing that while the generalizations about women in the 1960s and 1970s were crude, they were a necessary way of articulating gender as a social rather than a personal issue. However, although feminists need to make some generalizations, they need to be careful of the type of generalizations made in the 1960s and 1970s that functioned as universalizations. In relation to gender and power, without returning to “the totalising framework of traditional Marxism,” we need to recognise that, despite differences, patriarchy remains a powerful social force (Walby, 1992, p. 36), and that “While gender relations could potentially take an infinite number of forms, in actuality there are some widely repeated features and considerable historical continuity,” making generalization and theoretical concepts about gender and power useful even in the face of complexity. Moreover, there is a need to recognize that amongst women there are particular configurations between age, race, socio-economic position and gender (Anderson and Collins, 1995, p. xiii). With regard to the latter point, as Aggleton (2000, p. 8) argues, we should not ignore how such factors intersect to facilitate complex relations between women and men. Indeed, to ascribe all or the majority of women’s problems to men would be an over-simplification of social structures and human relationships.

Today, a key challenge confronting third wave feminists is to speak with one voice, recognizing how all women are oppressed, but at the same time understanding diversity (Miles, Rezai-Rashiti and Rundle, 2001, pp. 1-22).

2.4.2. Differences And Commonalities Amongst Men

The challenge of recognizing “commonalities and differences” is not only imperative in relation to women, but it is equally important in studies of men. Although patriarchy is a central structuring component in men’s lives (Bujra, 2000, pp. 7-8; Kimmel and Messner, 1998), it is necessary to stress the diversity of men’s experiences, attitudes, beliefs and practices, which are often structured along lines of race, class, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, age, region, physical appearance, able-bodiedness and mental ability (Brod and Kaufman, 1994, pp. 4-5). Moreover, diversity does not just occur between communities but it exists within every setting (Connell, 2000, p. 10). Finally, as masculinity is a social construct, there can be multiple masculinities which are not fixed or stable but open to uncertainties and contradictions and hence change (Christian, 1994; Connell, 1995; Connell, 2000; Robinson, 1996, p. 118).

It is important to find a balance between analysis that relies on broad, macro, all encompassing concepts and analysis that over fragments. While the former completely ignores differences, the latter fails to recognize commonalities in gendered analysis resulting in empiricism and undermining theoretical analysis. As such, we need to recognise that, despite differences, patriarchy remains a powerful social force (Walby, 1992, p. 33), and that “While gender relations could potentially take an infinite number of forms, in actuality there are some widely repeated features and considerable historical continuity” (Walby, 1992, p. 36). Thus it is important to take the local into account but this does not mean we should abandon all generalizations and theoretical concepts.

2.5. FEMININITY AND MASCULINITY

Often expectations of conventional femininity and masculinity shape sexuality and influence whether or not youth will engage in high risk sex (Moore and Rosenthal, 1993, p. xi; Thomson and Holland, 1998, pp. 59, 65), with some stereotypes of maleness and

femaleness having existed across cultures for tens of thousands of years (Holmberg, 1998, p. 40).

2.5.1. Femininity

In both modern and traditional societies, the tendency to present a homogenous image of the “African woman” and the assumption that sexism occurred under similar parochial conditions lead to distorted images of male-female relationships (Oluwele, 1998, pp. 96 – 104). McRobbie (2000, pp. 12, 28) observes that in the West girls are often portrayed in stereotypical ways. In some of the research it was found that girls’ self-evaluation depends on the degree to which their bodies and sexuality are publicly valued (McRobbie, 2000, p. 39). Further, McRobbie (2000, p. 38) argues that deeply inscribed in girls’ consciousness is the common sense wisdom that boys do not like girls who drink or take drugs. McRobbie (2000, p. 46) argues that in the United Kingdom, girls are one of the most powerless sectors of society. They are monitored closely by school, parents and youth leaders and are rooted in the home and local environment and lack the social knowledge to explore their environment the way boys can. Working class girls are taught to look forward to a “feminine” career in the home and they begin to underachieve in school as romance and boys become increasingly important (McRobbie, 2000, p. 53). McRobbie (1978) further illustrates how for school going working class girls, clothes become the resource through which they assert their independence of the institutional power of the school, so that fashion and beauty become a feminine anti-school culture.

The literature often portrays archetypal feminine behaviour as geared toward avoiding punishment and gaining favours (Jeffreys, 1996, p. 77; Vance, 1984, p. 2). Holland et al., (1996a, p. 146) argue that cultural values and social practices direct much of young women’s agency, energy and identity towards nurturance and sacrifice and meeting men’s “needs” rather than their own needs (Fine, 1992, p. 40; Holland et al., 1996a, p. 146; Thomson and Holland, 1998, p. 63). In their study of young people, “proper sex” was perceived as “a specific version of heterosexual intercourse in which the man’s penis penetrates the woman’s vagina; it starts with his arousal and finishes with his climax” (Holland et al., 1996, p. 146). Fine (1992, pp. 38-47) argues that young women

internalize femininity as being self-sacrificing and passive and this puts them at risk. For example the young women in her study were conscious of how racism and the economy had affected African-American males and felt that it was their responsibility to comfort them. They viewed self-protection as “taking away” from men, with one young woman saying, “If I ask him to use a condom, he won’t feel like a man” (Fine, 1992, p. 40). Moreover, many women receive messages that emphasise preserving relationships and that normalize a degree of male aggression in heterosexual encounters (Phillipps, 2000, p. 21). Thomson and Holland (1998, pp. 61-62) maintain that in many cultures although young men are encouraged to make sexual advances, young women are expected not to be sexually assertive and to resist the sexual advances of males. Furthermore, they argue that while young males approach sex as sexual actors (the person who does sex), young females are located as objects of sex (the person who has sex done to them), creating power relations that favour men and that detract agency from women so that ultimately women have little bargaining power in the sexual encounter.

Writing about women in the USA, Phillipps (2000, p. 17) argues that young women receive mixed messages and that the culture is saturated with contradictory discourses of hetero-sexual sex, love and male aggression:

... if we are women, we may be told that to be “successful” is to be soft and nurturant and to sacrifice our own wants for those of our families. Yet we are also told that we should be passionate, sexually sophisticated, and alluring to men.... [Moreover] Young women are simultaneously taught to solicit and feel flattered by male sexual attention, to protect themselves against it, and to control men so that they do not express it.

Writing about African-American and Latin female adolescents in New York City, Fine (1992, pp. 38-47) argues that these adolescents have a “dual consciousness” of passion and actual / anticipated sexuality but also fear and anxiety about sex. Fine (1992, pp. 33-36) argues that “sexuality as victimization” is a common discourse. In this discourse, sexuality is represented as a moment of victimization for adolescent women and young women hear of their vulnerability to “potential male predators,” learning to defend themselves against “being used,” disease and pregnancy. While this discourse sees sexuality as individual morality and promotes abstinence, there is also a “discourse of

desire” which remains a “whisper.” Richardson (1997, pp. 162-163) observes that recently some feminist are focusing more on elements of pleasure in sex, rather than sexual violence and oppression.

2.5.2. Masculinity

Often the literature puts forward an image of men that is white, heterosexual and middle class (Kinsman, 1995), and black men are portrayed in a stereotypical way as “macho,” “hypersexual,” “violent,” “exploitative” and “irresponsible” (Delgado and Stefancic, 1995, p. 211; Marable, 1998; Staples, 1995, p. 375; Westwood, 1990, pp. 56-57). For both black and white men, archetypal masculine behaviour is typically defined as demonstrating dominance and maintaining a place in the hierarchy (Jeffreys, 1996, p. 77; Vance, 1984, p. 2). Normative masculinity is generally epitomized as a man who is willing to take risks, to experience pain and not submit to it, is competitive and forceful and driven to accumulate power, money and sexual partners (Delgado and Stefancic, 1995, p. 211; Kimmel, 1990, p. 100). Universally, young men experience peer pressure to be sexually active, with sexual experience providing them with a passport to status and affirmation (Thomson and Holland, 1998, p. 60). Being seen as a “stud,” which implies virility, power and dominance, is seen as appealing to many men, particularly in the context of restricted economic and social opportunities to achieve status (Richardson, 1997, p. 167).

What dominant masculinities are not is as important as what they are, and masculinities are constituted in opposition to femininity and subordinate masculinities (Thomson and Holland, 1998, p. 64; Heise, 1995, p. 129) and, as men have a collective interest in the perpetuation of the gender hierarchy, individual male behaviour is closely monitored by the male community (Heise, 1995, p. 129).

Kaufman (1998, p. 4) discusses how violence towards women, other men and oneself can be part of the construction of masculinity, particularly in patriarchal, heterosexist, authoritarian, class societies. Acts of sexual violence against women are often explained by the myth that “male lust is intrinsic, uncontrollable, and easily aroused by any show of

female sexuality and desire” (Vance, 1984, p. 3). Not only does this take blame away from men for violent sexual acts but it also sends a message that female sexual desire must not be freely shown for fear of triggering a male attack. Moreover, because men’s sexual nature is seen as lustful, aggressive and unpredictable, and instigated by women, women become the moral custodians of the behaviour of men (Vance, 1984, p. 3). In South Africa the hegemonic masculinity is “rampant heterosexuality and male social dominance” (Bujra, 2000, p. 12) related to sexual prowess, putting both men and women at increased risk to HIV / AIDS. Kimmel (2001, pp. 339-340) has reminded us that the construction of masculinities in Southern Africa is a response to historically specific collection of local conditions, circumstances and struggles and it is important to understand these in analysing masculinity in Alex.

Despite some stereotypes of “maleness,” there are different ways of enacting manhood, different ways of learning to be a man, different conceptions of the self and different ways of using a male body in various locations and amongst ethnic groups (Connell, 2000, p. 10). Further, in relation to masculinities not being fixed, it is important to recognize that within masculinities there are contradictory desires and conduct. Connell (2000, p. 13) cites Klein’s (1993) study of bodybuilders as an example to illustrate the conflict between the heterosexual definition of hegemonic masculinity which operates in conflict with the way some body builders finance their bodybuilding by homosexual practices. Similarly, Cornwall and Lindsifarne, (1994b, pp. 11-23) argue that there are a variety of images and behaviours, which may be competing, contradictory and mutually undermining, which are associated with notions of masculinity. Masculinity depends on who is speaking and who is being described and its meaning alters over contexts and time. Moreover, masculinities can be borrowed and conflated with local ideas to produce new configurations. Cornwall and Lindsifarne (1994b, pp. 12-23) use the example of the “macho man” as a stereotype which has a cluster of elements which may be contradictory or oppositional according to context. For example, in a rugby club, the image of machoness is associated with physical prowess, toughness and virility and is always heterosexual. However, in a gay bar, while the ideal macho man may have the perfect body, he is not associated with the “conventional” macho attributes of a rugby player.

Indeed, the gay macho man may be targeted for heterosexist abuse because of what is perceived as a lack of masculinity, and it is important, is to recognize that being masculine involves a range of behaviours, which may be deemed feminine in certain contexts, or not considered relevant in gendered terms at all. Masculinities are actively produced, using the resources and strategies available in a particular social setting (Connell, 2000, p. 12). While some masculinities are dominant or hegemonic, others are subordinated or marginalized. However, it should not be assumed that the hegemonic masculinity is the most comfortable, and in the late twentieth century, due to social and economic changes, traditional ideas of masculinity have been called into question and some men are choosing to reject “hegemonic masculinity” (Christian, 1994; Connell, 2000). Indeed, many men live in a state of tension with hegemonic masculinity or distance themselves from it. It should also be noted that hegemonic masculinities can co-exist (Connell, 2000, p. 11; Cornwall and Lindsay, 1994b, p. 20).

While much literature focuses on women’s oppression by men, it has been argued that men are also oppressed by their gender²⁴, and the same factors that increase women’s vulnerability to HIV / AIDS, increases the risk for men (Aggleton, 2000a, p. 4; Robinson, 1996, p. 114; Selikow, Cedras and Zulu, 2002). Hence, as Aggleton (2000a, p. 4) observes, there is much value in analyzing how gender systems influence the vulnerability of both women and men in relation to the epidemic. While not denying or lessening the types of coercion women are subjected to, it is important to acknowledge that women are not always passive victims, and increasing recognition is being given to women’s agency (Baylies and Bujra, 1995, p. 194; Flax, 1990, p. 181; MacLeod and Saraga, 1988; Morrell, 1998, p. 605). For example Heise (1995, pp. 124-125) illustrated how women can exert agency, even within the most constrained social conditions, by showing how very poor women in India exert control over their sexual lives by declaring extended religious fasts which even violent men are reluctant to violate.

²⁴ Kaufman (1998, p. 7) argues that with masculinity, many desires and possibilities associated with femininity are oppressed.

3. STRUCTURES AND AGENCY

In debating what is traditionally known as the structure / agency debate, theorists have used a range of dualisms, each overlapping in some way but not synonymous. For example, the debate has been phrased as an opposition between objectivism and subjectivism and determinism and voluntarism and positivism and postmodernism. Objectivism or structuralism (often linked to positivism) usually refers to objective material conditions, at the expense of meanings, and tends to be deterministic. Voluntarism or subjectivism (associated with postmodernism and extreme interpretism) focuses on meanings and fails to identify real objects (including material structures and social constructions) which exist independently of the researcher (Sayer, 2000, p. 90). Subjectivist approaches also do not fully appreciate how structures may impact consciousness and are therefore usually over voluntaristic (Gibson, 1986, pp. 36, 123; Morrow and Brown, 1994, pp. 9-10; 57-59, 118-123, 148). In sum, these two approaches (although existing in many variations) can be represented as caricatures where in voluntarism there are actions but no conditions and in structuralism there are conditions but no actions. A further stereotypical approach to agency and structure is to posit a dialectical relationship between the two approaches; however this risks the danger of not distinguishing between “actions” (agency) and “conditions” (structures) (Collier, 1994, p. 143).

A CRA avoids the above problems inherent in the polarization of the agency / structure debate. It understands agency and structure as intertwined and mutually implicating one another (Morrow and Brown, 1994, pp. 59-60), and offers a “both / and” theory, rather than an “either / or” theory (Collier, 1994, p. 143). A CRA, rather than falling into the “agency versus structure” trap, asks “How do structures enable and constrain actions?” and “How do actions reproduce and transform structures?”

A CRA makes an analytical distinction between structure and agency, where a structure is the material and cultural conditions in which action takes place, as opposed to the

action itself (Archer, 1995). While this differentiation is useful for analytical purposes²⁵, it is also a reminder that social structures are ontologically not reducible to people and their practices (Lewis, 2000). Analytically, structures exist within the real and are both external (material and physical) and internal (symbolic, discursive and linguistic) to an individual (Lewis, 2000; Porpora, 1998, pp. 339-355). Both external and internal structures generate and reproduce relationships and, as such, are real causal mechanisms operating in the social world rather than purely theoretical concepts (Lewis, 2000; Porpora, 1998, pp. 339-355).

Structures are the result of actions taken in the past and they are both a condition for, and a consequence of, human agency. Moreover, all human activity is temporal, occurring within the context provided by the pre-existing social structures. Structures constrain and enable actions, but, at the same time, structures are constantly reproduced or transformed by human actors (Calhoun, 1995, pp. 35-36; Kushner and Morrow, 2003, p. 37; Morrow and Brown, 1994, p. 7). As Bhaskar (1989b, p.76) maintains, “Society does not exist independently of conscious human activity (the error of reification). But it is not the product of the latter (the error of voluntarism),” indeed for Bhaskar (1989b, pp. 34-35):

Society is both the ever-present condition (material cause) and the continually reproduced outcome of human agency. And praxis is both work, that is, conscious production, and (normally unconscious) reproduction of the conditions of production, that is society. One could refer to the former as the duality of structure, and the latter the duality of praxis.”

The schematic representation of structure and agency below reduces the complexity of theory and illustrates how sexual practices take place within structures.

²⁵ It is necessary to stress that the distinction between the two concepts i.e. internal and external structures, is primarily analytical, indeed many phenomenon occur in both arenas. For example, there is a discourse of desire constructed and reconstructed in discursive fields (e.g. what is erotic or an object of desire), this desire is “real” and is felt and experienced and (sometimes) enacted at a physical level. As such, desire occurs at both the level of the material and discursive. A similar argument could be made with regard to power, patriarchy, gender and a range of other concepts.

Figure 4.1



The view that there are social structures which facilitate and constrain actions is a rejection of voluntarism as well as a denial that social life is fashioned solely from discursive constructions and meanings. While the nature of the real does not pre-determine what will happen, it does constrain and enable what happens (Sayer, 2000, pp. 11-12). A CRA avoids determinism as human agency is not reduced to an epiphenomenon of pre-existing social structures, and it is acknowledged that people have the ability to engage creatively with historically given material and cultural resources (Lewis, 2000; Porpora, 1998).

Structures may generate events but may not, and this, coupled with agency means that it is not a deterministic theory. A key implication of a realist ontology is that it is possible that powers exist unexercised so that what is known to have happened or has happened does not exclude what could happen or could have happened.

This does not infer that there is no causality. Indeed, it is necessary to have a non-reductive materialism, and this can be accomplished if we are conscious of the symbolic order and jettison the positivistic understanding of causality as involving deterministic laws (Porpora, 1998, pp. 346-347). As such, we can look at causal forces that actors' material and symbolic circumstances exert on their actions without making any deterministic claims about the ways in which that behaviour is connected to those circumstances.

4. IDEOLOGY, HEGEMONY AND DISCOURSE

"Ideology," "hegemony" and "discourse" have been pivotal in explorations of culture. Barrett (1999) offers an excellent outline of the history of these concepts and the debates around them. In the sections below, I provide a brief rationale for my choice to use the concepts "ideology" and "hegemony" rather than Foucault's fashionable concept "discourse." I argue that Hall's politics of articulation incorporates both the strength of

Gramsci's culturalist understanding of hegemony as well as Althusser's structuralist²⁶ concept of interpellation.

4.1. IDEOLOGY VERSUS FOUCAULT'S "DISCOURSE"

Foucault, in trying to clear the "theory of ideology" of its "historical baggage" (Barrett, 1999, p. 145), replaced the term "ideology" with "discourse." He used the concept "discourse" rather than the concept "ideology" for two key reasons. First, ideology can be theoretically constructed as a truth that only certain groups have access to, whereas Foucault's notion of genealogy negates the view of an "unideological truth" that certain groups have access to (Mills, 1997, p. 33; Smart, 1985, pp. 17, 59; Rabinow, 1984, p. 10). Second, the Marxist concept of ideology is closely linked to class interests and the idea that the ruling class has almost complete power, and, as discussed further, Foucault's conception of power is a rejection of the view of grand overall strategies of power linked to a specific group (Foucault, 1982, p. 220; Mills, 1997, p. 38; Philip, 1985, pp. 74-75; Sawicki, 1991, p. 20).

While it necessary to revision the original use of the term ideology, prior to Foucault, there had already been a shift away from crude Marxist notions of "ideology." Moreover, Foucault's argument that discursive regimes are made to appear as self-evident truths is not so different from Hall's notions of dominance in ideology (Fiske, 1996, p. 216; Grossberg, 1996, pp. 135-136).

Second, although for Foucault discourse and regimes of truth implies that no one regime is more correct than another, he fails to explain why one regime becomes dominant at any given time (Hall in Grossberg, 1996, pp. 135-136; Parker, 1992, p. 19). This weakness is linked to Foucault's failure to conceptualise the balance of power between the different regimes of truth, indeed, as Hall (in Grossberg, 1996, p. 135) argues:

²⁶ During the 1960s and the 1980s there were major disagreements between structuralist and culturalist influenced approaches. While the structuralist approach was influenced by the likes of Althusser and Lacan, the culturalists were influenced by Hall's reading of Gramsci, as well as E.P. Thompson and Raymond Williams (Barker, 2000, p. 15; Katz, 2000, p. 36; Kellner, 1999; Slack and Whitt, 1992, p. 581).

If Foucault is to prevent the regimes of truth from collapsing into a synonym for dominant ideology, he has to recognize that there are different regimes of truth in the social formation. And these are not simply “plural” – they define an ideological field of force. There are subordinated regimes of truth which make sense, which have some plausibility, for subordinated subjects, while not being part of the dominant episteme.

While I do not see the necessity of replacing “ideology” with “discourse,” this does not mean that I shall buy the whole package of “mystification” and “false consciousness” (Parker, 1992, p. 19). Rather, I shall draw on Hall’s revisioned use of ideology based on readings of both Gramsci and Althusser (Hall in Grossberg, 1996, p. 136; Hall, 1996b, p. 30; Fiske, 1996, p. 216; Grossberg, 1996, pp. 135-136).

4.2. GRAMSCI AND HEGEMONY

The concept of “hegemony” replaced the concept of dominant ideology with a more sophisticated notion. Hegemony derives from Gramsci’s analysis of class relations and it refers to a continuous process by which a specific social bloc (made up of various class fractions) mobilizes public support and maintains its position of power by coercion and consent. Grossberg (1997, p. 130) describes hegemony as:

A question of leadership rather than explicit domination and control, containment rather than incorporation. It involves the colonization of popular consciousness or common sense through the articulation of specific social practices and positions within ideological codes or chains of connotational significance.

For Gramsci, hegemony includes ideology, however it cannot be reduced to ideology and indeed, it extends and enriches the notion of ideology:

Hegemony, then, is not just some successful kind of ideology, but may be discriminated into its various ideological, cultural, political and economic aspects. Ideology refers specifically to the way power-struggles are fought out at the level of signification; and though such signification is involved in all hegemonic processes, it is not in all cases the dominant level by which rule is sustained. ... But hegemony is also carried out in cultural, political and economic forms – in non-discursive practices as well as in rhetorical utterances (Eagleton, 1991, p. 113).

Hegemony also gives a “material body” to ideology so that it is transformed from a somewhat abstract system of ideas to “... lived, habitual social practice – which must

then presumably encompass the unconscious, inarticulate dimensions of social experience as well as the working of formal institutions” (Eagleton, 1991, p. 113).

“Common sense” is a crucial element of Gramsci’s notion of hegemony and is central in the creation and maintenance of hegemony as well as in the resisting of hegemony. The common-sense conception of the world is an episodic and disjointed complex of beliefs that guides everyday life but lacks the potential to put forward a coherent view of life (Gramsci, 1971, pp. 323, 324, 420). Although common sense is fragmentary, disjointed and often inconsistent, hegemonic control is attained by generating representations in common-sense thought in which social contradictions are viewed as unitary wholes (Komter, 1991, pp. 41-42). However, hegemony is a historically mobile relation and control is never total, as within the ambiguities and contradictions of common sense, the differentiation in the values of dominant and subordinate groups becomes evident. Moreover, as hegemony is a temporary settlement, it must be constantly (re)won and renegotiated in the conflict and struggle over meaning, and, since hegemony is always being remade, it opens possibilities for resistance and for counter hegemony.

4.3. ALTHUSSER AND INTERPELLATION

As a structuralist²⁷, Althusser’s work challenged the culturalist conceptions of culture based primarily on Gramsci. Althusser argued for the relative independence of the superstructure from the base so that culture was a relatively autonomous structure within a configuration of other such structures rather than an expression of the social whole, or a secondary emanation from the “real” economic relations in society (Connor, 1996, p. 354). Ideology was the set of discourses and images which constituted commonsense, or widely accepted knowledge and values disguising peoples’ true relations to one another and to society. Indeed, ideology is a distorted recognition of the “real” social relations, and the dominant ideology ensures that the cultural, social and economic relations and civil society seem inevitable and natural so that individuals believe themselves to be free. As such, Althusser rejected the humanist notion of individuals as self-conscious autonomous beings but rather claimed they were interpellated through pre-given

²⁷ Structuralism prevailed in the 1950s and 60s as a rejection of humanism and a focus on deep structures underlying the surface features of phenomena (Morrow, 1994; Seidman, 1998).

structures, namely the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), which consisted primarily of the family, schooling and mass media. In this regard individuals are ideological subjects and, through interpellation, language constructs a social position for individuals. Althusser's concept of interpellation moved away from ideology as distorted or false consciousness and allowed for a more discursive approach to ideology. "It put on the agenda the whole neglected issue of how we come to speak 'spontaneously,' within the limits of the categories of thought which exists outside us and which can more accurately be said to think us" (Hall, 1996b, p. 30). Indeed, Althusser argued that ideology is able to work because in the symbolic order, individuals make sense of their world, seeing themselves as strong and independent in the world. Hence, through identification, dominant social values are internalized and this allows the state and capitalism to reproduce themselves²⁸. Althusser (1971, pp. 162-3) argues that the interpellation of subjects is a structural feature of all ideology so that subjectivity is constituted in language:

I shall then suggest that ideology "acts" or "functions" in such a way that it "recruits" subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or "transforms" the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: "Hey, you there!" (italics in original).

Thus, Althusser's theory suggests that ideology, in addition to reproducing social inequality, provides a false sense of resolution offered by the symbolic order which offers the imaginary lure of final meaning and the promise of full "I-ness" which can only exist where "I am not" (During, 1993, p. 6). In sum then, this view sees the subject as positioned in such a way that their representations are seen as reflections of everyday reality (Chandler, 1995). Indeed, as ideology interpellates individuals into subject positions, subjects are the effects of discourse or constructs of ideology.

²⁸ From the perspective of psychoanalysis, through the symbolic order of language, individuals identify with the dominant ideology, and stimulated by fear of castration, and the fear of never fulfilling their individuality, attempt to "take the father's place."

The main criticism of Althusser was that his theories were seen by some as a crude economically determined understanding of Marx where the cultural superstructure is determined by the economic base – ultimately resulting in “the death of the subject” and replacing individuals with the mode of production as the real social forces, seriously undermining notions of agency and resistance (Morrow, 1991, p. 33; Morrow, 1994, pp. 50, 55, 125). In this regard Grossberg (1992, p. 117) identifies the paradox inherent in the conception that “individuals must serve simultaneously, as both the cause and the effect of social structures and, ultimately of history itself.” The concept of “interpellation” sees the subject as determined by cultural and linguistic factors. The subject is the individual who occupies a specific position and subjectivity, and their experience and understanding of themselves and the world, are always determined by the particular position from which the world is experienced and known. As such, subjectivity is socially constructed and is a product of ideology’s power to interpellate, i.e. to place individuals at particular sites within the field of meaning which it constitutes. However, the individual becomes the “apparent author” of the meaning system which has been generated, and hence responsible for them. Indeed, the individual who appears to have “had” the experience becomes:

the source and guarantee of the incontestability - the obvious and necessary truth - of the experience. The subject is merely the passive occupant of a particular position within a linguistic universe: as the speaker (“I”), the direct object (“it”) or the indirect object (“you”) (Grossberg, 1992, p. 118).

While each individual is positioned within the domain of subjectivity, power comes into play as not all positions are equally empowered to speak the languages which have empowered them. For example, subordinate subject-positions may be “denied the resources of language and discourse, or their own discursive resources (and their experiences) may be excluded from the realm of legitimate knowledge” (Grossberg, 1992, pp. 118). Furthermore, interpellation needs to be critiqued as it does not take agency into account. Rather it portrays subjects as “slaves in the fullest sense,” whereas, in reality, it is impossible to fully control even the most subordinated subject’s construction of their own linguistic practices. Grossberg (1992, p. 119-120) argues that theories of interpellation challenge the idea that subjectivity is essential, by historicizing and politicizing subjectivity, however, in this process they overemphasise power in

language and discourse. As the subject is hailed into place in an already determined history, all sense of agency to challenge “maps of meaning” which position them is removed from the subject.

4.4. THE POLITICS OF ARTICULATION

In the late 1960s, Hall used the concept of articulation, to bridge the two distinctive paradigms of Althusserian structuralism and Gramscian culturalism. Key to the politics of articulation is the following

- the centrality of agency and the idea that thinking people struggle in the world to change it;
- the significance of discourses and the role they play in shaping subjectivities;
- a materialist reading of discourse that recognizes the importance of discourse but insists that not everything should be reduced to it;
- an understanding that hegemony operates on a broad terrain of material, social and cultural life and should not be reduced to socio-economic or class or social location, indeed, groups and classes are differentiated by conflicting interests, cultures, goals, aspirations; and by the positions they occupy in various hierarchies;
- an analysis of power whereby power is not assigned to preconstituted structures as there are a multiplicity of dynamic power relations that can only be analysed within a particular context of articulation; and
- an understanding that ideological moments cannot be reduced to a single contradiction within the real (Fiske, 1996, p. 216; Grossberg, 1997, p. 130; Hall, 1996b, pp. 30-142; Hall, 1980b; Hall, 1996c, p. 142; Hebdige, 1996, p. 196; Slack, 1996, p. 124)

5. POWER

The balance of power in sexual relations is crucial in determining sexual practices and the unequal power balance in gender relations that favours men, translates into an unequal power balance in heterosexual interactions, so that men have greater control than women

over when, where and how sex takes place, increasing women's vulnerability to HIV / AIDS (Bastard et al., 1997, p. 52; Gilbert and Walker, 2000; Hoosen and Collins, 2001).

I draw on Foucault's conception of power but I argue that his notion of power needs to be read with the Gramscian concept of hegemony.

For Foucault, power is a relationship whereby one agent's actions affect another's getting them to do what they might not otherwise have done in a situation where there are choices (Mills, 1997, p. 36; Sawicki, 1991, p. 21; Tagg, 1981, p. 285). Foucault's conceptualization of power is a rejection of high structuralism and theorized abstraction common in macro-theoretical approaches. Indeed, Foucault's microphysics of power is a useful contrast to reductionist theories where power is perceived as arising from a highly unified and centralized origin (Smart, 1983, p. 87). Moreover, Foucault insists on a move away from the big theoretical questions of "What is power?" And "Where does power come from?" and is insistent that it is more useful to explore "the little questions" such as "What happens?" which although "flat and empirical," allows for a more realistic and multifaceted understanding of power (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. 217). Foucault's conception of power entails moving away from abstract and universal concepts, like patriarchy, to exploring how power operates at its most material and concrete level (Bidy, 1988, p. 7).

Using the concept of the "micro-physics" of power, he focuses on the micro, and calls for a focus on power that understands the concrete functioning of the "politics of everyday life" (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. 220; Fiske, 1996, p. 217; Fraser, 1989, p. 26; Grossberg, 1997, p. 94; Hall in Grossberg, 1996, pp. 135-136; Mills, 1997, p. 38; Philip, 1985, pp. 74-75; Sawicki, 1991, p. 20). As well, he observes that to grasp power, it is important to explore how power functions via various forms of control constitutive of individual's social practices rather than primarily through the distortion of their beliefs (Fraser, 1989, p. 25).

Foucault maintains that power is everywhere as an inherent feature of human relations. He claims that power does not operate from a single source and he conceptualises power outside the confines of the state, law, class and economic power. Moreover, not only does power operate at all sites, but it also does not operate from a single direction from top to bottom. Importantly, relations of power do not involve a top down vertical master – slave relationship whereby there are static disparities between dominant and subordinate groups (Bristow, 1997, p. 173).

Foucault rejects the “power as possession” model, maintaining that rather than ask “who” possesses power, it is more useful to explore the “how” of power, and to focus on power relations themselves and how subjects are constituted by power relations (Barrett, 1992, p. 136; Foucault, 1982 cited in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983, pp. 217, 219; Sawicki, 1991, p. 21). As power is a relation, rather than an imposition, there is always resistance, and power produces as well as represses (Mills, 1997, p. 36; Sawicki, 1991, p. 21; Tagg, 1981, p. 285). Moreover, as power is a dynamic relationship it is never fixed or stable:

What exists is always and specifically a power relation insofar as both resistance and domination are interconnected forms of power, among others; the opposition between them is never necessary but conditional and contingent (Foucault, 1979, p. 94).

As such, Foucault’s conception of power challenges a static notion of power and the idea that there are pre-determined unchangeable inequalities between groups (Bristow, 1997, p. 173).

5.1. WEAKNESSES IN FOUCAULT’S CONCEPTION OF POWER

Although Foucault’s reading of power is very useful, it is not without its problems.

Indeed, Foucault is in danger of conceptualizing oppression out of existence altogether (Bidy, 1988, p. 18). He fails to conceptualise the balance of power between different regimes of truth and his dispersal of power risks a negation of the systematic analysis of power as a structuring principle or overarching regime (Fiske, 1996, p. 216, Hall in Grossberg, 1996, pp. 135-136). As Weeks (2000, p. 119) argues in this regard:

There is, further, a slippage in Foucault’s concept of the workings of contemporary forms of power. In arguing that power is an effect of the operation of social relations, that is diffuse, omnipresent and polymorphous, Foucault does away with any concept of a hierarchy of power. It is surely evident that some

forms of power act as greater “restraints” and limits, or have greater productive possibilities, than others. The state for instance, does have a monopoly of legal violence. The media is monopolistic. Capitalists do have more power than workers. Of course Foucault recognizes this, while he rightly refuses to say that one form of oppression is better or worse, more or less severe, than any other. But some powers are more resistant to struggle than others

Foucault’s conception of power is useful, but more emphasis needs to be placed on macro structures of power (Sawicki, 1991, p. 11) and to avoid the over fragmentation of power, Foucault’s understanding of power needs to be read with a conception of hegemony (Morrow, 1991; Hall, 1996b)²⁹. Moreover, Foucault’s view of power is close to Gramsci’s view of hegemony which is never permanent and not reducible to economic interests, as well as being based on consent and coercion (Hall, 1997, p. 48). Foucault’s concept of power and Gramsci’s concept of hegemony read together, allows for a focus of micro discourses of power but with the acknowledgement that there is still a hierarchy of power. I also emphasise that power operates via the symbolic and the material.

6. LANGUAGE

Unlike bio-medical models, I focus on the use of language and recognise that while sexual acts are experienced via the body, they are made sense of through available discourses and narratives. In the last few decades, with the advent of the linguistic turn, there has been an increased interdisciplinary focus on language (Bryant, 1995, p. 5; Morrow and Brown, 1994, p. 24). Following Foucault, many studies that focus on language use the term “discourse,” however this fashionable term is often used as an undefined blanket term in a variety of contexts so that the concept has become vague. Although I make use of Foucault, I focus on language use in micro settings, whereas Foucault refers to broader, institutionalised ideas which structure parts of social reality (Alvesson, 2002, p. 68; Fairclough, 1992, pp. 38-39). Unlike Foucault’s use of the concept “discourse,” or discursive practice, which indicates languages and practices need to be understood as if they were the same thing, I draw a conceptual distinction between meanings, the expressive and physical changes and the practical order (Parker, 1992, p.

²⁹ Not all theorists read Foucault as neglecting macro structures. For example, Grossberg (1992, p. 54) argues that Foucault’s theory of micropolitics does not exclude questions of macropolitical structures.

17 drawing on the work of Harre, 1979). I argue that although language has a material effectivity, we need to distinguish between speaking and others processes. I therefore draw a distinction between cognitively embodied actions, linguistically embodied actions and corporeally embodied actions, as was indicated in the previous diagram.

6.1.SAUSSUREAN SEMIOTICS

The 1950s and 1960s witnessed the popularity of semiotics and polysemy in cultural studies. This school of thought emphasized multiple meanings and was promoted by the structuralist Saussure.

Saussure divided language into two parts, *langue* (the language system) and *parole* (actual speech acts). *Langue* is the underlying, general abstract rules and codes of the linguistic system which are learned and must be shared if communication is to be successful. *Parole* uses the structure and codes of the *langue* to create speech acts. While because of its closed, limited nature, *langue* can be studied like a science at the level of deep structures; *parole* is the surface and there are an infinite number of possible utterances making it difficult to study (Gottdiener, 1995; Hall, 1992; Hodge and Kress, 1988; Lechte, 1994, p. 150).

Most importantly, according to Saussure, the production of meaning depends on language, which is a system of signs. The sign consists of the signifier (the form or actual word or image) and the signified (the image the signifier generates) (Gottdiener, 1995, p. 4; Lechte, 1994, p. 150).

Signs are organized into systems of difference and hence language is a phenomenon of structural relations where the relationship between the signified and signifier is set by cultural and linguistic codes, and meaning is created by difference and the play of signifiers and signifieds. Moreover, the relationships between signifiers and signifieds are not universal or transcendent but are subject to historical change and open to slippage. As there is no inevitable link between the signified and signifier, the sign does not possess an

essential or fixed meaning. There is thus no one single true meaning (Gottdiener, 1995; Hodge and Kress, 1988).

6.1.1. Criticisms of Saussure and Semiotics

Saussure's focus on the more formal aspects of language detracted from the interactional and dialogical nature of language and he did not look at the general social constraints on individual thoughts and how power operated to constrain the volatility of polysemic discourse (During, 1993, p. 7; Gottdiener, 1995, p. 21; Hodge and Kress, 1988, pp. 1, 20). A further criticism of Saussure is that his exclusive focus on the signifier and signified meant he did not pay attention to the "real" objective world outside of language, or what is known as the referent. As such, his work did not enable a materialist approach to culture (Gottdiener 1995, pp. 3-5, 9, 13). Nor did his work explore the type of questions asked by cultural studies about how groups with limited power develop their own readings of, and uses for, cultural products (During, 1993, p. 7).

6.2. POSTSTRUCTURALISM

Unlike Saussurean semiotics, for poststructuralists meaning is constituted within language and is not guaranteed by the subject which speaks it. Moreover, signs do not have an intrinsic meaning but only acquire meaning via language and because of their difference to other signs. As such, there are competing ways of attributing meaning to the world and competing discourses so that language becomes a political and social site and place of struggle. Indeed, language and power are intrinsically linked and power is partly about producing and maintaining dominant meanings and presenting them as normative. Poststructuralists also argue that identity formation is a linguistic process.

However, while poststructuralists make the useful move away from Saussurean semiotics by locating meaning within contents, due to their lack of a realist ontology and the fact that they only focus on the discursive, they are guilty of language idealism. Although language is socially constructed, the idealist stance of poststructuralism excludes the referent and sees language as arbitrary (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 18). A further criticism of poststructuralists is that they undermine how humans create shared meanings

in everyday communication (Gottdiener, 1995, pp. 23-24; Pilgrim and Rogers, 1997, pp. 37-38). A broader critique of poststructuralism was offered in the previous chapter.

6.3.A CRITICAL REALIST APPROACH TO LANGUAGE

I adopt a critical realist approach to language. A CRA, due to its relativist epistemology is able to build on the strengths of poststructuralist insights and take the linguistic turn into account. Due to its realist ontology, a CRA offers a more comprehensive understanding of language than poststructuralism is able to.

I focus on the micro politics of language and day to day speech of youth. In line with a CRA, I maintain that discourse is one of a number of elements of social practice which co-exist in a dialectical relationship. I do not reduce social life to discourse but I recognise that language is just as real as physical or material elements in that it impacts practices (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999, pp. 1, 23). The key question I ask is “what are the effects of language on youth sexual practices?” (Hall, 1997, p. 6; Jaworski and Coupland 1999a, p. 3; van Dijk, 1997, p. 6). To answer this question, I draw on Foucault and how discourses set rules about how youth conduct themselves (Grossberg, 1997, p. 133; Hall, 1997, p. 44), and I look at how some discourses become hegemonic in the construction of youth sexuality. I maintain that the habitual and unconscious use of language, including figures of speech, create shared meanings and partly construct youth’s realities, disguising the fact that social reality is partly constructed. This being said, it is also important to recognise that within language there is always space for resistance. Moreover, I avoid language determinism and rather, following Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999, p. 13), I maintain that there is a complex relationship between language and sexual practices. Finally, it is important to understand that language can manifest as “mere words” and changes in discourse which may appear to constitute changes in social practices do not necessarily lead to changes (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999, p. 23).

Although I see language as being central in the mediation and constitution of reality, I avoid radical forms of language analysis, such as idealism and deconstruction, which

privileges the symbolic over the material and I look at how language is firmly rooted in the material (Calhoun, 1995, p. xvii; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999, p. 28; Gottdiener, 1995, p. 56; Morrow, 1991, p. 45). In line with critical realism, I accept that meanings are not located at one particular point in the play between signified and signifiers, but I maintain that the referent needs to be reintroduced into the discussion and that meanings are not as unstable as postmodernists posit (Sayer, 2000, pp. 36-40, 71). Furthermore, discourse is always historical and is always produced and received within a context (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, pp. 272-280) and the concept of intertextuality allows an understanding of how current discourses are connected to pre-existing and existing discourses and resources (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, pp. 272-280; Fairclough, 1999, p. 184; Parker, 1992, p. 16).

7. CONCLUSION

In understanding youth sexuality it is important to explore dominant masculinities and femininities as these shape sexual practices. I have argued that the concept hegemony is useful to understand why certain masculinities and femininities become dominant. Hegemony operates on both material and symbolic terrains, and the notion of hegemony and the microphysics of power enables us to understand how local nuances play themselves out against the backdrop of a larger preconstituted system and a wider historical context of dominant constructions of gender and sexuality. With regard to language I have proposed that it is important to explore the daily language usage of youth and how this influences sexual practices. Finally, I suggest that a critical realist understanding of how structures enable and constrain actions is key to understanding youth sexual practices. While the task of this chapter and the preceding chapter have been to set out the methodological and theoretical premises of my research, in the following four chapters I embark on an empirical exploration of youths' sexual practices.

PART THREE A THEMATIC READING: BUA

Part three of the dissertation is a thematic reading of my data. It is entitled “Bua,” the Sotho word for “talk.” This title accentuates the importance I attach to listening to the voices of the youth, and where possible I have used extensive quotes and let the youth “speak for themselves.” This being said, two important interlinked points need to be made. First, although the youth “speak,” their voices are filtered through my methodological and conceptual framework. While positivists shy away from this actuality, yelling “unscientific,” at the other extreme, postmodernists, in their eagerness to represent all views as equally valid, descend into uncritical redescriptions of what others say and claim to keep their own voices hidden. As a critical realist I recognize the errors in both these approaches and I allow youth to speak, however, while making an honest attempt to portray the understandings of youth as accurately as possible, I acknowledge that my own views are of value and hence I offer commentary on what has been said. As well, I draw on sociological theories to make sense of and explain youth views.

Second, in line with interpretive approaches I place a significant emphasis on youths’ views and perceptions, but my research moves beyond a purely interpretive approach and locates youth’s views within structures. Indeed, to only focus on what youth say and to ignore structures would be empiricist and a lapse into postmodernism.

Bua consists of four closely interlinked chapters that ultimately form a unit and that outline and contextualise youth’s sexual practices within the material and symbolic structures in Alex. These chapters are

- chapter five: Alex Youth: From Young Lions to Young Lovers;
- chapter six: The Main Playas;
- chapter seven: Knowledge of HIV / AIDS; and
- chapter eight: ABC: We Need a New Love Literacy.

In chapter five, I set the scene for the research by sketching the material and social context of Alex youth. The title of the chapter, “Alex Youth: From Young Lions to Young Lovers,” is indicative of the fact that today’s youth are not as politically inclined as the young lions of the 1970 and 1980s. I argue that since the 1990s, with youth increasingly being less involved in politics, youth invest much time and energy in defining and enacting their sexual identities. This takes place within a context where overcrowding, unemployment, poverty and high levels of violence and crime are ubiquitous and where there has been an increase in consumerism and materialism. Moreover, although many traditional beliefs still exist, traditional institutions associated with sexual socialization have declined; and neither schools nor families fulfil the role of sexual socialization. Further, many people who might have been positive role models for youth have left Alex for better living conditions, hence often criminals are role models. Youth, who had high expectations about their opportunities in a post-apartheid South Africa, are disappointed and discouraged by the fact that further education and jobs are still not within their reach. I argue that within this milieu, an extreme culture of risk taking, *tata ma chance*, has developed and sexuality has taken on an increasing significance, with sex being both a symbolic and material resource.

In chapter six I introduce the main “*playas*,” or ideal type sexual identities and “what they want.” I illustrate that youth construct male sexualities as being divided into two extreme categories, the *ingagara* and the *isithipa*. The *ingagara* is a “real man” and is epitomized as a man who has many girlfriends, a good car, is fashionable and has access to money, usually through crime. At the other extreme, the *isithipa* is invented as a man who does not have many girlfriends, is not fashionable and may have a job or be in an institution of higher learning. Women are divided into three categories; the *regte*, who is the long term girlfriend and may be the mother of an *ingagara*’s child; the *cherrie* (also referred to as the *makwapheni*), who is a “back up girlfriend” and who is second best and for fun, sex and status; and, lastly, the one night stand; the former two being the focus of this study. Other identities that youth have constructed are the *chicken*, the *minister* and the *A.T.M.*, all references to the fact that often men are seen in terms of what they can provide for

women. Indeed, in a context where women have limited access to resources, the theme of “men for money,” either for basic subsistence or for conspicuous consumption, runs throughout the research, with women’s “pay back” being sex. As masculinity is intertwined with sexuality, sex has a symbolic value for men and this creates a sex exchange economy, with sex being traded within the framework of a regte and / or cherries relationship. I illustrate how within these relationships, the conditions of exchange are not equal, with the balance of power favouring men and putting both men and women at increased risk of HIV infection.

In chapter seven I interrogate youths’ understanding and awareness of HIV / AIDS. I argue that youth obtain information about HIV / AIDS from a wide variety of sources but they primarily rely on friends for information despite the fact that youth’s knowledge of HIV / AIDS is infused with myths and misunderstandings. These myths and misunderstandings relate primarily to modes and symptoms of infection, a cure, testing, high risk partners, AIDS as an invention and the existence of HIV / AIDS. I illustrate that youth’s understandings of HIV / AIDS are partly derived from everyday experiences and hence these understandings often contradict the scientific discourse about HIV / AIDS. In light of this I maintain that notions of awareness about HIV / AIDS would be usefully conceptualized using Gramsci’s notion of common sense. I demonstrate that knowledge about HIV / AIDS, and even knowing an HIV positive person, does not necessarily transform sexual practices, and I argue that this is because sexual practices always occur in a complex social milieu and changing sexual behaviour cannot be understood in a cause and effect way.

In chapter eight, “A.B.C.: We Need A New Love Literacy,” I extrapolate from the previous three chapters and look at the implications of youth behaviour for the A.B.C. approach. I observe that abstinence is a difficult option for four reasons. One, young people maintain that youth who do not engage in sexual relationships are crazy or cursed by bad luck. Two, for a range of reasons it is important for youth to be involved in relationships and within relationships, sex occupies an important place. Three, youth believe that it is a biological necessity that males engage in sex, and four, violence

undermines the idea of abstinence as many women believe that as the chances that they might be sexually violated are high, they may as well have sex. In relation to the “B” in the A.B.C., I argue that despite the multitude of campaigns in South Africa that call for monogamy, both males and females engage in multiple relationships. As I argued in chapters five and six, the hegemonic masculinity in Alex is characterized by multiple partners for men and this is a central explanatory factor in why “being faithful” is not adhered to. As well, in these two chapters I illustrated that women have many “needs” that are met by men and often these requirements cannot be met by only one man, hence women often have multiple sexual partners. Furthermore, there is a myth that men have an inherent need for sex from multiple partners. Although youth have some sense that multiple relationships increase the risk of contracting HIV, this understanding co-exists with ideas that undermine this awareness. For example, youth do not take their partners previous sexual history into account and they believe that if they have known someone for a long time they can trust them. In the final part of this chapter I argue that although condoms are widely available, they are not used regularly. I illustrate that condom usage varies with both regtes and cherries and that women have very little decision making power with regard to whether a condom is used, partly due to the physical power of men, and partly due to the transactional element in most sexual encounters. I demonstrate that condoms are not neutral objects and that decision making about condoms is partly predicated upon the symbolic meanings attached to sex, whereby a condom is associated with casual sex, and condomless sex with love and trust. Although males sometimes choose to use condoms with cherries, it is highly unlikely that they will use a condom with a regte.

CHAPTER FIVE

ALEX YOUTH: FROM YOUNG LIONS TO YOUNG LOVERS^{30, 31}

1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I focus on Alex today and I explore six themes that emerged from interviews, namely

- the disappointment and pessimism of youth;
- the depoliticisation of youth;
- the erosion of key traditional institutions associated with sexual socialization;
- a violent and patriarchal culture;
- a materialist and consumerist culture, and;
- a risk taking culture, which I refer to as tata ma chance.

By exploring the above themes I am able to locate youth's sexual practices within the pre-existing material and symbolic structures which constrain and enable youth's actions. This is central to a CRA and is a task which both bio-medical models and poststructuralist theories do not explore adequately; hence their inability to explain sexual practices.

The title of the chapter, "Alex Youth: From Young Lions to Young Lovers," is indicative of the fact that today's youth are not as politically inclined as the young lions of the 1970 and 1980s, but rather they invest much time and energy in defining and enacting their sexual identities. This takes place within a context where overcrowding, unemployment, poverty and high levels of violence and crime are ubiquitous and where there has been an increase in consumerism and materialism. Moreover, although many traditional beliefs

³⁰ Selikow (2005b).

³¹ The title of this chapter refers to the fact that the youth who lead the struggle against apartheid from 1976 to 1990 and who were called the young lions, can now more aptly be characterised as young lovers.

still exist, traditional institutions associated with sexual socialization have declined; and neither schools nor families fulfil the role of sexual socialization. Further, many people who might have been positive role models for youth have left Alex for better living conditions, so that often criminals become primary role models. Youth, who had high expectations about their opportunities in a post-apartheid South Africa, are disappointed and discouraged by the fact that further education and jobs are still not within their reach. I argue that within this milieu, an extreme culture of risk, *tata ma chance*, has developed and sexuality has taken on an increasing significance, with sex being both a symbolic and material resource.

2. ALEX TODAY

In the previous chapter I provided a brief history of Alex and in this section I focus on Alex as it currently is. Today Alex comprises a mix of ethnic cultures, languages and traditions as well as rural and urban people. Alex is approximately 4.6 km long and 3 km wide and, although originally designed to accommodate 40 000 people, it is now home to an estimated 350 000 - 500 000 people. In Alex there are about 4 060 formal houses and about 34 000 shacks. In addition, people live in hostels, flats, and warehouses.

Currently 43 % of residents live in informal dwellings and 39 % in formal dwellings. The remainder live in hostels (18 %), flats (4 %), the East Bank houses (3 %) and the relatively recent Shtwetla informal settlement outside Old Alexandra (3 %). There is serious overcrowding with extremely high densities, for example in Old Alexandra, approximately 70% of households house more than 10 people. Overcrowding was raised as a concern by many youth. A male from group one commented:

Even the government can start building houses in Alexander so that people can stop being overcrowded like this. Maybe we can start to live like other townships where there are no lots of mhkukus [shacks], where there is peace.

The vast majority of residents (over 70%) are unskilled, education levels are low, (generally lower than STD 9), unemployment is high (60 percent) and poverty is rife. Given this context, Alex has been described as a “breeding ground for criminals” (Maphumulo, 2001, p. 8; Smith, 2002a, p. 11)³², with more hijackings taking place on

³² In Gauteng, 28% of youth have been victims of crime (CASE, 2000, p. 43).

Alex's London Road than on any other stretch of road in the country (Marshall, 2002, p. 13). Speaking of crime Jijobest echoed many youth when he reported:

Youth in Alex, they are criminals.... they can go to suburbs and rob some people there. ... You see, Alex is too tiny and there are many shacks, to hide is very simple, you can steal a car and park it in a yard, there are many people in one yard, so it is not like in the suburbs where every house has its yard, ...here in Alex, so many people in one home, and they can be scared to tell [if you hide stolen goods in their yard].

Thus, as noted by Jijobest, crime is facilitated not only by Alex's geographic location but also by its haphazard design, making it difficult for police³³ to track down criminals.

Further, community fear ensures that residents do not divulge crime making it easy for criminals to hide stolen property in backyards. Given the high levels of unemployment, as Vusi observed "drugs, stealing, hi-jacking cars; those illegal things. Those illegal things some of them they make them [enable them] to survive. So they are looking on that. They are not looking at the person that goes to school, works at a job and that." The theme of criminals as role models is pursued in section 2.3. below.

In addition to overcrowding and crime, comments from youth pointed to the lack of facilities for entertainment in Alex, as is the case in many townships (Mhlanga, 2002, p. 8) and youth claim that sex and drinking alcohol are one of the only forms of entertainment. In this regard participants from group two claimed:

M1: We sleep with them [girls] to keep ourselves busy

M2: You just go to bed because there is, especially in the black community, there is no more entertainment. It is not like in the suburbs where you can find parks, swimming pools, this and that. When we want to entertain ourselves we drink liquor and get our girlfriends.

M3: ... and the only thing you think of is to go out and search for girls and that is the entertainment we have got.

Alcohol is very much part of the "Alex male culture" and is associated with high risk sex (Becker, 2001, p.12; Magardie, 1999, p. 7; Mnyika et al., 1997; Moatti, Hausser and Agrafiotis, 1997; Pattman, 2001, pp. 8-10; Skinner, 2001, p. 6) as youth are less likely to take safety precautions when under the influence of alcohol. Indeed, Themba noted that "The problem is that if you get drunk I don't think that you can practice safe sex.

³³ It has been alleged by Alex residents that police are involved in crime in the township (Stavrou, 1993, pp. 7-12).

Because the alcohol controls your mind. You don't think. You [are] just doing it. You don't think about the consequences,” and Jijobest explained:

So, I am afraid, it was not my intention, so I did not use a condom when I was drunk. That is why I say sometimes liquor is influential... When you are drunk, you can do anything but when you are sober, you are thinking, “Eish, if I am doing this, this is going to be a problem.” But if you are drunk, you can do anything that you think of doing, they will tell you tomorrow that you were doing this and that. Sometimes you will be surprised, “Me, doing what?”

Moreover, boys take advantage of girls who have consumed alcohol and in this regard Nkululeko pointed out that “Sometimes when drinking, it’s one of the strategies: when the girl gets drunk, then you go to bed with her. Yes! And then you go sleep [have sex] with her. Then she will only realize in the morning that she took a wrong decision.”

Indeed, alcohol abuse is a major problem in Alex, contributing to irresponsible behaviour, violence and the spread of HIV³⁴.

Health and disease are related to factors associated with the physical environment such as unemployment, homelessness, unhygienic circumstances, prostitution, crime, a high school drop-out rate, social unrest and widespread poverty (Coombs, 2000; Gilbert and Walker, 2000; Gruhndling, 2001, p. 23; Parker, Dalrymple, and Durden, 2000, p. 2), all factors characteristic of Alex. As such, any programmes implemented to alleviate the high HIV / AIDS prevalence rate needs to adopt a long term commitment to develop the physical environment in Alex.

2.1. LACK OF ROLE MODELS

With the scrapping of the Group Areas Act, many professionals escaped the overcrowding, poverty, and crime of Alex for the suburbs. In this regard, Nozipho observed:

In Alex we don't have role models. We don't have somebody who you can look up to, especially guys. Guys are the ones that are having a problem because this is

³⁴ Although I focus on alcohol abuse rather than drug abuse, drugs are a serious problem in South Africa. Indeed, South Africa is part of the major international drug-trafficking network and figures released by the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention show that the amount of dagga (marijuana) seized in South Africa is the second biggest in the world (Otto, 2002). In Alex dagga is easily obtainable and relatively cheap, R5.00 – R10.00 for an arm (Canadian \$ 1- 2), depending on the quality of the drug.

someone you know, whoever-whoever, he moves from Alex now and he lives in Houghton [a very wealthy suburb].

Tebogo expanded on this aspect, arguing that:

Our role models are I would say criminals, because they live a good life.... Ah, you've got a car, you've got money, you live in a nice house, you're being followed by hordes of girls, so that's the type of a lifestyle, you know you grew up, and look up to them [criminals], and say "Yes." ... They [young professional] move out of Alex, and the reason is that they want [a better life]. ... Like I say, crime here, is more glorified.... If you were to choose between a lawyer, and a criminal, ok, maybe the lawyer is struggling, ok, maybe he doesn't have a car, but the criminal just, you know, has never worked, he lives a good life. As a youngster, you say to yourself "This is what I want to do. This is my role model!"

Nkululeko confirmed that youth see criminals as role models commenting that:

And their role models for now I mean in the township, most of their role models are drug dealers. They can drive posh cars; they can move around with those beautiful ladies. So they are criminals most of them.

Traditionally crime is a male domain (Mabena, 1996) and involvement in crime gives Alex males access to large amounts of money, while females generally have far fewer financial resources and this has implications for the commodification of sex and high risk sex, as shall be elucidated throughout this research.

3. THE DISAPPOINTMENT OF YOUTH

Despite the transition to democracy in 1994, and black youth's expectations that there would be material deliverance with democracy, this has not happened; leaving youth disappointed and disillusioned (Everatt, 2000, pp. 3-6; Mabena, 1996, p. 1)³⁵. In the context of poverty, crime and lack of access to facilities, it comes as no surprise that youth in Alex do not express optimism for the future. Dali's comments give evidence to the disappointment that many youth feel post 1994 as well as the unrealistically high expectations that many youth had about how life would be in the post-apartheid state:

[post-apartheid] ... one of the major particular issue which became a very sensitive issue was that of young people now being sort of forgotten. A forgotten young people, which was at some point, pre 1994, sidelined. So they actually became neglected and really, we found the situation very stressing, depressing.

³⁵ According to a survey, 52% of black South African youth feel that their standard of living has not improved over the last 5 years (CASE, 2000, p. 9)

You'd find yourself; you'd left school because of the whole situation of the transformation of the country and what-have-you. And you start to wonder as to what next. And once the new government was in place and we had expectations as to we'd find jobs and be placed in better positions and maybe our schools would have been brought to a better kind of learning environment and what-have-you. You know all of those things did not materialise. Well, I must also admit to the fact that before the election there was a lot of imaginative or maybe ambitious expectations about what will happen when the ANC goes into power. One example ... is that there was this guy who just before the 94 elections, who went to Sandton [a luxurious suburb next-door Alex] and he came to sit outside the beautiful houses in Sandton. And during the early hours of the morning before the elections the police found him there and they asked, "What are you doing here?" And he said "No, we are voting the ANC into party so I'm expecting to own this house after that." ... People tend to make a joke out of it, but it's actually a very true story as to how people thought at the time. We thought it was going to be a total onslaught but unfortunately that was not to be. And that, that was a major draw back, especially the young people because at the end of the day they were being forgotten.

While the man who sat outside the house in Sandton may be an extreme example, it is indicative of the types of expectations that many people had pre-1994. This was reiterated by Tsepo whose narrative draws attention to the relationship between the failure to eradicate poverty and the commodification of sex³⁶:

After voting we were expecting to get a new house somewhere in Brambley [a wealthy neighbouring suburb]. Because we people, we thought that we will be going out of poverty and whatever. For now poverty is one of the central phenomena around this thing. Because you see there are families who cannot put a loaf of bread on the table. So if you gave me twenty Rand now, I go back and see two young ladies hungry there. Some of us use that opportunity to say "Hey come, I'm monied. So do you want to eat? Okay, we can have sex." Sort of you negotiate from the position of strength because you've got something to offer.

Comments from group 5, support Dali and Tsepos' observations and underscore youth's feelings of despondency:

M1: Our future is limited.

M1:...now you see most families are burying their young ones, they have kids they sent to jail, so you see the future will take a long time...

M3:... I don't see any future. People when they finished school, they knew they were going to work. Now you get your matric now and there's no life for you, you stay at home, your mother can't afford and somebody can't afford to take you to

³⁶ Of course sex is often a commodity in material environments which are not characterized by poverty, and we need to avoid reductive arguments which explain transactional sex as resulting purely from material factors and lack of resources.

university, you just stay at home, and there's nothing you can do anyway, except to be a criminal or something.

M4: Ja, I don't see a bright future for this government?

M5: For myself, at the rate of unemployment, getting a job or furthering your education, well I don't have money...I don't see a future 'cause you can't get no job.

M6: (Male): But a man must live, I will do something

(Many voices): Ja

M1: Eish, but many people with diplomas sit with their diplomas because there are no jobs.

M7: I beg to differ, some of us have diplomas, I don't know what we are waiting for, even the Bible says "There are treasures in life" so stand up and do for yourself.

M4: Tomorrow I can be in jail, hey, I can even be in Chris Hani [a hospital]...

The above dialogue draws attention to the fact that, while a few youth feel that they can take action to improve their future, most youth feel despair, particularly in relation to the high rate of unemployment and the lack of opportunity for further study (primarily as they cannot afford it). This sentiment feeds into the "tata ma chance" logic, as elucidated in section eight.

4. THE DEPOLITICISATION OF YOUTH

In the following sub-section I draw primarily on the "older youth." These youth argue that while the 1970s and 80s offered many youth a focus through political involvement, during the negotiation process, many youth were sidelined from politics, and today youth are mainly apolitical³⁷ (Daliwonga Ka Plaatjie, 2002, p. 20³⁸; Delius and Glaser, 2001, p. 19; Mabanga, 2002; Masiomabuka, 1999; Mbatha, 2002, p. 17; Mkhuma and Seery, 2002, p. 13; Wolpe, 2002). Zandile's comment, which refers back to the title of the chapter, suggests that the new generation, in contrast to the "young lions," are more concerned with "love" than with "politics:"

During those days [the seventies and eighties] people were the soldiers, time for love it wasn't there ...the Young Lions, we had time for the struggle. We had sleepless nights having some workshops. ... We were sleeping in the veld. Life

³⁷ Ramagoshi (2002, p. 21) maintains that young women are even less politically inclined than young men.

³⁸ Daliwonga Ka Plaatjie (2002, p. 20) argues that even township students who were historically in the forefront of the struggle against apartheid have developed a culture of anti-politics and a fascination with Americanism. To support his argument he notes that at the recent WITS SRC elections, political parties were defeated by a kwaito singer.

was not so simple, we never had loving time, our time it was struggle. Ja, with us it was time for stone throwing. Make ideas how to overcome this country, take some petrol bombs Dig some big holes on the streets, if the police come they should fall into those. Our life it was fight anything you think about. We never have time to stay and drink with music. We had time to discuss, "How is your idea about this and that?" Try to bring one, two and three then we make a solid thing then we go and fight. We never had time to dance. We had time to bury our friends and mourn only. We never had any time to smile, to sit and talk to your family. We never had that time and we didn't had any thought of that. We said "We are fighting for the struggle, we'll overcome. Even if we die we know that we got freedom." ... eish, young lions? Hey wena (you), today they [youth] can just be [are] young lovers....

Similarly Nkululeko lamented that the new generation:

... they are not like the young lions. No. They, the youth, are different in many ways [from the young lions]. Like one, in our generation there's more of a custom of the liberation struggle. We used most of our energy, our efforts, running around the streets, organizing meetings; after meetings going to school; engaging in protest marches and a number of activities. But with this generation now, they are idling a lot. ... it's [their concern is] with love and sex... sex and love.

In addition to observing how the new generation has lost all interest in politics,³⁹

Nkululeko constructs the new generation of youth as being materialistic and individualistic:

The membership of the youth movement, it has declined, ... but also political conscious has declined... Because the people, in the past we were always together in meetings discussing things. ... In our meetings we never discussed only political issues. We discussed a number of issues, they involved civic matters. Today we are more individual, we don't have that collective spirit of approaching and discussing issues. Even these discussions now, political discussions, it's very rare they look at us [find us] discussing political issues. You'll get us discussing cars now, the car I want to drive, the area where I want to stay.

In addition to a decline in political consciousness, Nkululeko's account highlights a decline in interest about civic matters and a change in conversational topics. Tsepo concurred with this, noting that "The problem is that the only things that they talk about when they are together is about going to parties; cars; - there is no more political engagements." And Vusi observed that youth today "... don't care about the politics of their own country any more. I think if there are those who care, it's only a small

³⁹ Marks (2001, p. x) argues that politics is no longer based on passion, but is often based on careerism and individual gain.

percentage. Ja, those who really want to know about what's happening in our country, it's small."⁴⁰

Indicative of youth's general lack of interest in political issues, was their lack of knowledge and interest in the "Thabo Mbeki HIV / AIDS controversy." At the time of my interviews there was much publicity about statements by President Mbeki about HIV and AIDS⁴¹. Although I anticipated that this controversy would be infused with the youths' narratives, contrary to my expectations, this was not a topic that interested youth, indeed most youth knew very little about the controversy, despite its massive publicity in the media.

Nkululeko and Vusi linked the decline in political consciousness to a dwindling in social responsibility⁴². Nkululeko, referring to the period of 1986, claimed that:

I remember we had an anti-crime campaign. In the anti-crime campaign we were also taking youth out the shebeens [drinking taverns]. So if you were young and you were in a shebeen, we were taking you out because you are not supposed to be there. But for now I think it's not like that.

Vusi's insights amplified the role youth played not only in the anti-apartheid struggle but also in the community:

We did have our COSAS [Congress of South African Students] in the previous government and the ANC Youth League; we were together. So we did fight, and we fought that fight because we did have many groups who [were] hi-jacking, raping, harassing people, we did destroy those groups. I was one of those people [involved in destroying criminal groups]. The youth, those of today, are not anymore like that [involved in social problems of the community].

⁴⁰ An indication of the decrease in political consciousness can be attested to by the fact that COSAS is at its weakest since its formation in 1979 with a lack of commitment at all levels as well as a lack of culture of political discussions and debate (Mabe, 2001, p. 11).

⁴¹ Mbeki's views on HIV / AIDS frequently shift. He has disputed the Western orthodox view of HIV/AIDS, the relationship of HIV to AIDS, the existence of the virus and the cause of the virus.

⁴² The depoliticisation of youth and decline in social responsibility has implications for AIDS awareness and it is less likely that apolitical youth would take up the struggle against AIDS. Certainly not all youth are disinterested in HIV; indeed there is a cadre of dedicated youth who are carrying the HIV / AIDS awareness message across South Africa with dedication, vigour and commitment.

According to older youth, one of the implications of the decline in political and social responsibility is that, as well as contributing to a milieu of crime, all sense of a code of conduct about sexual relationships vanished. Tsepo argued that although multiple partners were not uncommon during the struggle days, relationships between men and women were at least subject to an unofficial code of conduct unlike now:

We did have more than one boyfriend; girlfriends and boyfriends by then, you see. But now the problem mostly is, with us who were involved in the whole process of struggle, there was some kind of code of conduct, some terms of the way you should conduct yourself as a leader, as an activist in the community. Unlike now, we did carry more of responsibility than the youth today.

Although the “code of conduct” was not documented, according to Nkululeko it was based on the idea that:

One, is that you need to treat girls with dignity. Two, you don't have to use your position as a community activist, to manipulate sexual relationship with girls. ...it [the code of conduct] was not written out. We had discussions, you see, “Imagine if that is your sister in the same situation.” We just had full discussions around these issues and we, we managed to accept it. You know, this is an acceptable way of conducting ourselves, so there was nothing [written]. In Alex there was a period around eighty six when you could go from the first to twenty two [avenues] being a lady, around one o'clock AM without anything [happening to you]. There was time whereby everybody was, we respected everybody. So there was a time really- there was no crime. Not a single crime, you see. No rape, no abuse, no murder. So those were when people reached a certain stage of consciousness; people started to respect each other but that, that is not there today.

As Tsepo explained, the sexual code of conduct was destroyed along with the “social fibre” of Alex, when the police arrested or killed activist youth leaders in Alex during the repressive states of emergency. Tsepo links this period of lawlessness to a new phase in Alex where youth began to see criminals rather than political leaders as role models, a trend still common today as discussed in section 2.1. of this chapter:

By that period [mid 80s] it was very difficult for the police to operate in Alex. The community of Alex by themselves took governance⁴³ into their hands. So much that there were street committees, law committees and other related institutions of governance. So it was difficult for them [police] to operate in Alex so the only way to operate there was to remove [arrest or kill] the leadership around Alex, then it brought you some kind of disorder ... , generated a conflict and that social fibre has been destroyed by the police. Then, what happened, the

⁴³ He is referring to the self-defense units that developed as a response to the fact that police often colluded with gangs as a strategy to undermine those youth who were politically organized and self-defense units were thus established to protect residents from gangsters and criminals.

criminal things came back. So the only people who were role models, who were celebrities, became criminals. So the whole focus now from the youth started to aspire to the criminals You see with criminals in the township mostly, they are the people who get thirty-six years old driving an MS car. So that, that's where you can get a sexual relationship of a young girl with an old man⁴⁴.

As Everatt (2000, p. 6) cautions, we should not idealise all youth who were involved in the struggle⁴⁵, and similarly, we should not take older youth's portrayal of a sexual code of conduct at face value. Indeed, although there is a dearth of research into youth sexuality during this period, the available literature suggests that older youth romanticize the "struggle" days and the conduct and sexual ethics of the young lions of that period. For example, although from the 1950s up until the mid 1970s, school leaders were less physically aggressive and more respectful of women (Delius and Glaser, 2001, p. 13; Mokwena, 1992, p. 35; Seekings, 1993, p. 25), in the 1980s the distinction between gang and school culture blurred resulting in a "hybridized" culture of gangsterism and disciplined school activism. As well, the culture of the 1980s was highly masculinist, and, although comrades punished⁴⁶ gangs for rape and abduction and dealt with teachers who abused female students, many comrades themselves imposed their own forms of sexual coercion upon women (Delius and Glaser, 2001, pp. 19-20). In addition, men saw themselves as "fighters" and it was seen as a women's duty to nurture men and to offer sexual favours to comrades, and to produce more soldiers for the continuation of the struggle⁴⁷ (Seekings, 1993, p. 82-86; Delius and Glaser, 2001, p. 20). With regard to

⁴⁴ Tsepo is referring to the "sugar daddy phenomena" whereby older men, who have accumulated wealth, date much younger girls. However, today it is not only older men who have access to large amounts of money as, through crime, many young men accumulate money, mirroring the sugar daddy phenomena where relationships are based on money, but where the age gap may not be as vast as it is with traditional sugar daddies.

⁴⁵ Everatt (2000, p. 6) notes that in addition to those youth involved in the struggle for political conviction, there were those who joined as a cover for criminal activities or because of the excitement of resistance.

⁴⁶ Although in the 1980s there was an increase in gangs and in sexual coercion associated with a rejection of parental authority and values (Ramphela, 1992), during this time males would protect females from sexual assault.

⁴⁷ Fine (1992, pp. 38-47) argues that young women internalize femininity as being self-sacrificing and passive and this puts them at risk. For example, the young women in her study were conscious of how racism and the economy had affected African-American males and felt that it was their responsibility to comfort them. They viewed self-protection as "taking away" from men, with one young woman saying, "If I ask him to use a condom, he won't feel like a man" (Fine, 1992, p. 40).

women's perceived "sexual duties and responsibilities," it is important to understand how expectations of femininity shape sexuality and influence whether or not women will engage in high risk sex (Moore and Rosenthal, 1993, p. xi; Thomson and Holland, 1998, pp. 59, 65). In South Africa, although there is a growing body of research around masculinity, and what has been termed the crisis in masculinity (Morrell, 2001), there is limited research into femininity in South Africa. In my study I was more easily able to identify hegemonic masculinities in the township and future research into femininity is required in the South African township context.

5. THE EROSION OF KEY INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH SEXUAL SOCIALISATION

In this section I argue that traditional institutions associated with sexual socialization have declined in Alex, leaving youth with no clear institutionalised norms and guidelines in relation to sexual behaviour. The decline of traditional institutions can be traced to as far back as at least the beginning of the 1930s and 40s (Delius and Glaser, 2001, p. 6-11) and is linked to, amongst other factors, industrialisation, migrant labour, the influence of Christianity, apartheid and globalization. Of significance in this study is the erosion of institutions associated with sexual socialisation and sexual practices. Three illustrative examples are

- initiation; [the process a young boy undergoes in order to "become" a man]⁴⁸;
- lobola; [payment that is made by the husband's family to the wife's family prior to marriage]⁴⁹; and
- intlaola [damage pay].

⁴⁸ In many cultures, particularly Xhosa culture, a man will not be taken seriously unless he has attended initiation school where he will be circumcised and initiated into the rites of manhood. What happens at these schools is meant to be kept secret and if discussed with anyone who has not graduated can lead to excommunication from manhood (Anonymous, 2002). There is a mixed response from young boys as to whether the practice of initiation should be continued (wa Maahlamela, 2002, p. 13).

⁴⁹ For a discussion of lobola in Southern Africa, see Ansell (2001).

Most of the younger youth with whom I spoke had not attended initiation school, and there was no clear point at which they felt they moved from boyhood to manhood.

Moreover, Tebogo argued that:

Even though some guys go to initiation, they do not take it seriously, not what it means to be a man and the consequent responsibilities. ... They did not go there just to cut the foreskin, like now. Some I don't think that, maybe I might be misinformed, but I don't think that they are that intense in forming these young boys. Because when they come in here, they coming back and saying "I'm a man," the next thing that he does is he gets a girlfriend, the girlfriend is pregnant and he runs away from the responsibilities. He goes to another girlfriend, impregnates that girlfriend, where's the responsibility there?

Tebogo refers to men not taking responsibility for the children they have fathered, and the dialogue below with Sibongile continues this theme and also touches on lobola and intlaola. Sibongile has a one month old baby and says:

I can be lucky if he [the father of the baby] can marry me. ... We do [discuss marriage], he wants to [get married] because this is his first son ... and he doesn't want his child to grow outside without him. He wants to raise him.

However, her boyfriend has not made a commitment to her and she says that he is worried that marriage to her may be "the biggest mistake of his life." She is also very conscious that many men evade their responsibilities and leave females with the sole responsibility for the baby. Indeed, the concept "run-away groom" has been coined to refer to men who leave their girlfriends when they are pregnant⁵⁰. In relation to lobola and intlaola, Sibongile is adamant that:

... even if he doesn't pay lobola for me, but he has to pay the damage for the baby. Intlaola, the damage, because this is my first son, my first born, so he has to pay the damage... .. um... because he broke my... I'm not married and he gave me the baby, so he has to pay, he has to pay my uncles [her parents are deceased]. ... Sometimes it is R1500.00. Some, they are not charging the same. Yes, they have to meet with my family, so they can discuss that. ... Also lobola, because it's not forced to pay lobola, these guys, these days, they just give ladies some babies and they just go away. Some of them just dump them, some of them are just cheating on them. They don't get married.

⁵⁰ Pregnancy of young girls outside of marriage is very common in Alex, and in South Africa in general, and this trend can be traced back to at least the 1930s (Delius and Glaser, 2001, p. 16).

The above commentary attests to the lack of clarity that exists in relation to traditional customs and practices pertaining to relationships and sexual practices. However, it is important to differentiate between traditional institutions and traditional practices, ideas and beliefs. Indeed, as expanded on in the following section, while traditional institutions are declining, traditional ideas still exist and many youth draw on tradition to explain and justify behaviour. The above commentary also brings to light how youth do not fit neatly into categories and the concept of performativity is drawn on in chapter 10 to explain why youth, like Sibongile's boyfriend, act in ways that seem contradictory.

5.1 THE USE OF TRADITION TO JUSTIFY BEHAVIOUR

Group two's comments reveal how tradition is drawn on to validate particular behaviours, for example, the acceptability of men having multiple partners (Caldwell et al., 1989; Gruhndling, 2001, p. 27; Hoosen and Collins, 2001; Leclerc-Madlala, 2000; p. 29; Ramphele, 1992, p. 24; Skinner, 2001, p. 6; Susser and Stein, 2000; Thorpe, 2001, p. 11).

M1: Especially if you are a boy, you must have many girlfriends. Let me explain it in Tswana *Mona ke selepe wa dulisana*. I am trying to support what my friend has said "*Mona ke taka ya naba*." And of which if we try to focus much on our roots. ... there are so many people who are trying to make us aware of AIDS but we can't understand because we told ourselves that "*Mona ke selepe wa dudisana*. You see, if you are a man you have to have many girlfriends because you are just like an axe, you cut each and everything, you just go there and cut.

M2: Yea, just like an axe that is how we were brought up to be. That one is from our ancestors. A long time ago our ancestors used to have maybe 3 wives you see, eight wives, so we used to be like that.

M1: It is like you talk indirectly, not to say you must be like an axe, like it's part of our culture. Ok, let me say you have maybe 3 or 4 girlfriends, amongst those you only love one, those other three you don't love, just cut one by one and say bye-bye. You just want to sleep with them and then you are ok.

In rural settings, an axe is lent to neighbours to chop wood. Thus the saying, "*Mona ke selepe wa dulisana*," reinforces the fact that a woman must understand that her boyfriend/husband will have other girlfriends as he is like an axe that can be lent to other people.

While multiple partners for men is consistent with isithembu, the practice of a man marrying more than one wife, there are important distinctions between the ingagara's multiple partners and isithembu because isithembe is an institution with rules and regulations while the relationships of the ingagara are not governed by any codes of conduct. In many instances, traditions have mutated and the rules and regulations, which contained them, have been adapted, often to sustain patriarchal practices, so that there are different standards for women and men. Indeed, as will be discussed further, while women who have many multiple partners are degraded, tradition is often used to not only justify men's multiple partners, but to glamorize them (Selikow, Zulu, Cedras, 2002). In this regard Tebogo noted:

Traditionally, like I said, you know if a young man has got more girlfriends, he would be, he will be like a demigod in that village. I'm talking about the village life now. Those are the past, the traditional. Still those villages, you're still living in the village today, because we still are glorifying a man or a guy with lots of girlfriends.

The language of tradition and how tradition is used to justify sexual behaviour is expanded on in chapter ten, "The Semantics of Sexuality." Most of the older youth believed that the youth had "turned their back on the ancestors," with Zandile claiming that "Most of us, we Africans we do believe in our ancestors, but these youth of nowadays is hard for them to believe in ancestors." However, some youth I spoke to still believed in the ancestors or elements of the ancestors. For example Kwena wore an isiphandla. This is a bracelet made of goatskin and worn by Zulu men. It is put on after the ancestors have been thanked for sparing one from danger or evil. Indeed, Kwena believes that if he had not been protected by the ancestors he would have been killed in a gang fight that nearly took his life. Other youth attend church, but also retain some beliefs in traditional notions of ancestors and G-ds. Other examples of drawing on tradition pertain to the minority belief, that sangomas can cure AIDS and to the pervasive idea that youth have been cursed with ibadhi [bad luck] if they do not have a boyfriend or girlfriend, and the fatalistic attitude embedded in the tata ma chance discourse of risk.

5.2 WESTERNISATION

A further contributing factor to the breakdown in tradition is that since the late eighties, youth have been exposed to “white western” cultures which they had been excluded from prior to 1990. Black youth were exposed to these cultures in the 1990s when black political parties were unbanned and international boycotts of South Africa were lifted. Around this time, the South African state also ended its censorship of the media. In this regard Dali claimed:

We have become so westernized. We have forgotten our cultures. You know a lot of things we see in the movies and the TV and what-have-you. . . . They affect us in a way that you cannot believe. . . . The things that we see on TV. I mean let’s talk soapies, for instance. I can use *The Bold and The Beautiful* and *The Days of Our Lives*, for an example. They have an effect on us you know. We say “Look, hey, I wanna behave like you know so and so that I saw in whatever show that there is.”

In addition to the influence of the Western media, Dali added that the integration of schools⁵¹ beginning in the 1990s, meant that black youth were exposed to “white” South African culture:

I think that was the source [of the change in culture]. There was an influx you know, of black kids going to these white schools, the former white schools. And that culture for me derives from there. Because now, there is this mix now, of cultures. You know the diversity of cultures. People no longer think the way they used to think . . . so this is the kind of thing that we see as happening now, young people finding themselves in a new environment, very different from where they come from, where they grew up from . . . And the ideas are beginning to change; attitudes begin to change.

5.3. THE BREAKDOWN OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND YOUTH

Over the last four decades there has been a decrease in the role parents play in regulating adolescent sexual activity (Kelly and Parker, 2000, p. 2). As discussed in chapter 8, while tradition and respect are often cited by youth as reasons why parents do not speak to their children about sex, the general lack of communication between children and parents around sexual matters needs to be seen in the context of the breakdown of the family

⁵¹ Under apartheid schools were segregated and there were separate schools for children of each racial group.

under apartheid⁵² (Musi, 2002, p. 8; Ramphele, 1992; Smith, 2002b, p. 13), as pointed out by Tebogo:

.... because of the previous dispensation, the family life was sort of never there, because your parents had to leave, the previously called TBVC [Transkei, Boputhutswana, Venda and the Ciskei, the former homelands] states to come and work in the city. You're just here to work, some parents work in the mines, some domestic workers, some have good jobs but they stay in hostels, they stay in compounds; so you cannot bring a child to stay with you in a hostel. It is certainly not a good place to raise a child, so what they did is, they left us with grandparents...

The undermining of parental authority that began in the 1960s and 1970s (Delius and Glaser, 2001, p. 13; Mokwena, 1992, p. 35; Seekings, 1993, p. 25) impacts on discussions about sexuality between parents and children as Dali explained:

Life has become fast. Young people don't necessarily listen to their parents any longer, like we did in the past you know. I think the breakaway started you know during the apartheid era, seventy-six onwards.

In the context of apartheid and the breakdown of family life, since the 1960s young males played a dominant role in male youth socialisation, instead of adults playing this role (Delius and Glaser, 2001, p. 15). Further, parents were unable to offer their children material security, and under apartheid their dignity was constantly under threat, creating an environment where there was little incentive to respect parents. The mid 1970 witnessed the complete breakdown of schooling and a new era of political youth culture (Seekings, 1993, p. 25). The ascendancy of youth in politics further undermined adult authority (Mokwena, 1992, p. 35). By the mid 1980s when black urban schooling practically collapsed, teacher authority and credibility reached an all time low. Any semblance of adult leadership, which they may have provided in the 1960s and 1970s, disintegrated. As well, youth felt that the older generation had disgraced itself by its passivity towards the state. More than ever before, youth taught each other and disparaged the advice of elders (Delius and Glaser, 2001, p. 18), indeed youth had

⁵² At the South African Moral Regeneration Summit in 2002, it was agreed that it was necessary to "strengthen the moral fibre of our society, as a matter of priority, by rebuilding the family unit, as a family is the place where good values and respect are constituted" (Mkhuma, 2002, p. 13).

subverted the traditional authority adults “assume” over younger generations (Everatt, 2000, pp. 9-10)⁵³.

6. A VIOLENT AND PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY

South Africa has historically been a patriarchal society and even though the constitution has placed gender firmly on the agenda, in day-to-day practices, patriarchy is evident in Alex as Nkululeko confirmed:

... in the past we believed, and 99% of men still believe, that they are superior, that they are head of their house, they are people who supposed to lead. They can take a decision and do what they like. In life, women should be subjected to the advice of men, ideas of men and other related stuff. So that's why we don't view women as equals to us. That's why if a woman does engage in a number of relationships we see it as a taboo in an African way.

Coupled with South Africa's patriarchal culture is a culture of violence. Indeed, South Africa's history has been characterised by violence⁵⁴ against women by both strangers and within intimate relationships (Vetten, 2000, pp. 47-82)⁵⁵, exposing women to HIV so that today the epidemic is spreading most rapidly amongst young women (Bothma, 1999; Coombs, 2000; Msimang, 2000, p. 69; Parker, Dalrymple and Durden, 2000, p. 16; Watts and Garcia-Moreno, 2000)⁵⁶.

As depicted in the discussion with group 4, females argue that ghetto guys [guys from Alex], in contrast to men from suburbs, frequently use violence in their interactions with women:

F1: And the way like boys treat you, you know. With ghetto boys, they are so rough, but you know with a model C boy [guys who attend formerly white schools and who often live in the suburbs], he is kind and he is romantic, brings

⁵³ Formal schools (which traditionally play a secondary socialisation role) have historically been seriously undermined and many schools are unable to offer the type of guidance and support that youth require.

⁵⁴ In 1997 the South African Police reported that a woman is raped every 17 seconds in South Africa, and only one in 36 rapes are reported (Violence against women. A resource for journalists. 1997, Soul City. STE Publishing. Johannesburg.)

⁵⁵ One in six intimate relationships in South Africa is violent (Power, 2002).

⁵⁶ Women are anatomically and physiologically vulnerable to HIV infection, and are also vulnerable because of cultural practices such as female circumcision (Becker, 2001, p. 1; Gilbert and Walker, 2000, p. 14; Gruhndling, 2001, p. 27; Ndiaye, 2000, p. 57; Strebel, 1996; Parker, Dalrymple and Durden, 2000, p. 16).

you flowers, oh...Ghetto guys...they get into your house and are like, very abusive. ...

F2: I've dated three guys like this, and all of them like beat me up when ever I made a mistake, they never rectified it, they just beat me up. So I just decided to start dating Model C guys ... You make a mistake... They sit down and talk with you, you know...

Dineo further attested to the extent to which violence against women is "common" in Alex:

It's very common [for guys in Alex to hit their girlfriends], normally some would say "Ey, this so and so person was hit by so and so," it's "OK." It's common, it's not really anything that would shock anyone. It just, it happens...

And Kwena confirmed that:

Here in the township common assault is very, very active and flexible. Most of times girls are getting klapped. ... My girlfriend might walk with somebody else to the shop. So if I meet them, I'll get in and say "Where are you going?" They are making me a fool, they think that I'm a fool they come and walk in front of me. And then, I klap them you see. So common assault is very flexible in the township.

Innocentia's commentary below highlights why women's day to day lives are characterized by fear of violence:

... obviously I can say I can do that [abstain from sex], I'm really good on it but then, then, what happens when you walk down the street and this guy points the gun to you? I mean, you are not gonna have that power to say no or to do anything to him. And then what happens, you have that one boyfriend, he really thinks everyday should be sex. And every time you break up with him, he beats you up. When you go to the police station they don't do anything. See, it always go back. It always, it's like a circle. So, obviously you don't have boyfriend, then fine. If you don't have boyfriend but then some guys they just come to you, "Innocentia, Hi! My name is Jack." "And I'm Innocentia." "Innocentia I want you to be my girlfriend and I don't want you to say yes or no. I'm telling you, I'm not asking you." There are boys around here who can do that.

Innocentia highlights three forms of sexual violence, namely: being pressured to "have sex everyday" within a relationship; being assaulted for leaving a relationship; and violent coercion at gunpoint to have sex. She, like others, also alludes to the helplessness women feel and the lack of police support in these matters.

As Innocentia points out, rape of women by strangers (although not a focus in this study) is common in Alex. Indeed, when Thandi talks about “loction” [derived from word location] culture, she says:

... when we say loction culture, we do have rapists⁵⁷, we do have serial killers, we could say, and that’s one thing about the guys here, some of the guys, not all of them, ...they do rape when you go to the parties. They just, you call that, what’s that word? Ummm, batula, they batu you. It’s another word like batula, batuing, when they take you with force and after that they rape you.

Youth offer a number of “reasons” why men beat girls, and group 4 listed a range of reasons where it would be likely that a man would beat a female:

M1: They [girls] mixing with guys.

F1: When you’re stubborn.

F2: When you have two guys, another thing is when he says “you a liar,” and if you don’t listen to him he says “Don’t do this, and if I catch you doing it, I’ll kick you.”

F3: Like when they say “Don’t go to parties” and you feel the need to go to a party, and then you go to a party, and when you get there he find you at the party and

he starts hitting you.

F4: They also choose friends for you “Like Nonhlanhla is not good to be your friend.” And then you wear short skirts, “Why you wear short skirts?

Everybody’s

gonna look at you.” And then they beat you up.

Nokuthula’s story below is a typical one and indicates the extent of sexual coercion and sexual violence in Alex:

... a ghetto guy hits you...And when he says I want this, he wants that. If he says, I wanna be with you, like now, I wanna be with you. And I remember this other time, the ghetto guy took me at home without shoes. So, like he took me, I was not wearing shoes, I didn’t wanna go, he said like “No, let’s go to my place.” I said, “No, I don’t wanna go to your place ‘cause I’m tired. I just wanna have a nap, hey.” He said, “No way. You must go, like now.” “It’s like why?” He just said “Get in the car.” “No I don’t want to get in the car.” Like he just beat me, forced me to get in the car, so I just went in the car. I went to the place and I was crying, I was asking myself, “I mean what’s going on?” He said “No, I love you and all that stuff.” Lots of guys think that if they hit you, they love you, and a ghetto guy don’t want to see you with the other guys ‘cause they very jealous.

⁵⁷ For a discussion of the social construction of rape see Edwards (1996).

That's one thing about those guys. They're very jealous, and, they don't want any nonsense, and that's it.

A female from group 5 indicated that often women blame themselves and justify why they were beaten:

Ja, and most of the girls when they in a relationship, when their boyfriends don't beat them, they feel that they don't love them. And then if you hit the girl, then "But anyway he loves me"...so it's maybe up to the girl, the way you carry yourself, if you feel that, if a guy hits you, then it's OK, it's just showing you another way that he loves you. And then sometimes the guy beats you up and then puts the blame on you, like "No, you made me do this, I don't want to do it, I love you, you know, I'm so sorry, it will never happen again," and then you make the same mistake, he beats you up again.

Dineo expressed similar sentiments:

Instead of seeing guys as wrong, the girls blame themselves, "No, he hit me because I stayed out all night," or "He hit me because I went to a party with some other girlfriends." It's like no wonder we can't do anything about it because we blame ourselves, basically; "Because I did this or that." That's the problem.

Abuse of women is pervasive in Alex and in some studies it has been suggested that the extent to which young girls experience coerced sexual relationships may lead them to be socialized to expect violence and coerced sex as a "normal" part of their relationship (Phillips, 2000, p. 21; Watts and Garcia-Moreno, 2000, p. 6).

As evident in Vusi's comments, some males believe that women "like" to be beaten:

And there are girls who like to be beaten. If you don't beat her she believes that you don't like her, you don't love her. ... I used to beat women bad, so there was a girlfriend that heard that I like to beat women then she told other girls that "I like this gentleman." Then when I ask them why this girl said she loves me. They said "No, because you can beat the women."

Group 4 indicated that when men have spent money on a woman they often believe that this entitles them to beat her:

M1: you [she] tend to be in abusive relationships because of you being too materialistic. ... When she starts flitting around [misbehaving], I can kick her anytime, 'cause I think, "Hey; I'm spending this much for this lady."

M2: Ja. That's what I do [beat a girl if he has spent money on her].

M3: No, not me.

M4: Ja, that what most of the guys do, we can beat her.

Sexual acts of violence against women are often explained by the myth that male “lust” is intrinsic and uncontrollable so that blame for violent behaviour is deflected from men (Kaufman, 1998, p. 4; Vance, 1984, p. 3).

It is not easy for women to leave violent relationships, and, as attested to by group 2, women who leave such relationships often risk their lives by doing so:

F1: These girls, when they tell him they want to leave him, he takes a gun and tells her “I’ll kill you if you tell me that.” My friend, he almost killed her because she wanted to leave. No, then she had to stay and today, I do not know.”
F2: If you tell him this is the end of our relationship, they make sure they hurt you. ‘Cos I told this guy and he slapped me

Youth’s testimonies provide evidence for the fact that Alex is a violent social milieu particularly for women, and the lived experience of women is defined by, inter-alia, a fear of sexual violence. Feminists have challenged conventional definitions of violence and definitions upheld by the law and have argued that coercion (such as pressure to have sex) and threats of violence should also be considered abusive. In addition to the overt violence described above, there are multiple forms of covert violence in Alex (Selikow, Zulu and Cedras, 2003).

Evidence from my data suggests that violence is part of the construction of the hegemonic masculinity, and this is corroborated by much research in the South African context⁵⁸ (Ashforth, 1999; Baylies and Bujra, 1995; Becker, 2001; Bujra, 2000; Hoosen and Collins, 2001; Mabena, 1996; Morrell, 2001). Masculinities are not inherent but are constructed in response to historically specific conditions (Kimmel, 2001, pp. 339-340) and are actively produced, using the available resources and strategies (Connell, 2000, p. 12). In South Africa, the increase of violence against women in the 1990s has largely been attributable to what has been called the crisis in masculinity (Morrell, 2001) which has resulted from, amongst other factors

⁵⁸ Violence as part of the construction of male sexuality is not unique to South Africa (Kaufman, 1998, p. 4).

- the undermining of men's power due to racism (Becker, 2001, p. 12; Mokwena, 1992, pp. 43-44); the denial of traditional routes to manhood (Insights, 2000);
- the high levels of unemployment amongst youth, as noted in section 3 of this chapter, which are experienced as personal failures decreasing the self-esteem of males (Becker, 2001, p. 12; Mokwena, 1992, pp. 43-44.) Moreover, being seen as a "stud," which implies virility and the exertion of physical power, is seen as one way to achieve status, in the context of restricted economic and social opportunities (Richardson, 1997, p. 167).
- the lack of something to replace the role young males played in the political arena (Mokwena 1992, p. 39), as discussed in section 4 of this chapter; and
- as illustrated in section 2.1. of this chapter, the lack of positive role models in the townships.

In light of the above, men have developed a violent kind of masculinity where affirmation and status is sought via displays of physical strength, violence and daring and where status is awarded to men for exaggerated displays of manhood (Delius and Glaser, 2001, p. 15). In this context, "Women, as less powerful persons, become the victims of displaced aggression and a symbolic reassertion of masculinity and control" (Mokwena, 1992, p. 44).

The impact of gender on the health of men is being increasingly recognised (Wilton, 1997, p. 7). The type of masculinity that has developed not only puts women at risk for contracting HIV, but, as it will be discussed further, men are also subjected to covert forms of violence which put them at risk for contracting HIV/ AIDS, one example being how masculinity is conceptualized as being linked to having multiple partners (Rao Gupta, 2000, p. 5; Selikow, Zulu and Cedras, 2002; Tallis, 2000, p. 59)⁵⁹. Violence against women in Alex is so pervasive that, as I discuss in the following chapter in

⁵⁹ Men can also be put at risk because masculine norms expect them to be self-reliant and knowledgeable about sex hence they may be afraid to admit they lack knowledge about sex or protection.

section 3.4., many women enter into sexual relationships with men as a way of buying protection against other men.

Radical feminist analysis maintains that violence is both a reflection of unequal power relationships in society, and it contributes to maintaining unequal power relationships (Maynard and Winn, 1997, pp. 175-177). Violence against women is one way that Alex men gain power over women, and violence against women detracts from women's agency, seriously constraining their choices. The issue of physical violence and agency is pursued further in chapter nine where I argue that violence against women undermines women's ability to make choices about their sexual practices and, as such, contributes to high risk sexual practices as discussed in chapter 8. While not denying or lessening the types of physical coercion women are subjected to, it is important to acknowledge that women are not always passive victims, and increasing attention is being paid to women's agency (Baylies and Bujra, 1995, p. 194; Flax, 1990, p. 181; Heise, 1995, pp. 124-125; MacLeod and Saraga, 1998).

7. A CULTURE OF MATERIALISM AND CONSUMERISM

Everatt (2000, pp. 3, 9, 29) argues that there has been a radical transformation of youth from fearless young lions fighting for liberation, to consumers driven by the desire to own designer labels. Indeed, in youth culture throughout South Africa there is an increased emphasis on material belongings, dress code, and luxury cars (Delius and Glaser, 2001; Mabe, 2001; Masiomabuka, 1999; Mkhabela, 2002, p. 16; Mokwena, 1992) and Nkululeko alleges that the new generation of youth:

Is more materialistic than everything. Yah, with all the fashions that come in, with all the technology that is happening. We want to own beautiful cell phones, fancy cars, and what-have-you. With us [the older youth] it was not like that in the past.

Indeed, as discussed in the following chapter, the hegemonic masculinity is characterized by expensive clothes, fancy cars and other material goods, and, as evidenced by group two's comments, these make men desirable:

M1: Even if maybe I can also sleep with 3 girls one day because I'm rich. It's obvious that if I get to any location [township] or anywhere with a fancy car I'll get ladies if I find ladies walking.

M2: They only love money, they always want you to buy them clothes, food, you see all these stuff.

M3: They [girls] are looking for how you wear [what clothes you wear], they look at the shoe style, where do you live. It's like if I can say I'm living in Lombardy [a previously white suburb] every time I'm in Alexandra obviously I'll get so many girls.

Tebogo confirmed the significance of material belongings and the relationship of “wealth” to “love:”

You know why you are respected? It's money!.... So you've got to get a girl and try to convince her that you love her. That's where the money part comes in to play. Now obviously if you dress well, smartly; drive a good car, a Z3W; and you've got money, your job is three quarters done. Sometimes they might just fall into you, because they don't like you but they like your lifestyle, so they would automatically fall in love with you. So, you are at an advantageous stage if you have got all these things.

In Alex the consumerist culture and emphasis on material belongings takes place within a context of poverty, and, as Sibongile said, “To buy these things [material rewards for girls], some of them are hijacking, some of them are robbing banks, some of them are doing the armed robbers, some of them are doing housebreaking.” Indeed, as young women are less likely to be involved in crime, they often become dependent on men for material rewards.

The 1990s witnessed not only the growth of a culture and materialism but also an intensification of the commodification of sex (Delius and Glaser, 2001, p. 19; Hunter, 2002; Mabe, 2001, p. 11; Masiomabuka, 1999), and, as I shall elaborate on in the following chapter, the commodification of sex is closely linked to the culture of consumerism.

8. TATA MA CHANCE: A CULTURE OF RISK TAKING.

Lerato describes Alex youth as people who “Don't care when; they don't care what will happen to them” In the sections below I elaborate on this “don't care” attitude linking it to a risk taking culture and drawing out the implications for high risk sex.

Universally, youth are prone to risk taking (Wilton, 1997, p. 81) and sexual experimentation, both factors which increase vulnerability to HIV infection. Youth risk taking is partly attributable to their belief that they are invulnerable to dangers that other individuals are subject to (Moore, Rosenthal and Mitchell, 1996, p. 36-37). Dineo says “In Alex, you don’t really care about whatever [anything],” and, in addition to universal risk taking, Alex offers its own peculiarities, which compound and intensify a sexual risk taking culture. I have grouped these peculiarities together and have coined the concept “tata ma chance” to refer to the general culture of risk taking. Tata ma chance literally translated means “take a chance” and “Tata ma chance – tata ma million” is the ubiquitous slogan used to advertise the lottery in South Africa. In essence “tata ma chance” refers to a particular attitude to danger and death and manifests itself in doing crime and engaging in high risk sexual practices, the latter being my focus. As Innocentia commented, “They [youth] just, okay, as lotto says ‘tata ma chance,’ and then they just do that.”

Zandile captures the tata ma chance logic in the following way:

You see when they say tata ma chance, whatever you are doing you can do, it’s like taking a risk you don’t mind what is an income [outcome] at the end of the day. They call them the ingagaras because they take chances; they don’t care about their life. Do and Die! Tata ma chance! Anything they do they don’t care. They call them Amagangara [a combination of amagents and ingagara], these strong men you know, heroes. He says “no I don’t care.” They are the do and dies, “Why should I use a condom? I don’t care even if I die.”

To understand why youth are prepared to tata ma chance and how this “lotto logic” works, it is necessary to understand four phenomena, which I have separated for analytical purposes, but which are intrinsically linked

- sex as a symbolic and material resource;
- notions of fate;
- day to day “real” township dangers: past and present; and
- living in the present.

8.1. SEX AS A SYMBOLIC AND MATERIAL RESOURCE

Sex has become both a symbolic and material resource. This will be discussed at length in the following chapters. At this point, however, it needs to be noted that for males sex is a symbolic resource, as male identity is tied up with how many partners a man has. In the context of poverty and consumerism, where women have little access to resources, often their only resource is sex, and hence it has become a material resource, which can be traded for favours or money. For these, and other reasons, as explicated further, both men and women take their chance by having multiple sexual partners and not using condoms as the “pay off” is high.

8.2. NOTIONS OF FATE

Many youth have a fatalistic attitude to life, which feeds into the take it or leave it logic. Fate refers to the idea that humans have no control over their destiny regardless of their actions. The fatalistic attitude of youth can be partly understood as linked to tradition, as well as linked to myths and misunderstandings about HIV / AIDS.

8.2.1. Notions Of Fate And Tradition

Although, as discussed above in section 5, traditional institutions are declining, many youth still have beliefs that are informed by tradition and fate, as espoused by males in group one:

M1: We all gonna die, whether there is AIDS or not.

M2: You know we blacks we believe that when it is your time to die you will die.

M3: Him as a black not us

M2: AIDS or no AIDS you can't run away from death. When it is time to die you die; you can't run away.

M4: You can't challenge death

My-Nigger's commentary reinforces youths' beliefs that one's time to die is pre-determined and it is therefore necessary to make use of opportunities for sexual pleasures:

If I do not make use of this opportunity [to have sex], which I had, if tomorrow I die, I do not know ... You will not know the day for you to go up. You must fuck when the time is there. ... It is not you who decides when it is your time [to die.]

It also follows that, as when ones' time to die is pre-decided, it is not necessary to protect against the possibility of AIDS. Moreover, some youth have a fatalistic view of AIDS and view it as a punishment from G-d (Everatt and Jennings, p. 6), in this regard Voyakazi said:

Like when she [her close friend] told me she was HIV positive I was like thinking, I thought it was a punishment from God; "Why is it that my friend got affected from such a disease? Why was G-d angry with her?"

Other fatalistic beliefs, as discussed in chapter seven, include the idea that sangomas can cure AIDS and that people who do not have sexual partners have been cursed by the spirits or ancestors with "ibadhi" [bad luck]. Fatalistic attitudes probably emanate from, inter-alia, different religious and traditional teachings that advocate that everyone's life is controlled and decided by some powerful force "out there" (i.e. G-d / G-ds or Ancestors), and youth have interpreted this in such a way that they feel they have no control over their lives (Selikow, Zulu and Cedras, 2002).

8.2.2. Myths And Misunderstandings About Sex And About HIV / AIDS

A further fatalistic attitude that has developed amongst youth is linked to a sense of not having any control over whether or not one will get infected by HIV, an attitude not unique to South African youth (Moore, Rosenthal and Mitchell, 1996, p. 86). As will be elaborated on in chapter eight, youth have a contradictory consciousness about HIV / AIDS. While they have some sense of how they can protect themselves against HIV infection, this is infused with misunderstandings and myths about how HIV / AIDS can be contracted, for example, the belief that HIV can be contracted by condoms and that HIV can be passed on by casual contact. These myths and misunderstandings have led to a feeling of not having control over whether or not you will be infected, and a sense that regardless of what you do or don't do, you could get infected anyway. In this regard, Dali motivates that youth have developed a blasé "don't care" and "do as we please" attitude:

The culture that you see today in our young people is that of "I don't care" attitude. ... By the time this cure is going to be found, many of our people are going to be dead. And people who live, actually even went to the extent of giving up and say "Fuck," you know. ... that's the attitude you know. I'd rather be killed by what brought me in this world than be killed by someone else you know. ...

Yes, you've seen people die of AIDS and you say I've seen so and so. I know so and so who have died of AIDS but I just don't give a damn. I won't be the first one anyway. You know that kind of attitude, I'm not the first one so what the heck.

8.3. TATA MA CHANCE AND DAY-TO-DAY DANGERS: PAST AND PRESENT

Many youth are also prepared to tata ma chance as they believe that they may not live to see the future and therefore it does not make much sense to be concerned about trying to protect themselves from an invisible disease. This attitude emanated from the days of apartheid and persists today because of the violence and crime characteristic of Alex.

8.3.1. Apartheid

In the face of immediate risks under apartheid, the threat of HIV / AIDS, a disease that may affect one in the future, diminished (Grundhling, 2001, p. 28). In addition to the violence imposed by the apartheid regime, as Zandile explained, for young activists under apartheid the potential for imminent death was a daily reality⁶⁰, and, as a soldier, fearing death was taboo:

In saying, like Amadelakufa [people who do not fear death], people who do not care who are there to die, you see when you take a soldier to the army chances are very slim whether she or he can come back. Do and die then thus they say Amadelakufa.

8.3.2. Day-To-Day Dangers

Today, the sense of impending death, which initially emerged from apartheid realities, still exists and the threat of HIV / AIDS is often outweighed by the threat of more tangible and immediate dangers common in day to day township life, such as violence (Campbell et al., 1998, p. 53; Marais, 2000, p. 51; Strebel; 1996). Not only do youth feel helpless in the face of very real township dangers, but many youth feel that the future is bleak, as discussed in section 3 of this chapter, and, as such, youth may not give much

⁶⁰ Marks (2001, p. 49) observes that being in political youth organisations during the eighties meant a precarious existence, however as youth believed that mass political organisations would fundamentally change their lives, they felt the risks were worth taking. Thus there is a historical culture of risk taking amongst youth, but the risks youth take today are of a different nature to those taken by the young lions.

thought to the future, nor a disease that may only affect them in the future, hence they tend to live for the present, an attitude which feeds into the *tata ma chance* logic.

8.3.3. Living In The Present As There May Not Be A Future

The fatalistic attitude of Alex youth coupled with the tangible day-to-day dangers of living in Alex has contributed to the development of a feeling that you could die any day so therefore you might as well “live for the now,” and living for now is closely relating to taking chances. Further, as discussed in section 3, youth have not experienced the post-apartheid changes they had hoped for, primarily in relation to improved socio-economic conditions and access to employment and education, and, as such, youth feel that they do not have much to look forward to, further contributing to a culture of living for the present (Mokwena, 1992, p. 48). Group two expounded on this:

M1: Some people think for the present moment, they don't want to think about the future. They don't think things like that.

M2: We don't think for the future, we just think for the present moment.

M3: We worry about it, maybe we can be someone famous. Be something, be a celebrity.

M4: We don't have a future because we are doing many things which may find ourselves dead in hospital or in jail, so we don't know where we are going with our future.

In a context where access to education and the job market is restricted, it is difficult to make plans for and perceive of an optimistic future, and it is more likely that youth live in the present, as indicated by Kwena:

Tata ma-chance is like, “I'm taking chances. I might get AIDS I might not get it.” ... You might say “Hayi [no] today I'm taking chances I'll see tomorrow. Man, this girl is nice and what, what, what [etc, etc.]” And find out that this is the girl that will be giving you AIDS in your life. ... , in fact it's all about plans you see. Some other people they don't have plans. The reason I'm saying this, I mean if you have a clear future plan, you'll obvious don't take chances. You'll do things the way they are supposed to be done. ... 90% of us in the township we don't have future plan. More especially others are, well are still struggling with the unemployment issue. So they end up doing funny things. Going around taking some other people's cars and watches and stuff like that. So I mean those kinds of people I can't as to say that they have plans in life. According to me they don't have any plans, then they *tata ma chance*.

8.3.4. Living In The Present And Immediate Gratification

Living for the present encourages an instant gratification sensibility, which is fuelled by the consumerist and materialist culture which is rampant amongst youth. Nkululeko linked the “tata ma chance logic” to materialism, arguing that youth don’t care about the future as long as they can “make the most” of being alive by having the best material goods, and, as discussed further, this often leads to transactional sex.

So the youth today is different, different dimension all together. It’s more materialistic than anything, they don’t care. ... They tell you they say most of them wherever you go especially those who you find in the thick of things, will always say “look we only live once. So make the most of it you know.”

Moreover, as Tsepo explained, “it’s about living for today” rather than focusing on the future, and many girls would rather have relationships with ingagaras who have immediate and constant access to cash through their criminal activities, than date a man who only gets paid at the end of every month:

I think most of those girls they don’t look at the future. They want to fulfil their needs now. As I’m saying they cannot wait until you earn it once in a month, on the thirty-first. Then from the thirty-first, the next thirty-first they don’t benefit anything. So it’s a wasted time for them. ... What is important is that their material demands are met. As I have said, she must carry a very sexy cell phone; she must wear expensive jewellery; expensive clothes; you must be able to borrow her your car- she must drive around; the next morning when you come up, you give her two thousand. Eish, eish, that’s the life. It’s about living for today.

8.3.5. Living In The Present And Masculine Rhetoric

For youth trapped in a cycle of poverty, with limited options for the future, male virility may be valorised and increased sexual activity may be a way of achieving immediate pleasure in the prospect of a bleak future (Mokwena, 1992, 44). As well, key to the Alex masculinity is multiple sexual partners, so that while both males and females tend to live in the present, an extreme “living in the present” sensibility for males, linked to masculine rhetoric has developed. Indeed, some males feel that if you do not live to the full, then you may as well be dead, and thus they espouse the masculine rhetoric that you never know when you will die, so enjoy life (Thorpe, 2001, p. 11). This is a similar type of reasoning to the popular township slogan, “live fast die young have a good looking

corpse” (Mabena, 1996). In this regard Kideo explained, many males believe that if you live in fear and do not enjoy life, you may as well be dead:

Most of the boys here in Alexandra, they say that "When I die I will die once, I won't wake up again. I won't die and wake up and die and wake up. When I die I'll die forever."

Vusi echoed the sentiments of “enjoying life” while one is still young and / still alive:

I don't know how to explain it but I would say tata ma-chance it's, lets say you live for today, you are not sure about tomorrow. So you better enjoy while you are alive because you are not sure what's gonna happen tomorrow, yah. Life is not fair, you can even, there are people that are living honestly but then they die with accidents, or that people get sick and die.

Kelly (2000, pp. 5-23) argues that in areas where the perception of personal risk has not translated into preventive responses, youth worry more about HIV infection and they make greater efforts to dispel the perception of risk, for example by developing attitudes of bravado as expressed by Jijobest's outlook that:

We do discuss things like what if one could have one girlfriend but, at our stage, we are still young, we still have to enjoy life, that is our belief, that is why we do not take it [condoms and monogamy] that serious but we do encourage each other to use condoms.

Thus high risk sexual behaviour is also explained by the idea that one needs to enjoy life while one can, and to do so, youth are prepared to tata ma chance.

9. CONCLUSION

In the above discussion I described the context of Alex and argued that living conditions in Alex are far from ideal and overcrowding, unemployment and crime are rife. This has lead most professionals to leave Alex and many Alex youth view criminals as role models as criminals are wealthy and have a glamorous lifestyle. Indeed, in the culture of materialism and consumerism that has developed, wealth is important to youth and crime is one way that youth can accumulate money quickly. Crime has also become a popular option for youth as despite the expectations of youth, there has not been material deliverance post-apartheid. For women, who have even less access to resources than men, sex, for both subsistence and for conspicuous consumption has become common in the township.

I argue that after the high expectations of the 1994 election, many youth have been left disappointed and disillusioned with what they had believed would be a better life under the ANC government. I also argue that youth are no longer involved in the political struggle and with nothing to replace the energy that had been channelled into political activity; few recreational facilities in townships and limited opportunities for further education and training, youth invest much time being “young lovers,” with sex and sexuality being predominant concerns of youth. Indeed, the above factors, coupled with the decline in institutions that traditionally paved the way to manhood, contributed to the hegemonic masculinity where men are rewarded for being sexually aggressive and having many sexual partners. Moreover, in a context where there are few opportunities to achieve status via education and careers, sexual prowess has become a central means of achieving status. Given the deprived milieu that youth inhabit as well as their pessimism towards the future, youth have developed an extreme risk taking culture, which I term *tata ma chance*. The *tata ma chance* culture is able to function, as the immediate rewards of sex, both symbolic and material, far outweigh the perceived risk of an invisible virus that may affect youth in the future. In the next chapter I introduce the “young lovers,” or “main players,” in Alex and focus on their sexual practices.

CHAPTER SIX

THE MAIN PLAYAS: INGAGARAS, ISITHIPAS, REGTES, AND CHERRIES⁶¹

1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I emphasized the disappointment and pessimism of youth, the depoliticisation of youth, the erosion of key traditional institutions, a culture of patriarchy and violence, the materialism and consumerism of youth, and the *tata ma chance* attitude of youth. This “set the scene,” and in this chapter I introduce the main players or “plays” in Alex, “playas” being used to refer to the slang word “playas,” which is used to describe a person who has many sexual partners.

I begin the chapter by detailing the hegemonic form of masculinity in Alex which is characterised by multiple sexual partners and epitomised by the *ingagara*, and his extreme opposite the *isithipa*. I argue that although youth construct the *ingagara* and the *isithipa* as extreme opposites, in reality the boundaries between the *ingagara* and *isithipa* are blurred. I illustrate that multiple sexual partners are linked to men’s status in light of the fact that more traditional ways of attaining status have been eroded. In the next part of the chapter I explore how women are divided into “*regtes*,” women who are for permanent relationships, and “*cherries*,” women who are involved in casual relationships. I demonstrate that women engage in relationships with men primarily for material gain and that they often engage in sexual relationships with more than one man as different men provide different things. Next I focus on sexual relationships as relationships of exchange. In the following section, I focus on whether women are aware that their boyfriends have other partners and I explore how women respond when they find out that their boyfriend is not faithful to them. In the final section of the chapter I outline some of the double standards that apply to men and women with regard to relationships.

⁶¹ Selikow et al., 2002.

2. THE INGAGARAS AND THE ISITHIPAS

In Alex there are two extreme types of masculinity, the ingagara and the isithipa. The ingagara is the hegemonic masculinity in Alex while the isithipa is the subordinate masculinity. In order to outline the central characters of ingagaras and isithipas, I have used ideal types. Ideal type is derived from Max Weber and refers to a conceptualisation of a phenomenon that is represented in an abstract or pure form for analytical purposes, with the understanding that there are empirical variations and departures from these ideal types. Although ideal types do not necessarily correspond to exact empirical instances, the concept should be objectively possible and approximate concrete realities (Jary and Jary, 1991, p. 225). In this regard the constructs ingagara and isithipa need to be understood as ideal types or extreme versions of a particular type of masculinity. Indeed, the constructs are useful abstractions but they simplify masculinities, as masculinities are far more complex than these two constructs allow for, and, in reality they exist on a continuum rather than in the animated way that youth portray them.

2.1. THE INGAGARAS

In South Africa masculinity is characterised by sexually assertive behaviour and promiscuity (Becker, 2001, p. 10; Bujra, 2000, p. 13; Jewkes et al., 2003; Masiomabuka, 1999, p. 27; Ndiaye, 2000, p. 61; Pattman, 2001; Skinner, 2001, p. 5; Thorpe, 2001; Vagra, 1997). Masculinity in Alex is no exception and men who have multiple partners are valorised. The hegemonic form of masculinity is embodied in the notion of the ingagara, and, as Vusi explained, ingagara is “the highest compliment” a man can receive. Mpho elucidated that an ingagara is “somebody who is having a lot of girlfriends, who is driving a nice car, who is wearing jewellery, expensive one, who is having plus minus twelve to twenty girlfriends.” Kwena reiterated Mpho’s definition of an ingagara and stressed the significance of “many women” as being central to the ingagara identity:

If I have many girlfriends, then I see myself as ingagara. Wherever I go, no one can claim he is better than me. ... Yes. If you have six ladies, you are in control, if you are driving a BMW, always with good ladies in the car, playing good music, wearing nice clothes, then, I am Ingagara.

Jijobest emphasised the material aspect of being an ingagara claiming that “if you have material, you have money, then they will call you ingagara, if you are driving a nice car and wearing quality clothes, they will start to respect you.” Nkululeko further attested to the importance of men having multiple relationships, explaining that a specialist language had developed to refer to the “culture of multiple relationships:”

We’ve got our own language we use in the township. Isitshabana ... Yes isitshabana means you are specialising in girlfriends. You are the one who is untouchable when it come to ladies you see. It’s like you are a superstar. It gives you that status of a kaside [from the word location] superstar of some sort you see. So if you say, sometimes we when we grew up we used to contest. Like I’m the one who will win, I’ll get her first.

As having multiple partners is tied up with the construction of masculinity, men invest much energy into policing each other. One way of policing is by competitions as My-Nigger explained:

... we do have a locker, we do have names we call each other names [nicknames]. There is ten of us there, we do have months and years on our lockers [a calendar]. If today, I do have someone [a girl], when I am going outside, I tick. ... A red one [tick] means. I gave her a fix [had sex]. A black one [tick] means, she refused, she did not want or maybe she had period pains, things like those. [Those with red ticks], they are top of the log ... King of the week.

Similarly Kwena described how he and his friends compete to see who has slept with the most women:

We fell [go] with many girls but if you check the number, I lead at the end of the day. Like as to how many girls did I sleep with. How many girls did I fall in love with and how many girls love me, that I don’t know them. ... I mean, we just exaggerate. But then at the end of the day, because of we [friends] are always together you see, so they know that [if you lie]. Like if I can make an example, between, what is this month, it’s May, neh [not so]? In May so far, maybe my friends have only slept with one girl. I have slept with five so far and I have met new girls about four or five. So now, I make a number in terms of that information, you see. It’s like when we make examples, somebody will say “Ah, amagents, the girls that I slept with, they can take three taxis” you see. So I say “I want five buses, big buses.” So they know at the end of the day that, that one is the ingagara. Even if I arrive in a party they’ll say that, “Hah, ufikile [he has arrived] ingagara. The ingagara has arrived” you see.

2.2. THE ISITHIPAS

Understanding the subordinate masculinity is as important as understanding the dominant masculinity and, as will be expounded on in chapter ten, youth construct the dominant masculinity in opposition to the subordinate masculinity. In Alex, the extreme opposite of an ingagara is constructed as an isithipa. Kwena described an isithipa as:

... a person, [who] comes with a, not exactly dark black, fat black lady, maybe wearing funny shoes, what we think are funny shoes, because that is also one thing that kills us is the price. ... So, if you come across that kind of a person, a person wearing maybe a R300.00 shoes, with a R50.00 trouser with an ugly lady if I must say so, so that is not an ingagara, we call that person "isithipa." Isithipa means you are "dom" [stupid].

Mpho added that, in addition to not being fashionable, the isithipa does not have many girlfriends, is usually employed, does not do crime and wants to achieve educationally:

They [youth] look at a person, how [what] is he wearing, there are different fashions now. There are some other guys who is wearing things like cargo pants, it happens that these cargo pants were wearing by families. Maybe he is not beautiful, handsome, ... the guy who is not involved in thugs, a guy who is not involved with criminals, a guy who does not like himself on [model himself on] criminals, who does not like to hang around different girls, all those things. A guy who likes to go to school, a guy who wants a straight future, so they call him sissy.

Dali further elaborated on the term isithipa:

Isithipa just means you are still fast asleep you know. You are not in the thick of things. You are not in the vibe of what's happening. Like somebody coming from the rural areas you know. He would find life very difficult ... Then you'll be seen as a useless person.

Ingagaras look down on isithipas and not only are they excluded from conversations about sex but they are not taken seriously in regard to subjects that do not pertain to sex.

In this regard Kwena said:

... if you do not have a girlfriend the belief is that, you cannot even discuss with me anything. You cannot discuss even things that you saw in the newspaper this morning, ... you cannot even show me a good car because I'm going to ask you, how can you know of a good car when you do not even have a girlfriend. People who do not have any girlfriends or have few ugly ones, they do not take you serious.... But most of the people that read books they don't get involved in love. So that it why we are saying "uyithipa," [he is a wimp] because of at the end of

the month, at the end of the day, I mean if you stay two months without having sex you get mad and then, eish.

As such, those who do not conform to the dominant masculinity are denied participation in discourse (Foucault, 1980; Munch, 1994; Smart, 1985), and may even be deemed mad. As witnessed in the previous chapter, youth discussions have shifted from being concerned with political and social issues to individualistic and materialistic matters, with sex occupying a significant part of conversations. As much of the conversation is about sex, a prerequisite for males to be taken seriously is sexual involvement. Youth have constructed a fairly sharp differentiation between those who “read books” versus those “involved in love,” and (ironically), the former are perceived as fools who are not taken seriously by ingagaras in regard to not only sexual matters, but any issues.

2.3. THE BLURRY BOUNDARIES BETWEEN THE INGAGARA AND THE ISITHIPA

Although youth construct the ingagara and the isithipa as if they are mutually exclusive and extreme opposites, neither the ingagara nor the isithipa conform strictly to the binary ideal type invented by youth. Indeed within both these forms of masculinities there are contradictory desires and conduct (Connell, 2000; Cornwall and Lindsifarne, 1994a).

Sibongile’s boyfriend serves as a good example of how in “reality” the isithipa does not adhere strictly to “isithipa norms.” When speaking about her boyfriend Sibongile says:

Isithipa, it’s a sleeping person. Ja, someone who maybe doesn’t do funny things. Who’s always doing the right things. Maybe who’s not even drinking liquor or smoking, who’s doing the right thing. ... ahahaha, he’s [my boyfriend] he’s isithipa, he’s not drinking, he’s not smoking, he doesn’t have lots of money [although he works he does not have as much money as someone who does crime]. No, he is not like the ingagara, he can’t [doesn’t] have too many girls.

Although Sibongile stresses that her boyfriend is an isithipa who always does “the right thing,” he resists using a condom:

He told me he can’t use a condom because condom, it’s making him sick. Then I told him that “I want to do safe sex, because all this time I don’t know what you have been doing, so I think we should use a condom, at least when the baby is growing up”, and he told me that he’d rather do it outside [not ejaculate inside], so we didn’t discuss that much further. ... [A condom makes him sick because] he’s not used to it. He’s used to doing it flesh to flesh.

In addition to not respecting Sibongile's wish to use a condom, as noted in the preceding chapter, although Sibongile's boyfriend has expressed a desire to play a role in the child's development, he has not made a commitment to marry her and Sibongile fears that, like many men, he may abandon her and the baby. Sibongile's testimony is a powerful indication of how men who are labelled as isithipa do not always behave in ways assigned to the isithipa. Tebogo's narrative further attests to the blurry boundaries that exist between masculinities. Tebogo, is a self labelled isithipa and says:

I'm very different [from the ingagara], because you know, when I fall in love, I really fall in love, you know, and I take love as a, you know, it's a valuable thing, you need to value, it's the word, if I say to someone "I love you," I must really, really mean it.

Based on his "philosophy" of love, he preaches about the importance of monogamy in his church:

I said, "Here you are, you telling me, you went and slept, you've never seen that lady, ... and then you're telling me afterwards that that lady is a slut, that lady is a whore, that lady is a bitch. What are you?" Then he'd say "No, hey, I'm ingagara." I said "Ingagara nothing! Ingagara Voetsek [nonsense / go away]! You are a slut! You, as you call that lady a slut, you are equal, you've never seen her.... . Equally, you are both strangers, [but] you used her body and she used your body. So you are both sluts... ."

Despite his proclamations and his insistence that he is "very different" from the ingagara, Tebogo says:

.... I wouldn't say that I've been loyal to her [his regte]. Like I said, it's a struggle. ... Ja, Ja, Ja. I'd like to see myself as being loyal you know, but then, I wouldn't say that I haven't been having, sidekicks, so to say. Yes, definitely, you can't eat cabbage everyday, you have to have maybe a sidekick, hahahaha, sometimes you might.

He explains his "need for sidekicks" by arguing that he is not "immune to the challenges of living in the township," and he draws on tradition and psychology to rationalize how he has "fallen into the trap of having affairs":

It's in African society. Even though we might be urbanized, however, our thinking is still very much traditional, urban yet traditional. ... But you know it's very difficult, in a black community to have one girlfriend, unless you are a hermit. ... You see, in the olden days, you are only seen to be a man, even now, if you go to places like Northern Natal, you've got a polygamous marriages, in that

part of the country; if you've got one wife you are not a man. Though you are a man, you are married, but your house, your home, won't be seen as a house of a man, because you've got one wife, so, you've got to have more than one to be seen to be man enough. Now, when you where a young boy, if you've got a string of girlfriends, you're respected. ... Ja, this is a real man because he's got girls. Indoda, Indoda, Indoda [male / husband]. You know we are Amadoda, because you've got those girls. Ja, ja, it's like traditions, although we are urbanized but it is still in our streak. In our streak, in our, in our psyche, it is still in our psyche. ... Ja, like I said, no one is an angel.

The language of tradition is explored in chapter ten, "The Semantics of Sexuality." Ingagaras, like isithipas, do not adhere strictly to behaviour associated with their "label," for example, some ingagaras who have children express desires to change their current behaviour and they struggle with their identities as ingagaras and fathers. Kwena, for example, while being proud of the fact that he is an ingagara and that he has many cherries, worries that his firstborn baby died because of his multiple affairs, and has expressed a desire that when his new baby is born, he will change his behaviour, and use condoms with cherries:

Yah, I do [plan to use a condom with cherries] ..., like pregnancy changed my behaviour. I had a child before, she died. I don't know the reason, so I have a pregnant lady now so I must just try to change because I might just find out that the cause of my baby to die was because of what I was doing away from my girlfriend [having sex with cherries without using condoms], so that is why I have changed. When the baby is here, I can [will] only use condoms with cherries, with casual girls.

The above vignettes underscores that in reality the ingagara and the isithipa should be understood as ideal types existing on a continuum rather than as extreme opposites, however, the concepts ingagara and isithipa offer useful insights into aspects of youth culture (Selikow, Zulu, Cedras, 2002). As well as the ingagara and isithipa not being binary opposites, there are those men who do not fit neatly into any categories. Witness for example Dali, who does not consider himself to be an ingagara but has more than one girlfriend. In my second meeting with Dali, he took me into his confidence and said:

Well, I have to share my secret with you. [I have a regte but also] I do have a girlfriend who's quite older than me. I think she's six years older than me, with four kids you know. What I think we exercise with her is the best of love, you know. Because really, truly speaking, love is something is very, very a scarce resource amongst us black people, you know. We don't treasure love as love, like white people do. You know I sometimes I do envy white people you know. The

way they treasure love you know. And for me, the woman that I am talking about, being the other woman in my life, is very affectionate. ... She [the other woman] knows, she knows [about his regte] and we are still going out.

Dali does not call his girlfriend a cherrie, but prefers to call her “his other woman” and claims that the relationship is based on “pure love.” Although most men see their relationship with cherries as being temporary, Dali does not feel that affairs need to be brief. He says:

In my case I think when I do come across a woman, that I want to get involved with I do my best to be very honest with her and tell her “Look, this is my position” so that I don’t want to create problems and maybe raise her hopes and maybe [she would] say “I’ve found a perfect man.” I always tell them “Look, I have a woman that I’m involved with.” I tell them “Look, we can have a long lasting affair. It won’t be just brief you know.”

Although Dali displays some characteristics that are typical of ingagara behaviour; in other respects he does not fit the ingagara ideal type. In chapter ten I draw on the concept of performativity to further explore the blurry boundary between masculinities.

2.4. WOMEN AND STATUS

Central to the ingagara identity is “having many women.” The ingagara establishes relationships with women for two key reasons. First, to achieve manhood he “needs” to have many girlfriends. Second, it is perceived by youth that frequent sex with a variety of women is a biological necessity. Men made very few references to love and intimacy as reasons for wanting to be in a relationship, although men used the word “love” in passing when referring to the differentiation of their relationship between the cherrie and the regte, with men occasionally saying they “love” the regte. Dali lamented the loss of “real love,” arguing that “People have become more materialistic than being in love, in real love. ... [Love is] something that is very, very scarce. I must tell you, it’s very scarce.”

When discussing the role women played in men’s lives, males talked about the important role that women play in providing men with status and they emphasise that it is not desirable to be seen at a bash without a female, especially a “new” girl. Jijobest explained it in the following way:

... If you like to socialize, there is a problem with this thing of one girlfriend because there are festivals, bashes. If you have many girlfriends, you go to this one and if she does not agree with you [about going out], you go to another one. There are people that like entertainment, there are people that like to go to church, different people. If you have many, you say, this one, I will go with her to festivals, this one I will take to movies, this one, what, what [etc., etc.]. You see, you will choose them according to what you want to do. If you say, I am having one girlfriend and you want to go somewhere, and she says, "Sorry, I will not be able to." [If] you go alone, your friends, everyone is having a partner, they will see you and they will say, "Where is your girlfriend?" You stay at home because you do not have a girlfriend, you do not go to the festivals, that is another problem.

As such if Jijobest's regte "is busy with the baby," he declares that "it is not a problem as I will try to organize another one [female]."

Similarly, Mpho claimed that:

The life that we live in, ... It's like we have a dinner party today. Tomorrow we have an after tears [party after a funeral], you see stuff like that. So I can't bring her [the regte] to each and every event that I go to. I mean, the life that we live in, we need to change faces and stuff like that. There is a saying that you can't eat meat everyday.

The above narratives represent males' views that it is necessary and desirable to have many girlfriends, and underscores the fact that a key defining feature of being a "real man" in Alex is multiple sexual partners. This hegemonic masculinity needs to be understood within the context described in the previous chapter; i.e. a context of poverty; the lack of opportunity for work and educational opportunities; the fact that youth are no longer politically involved; a decline in traditional institutions; and a culture of consumerism and materialism. Moore and Rosenthal (1993, p. 15) maintain that for teenagers trapped in a cycle of poverty with limited options for the future, male virility may be valorised and increased sexual activity may be a way of achieving immediate pleasure, in the prospect of a bleak future and Becker (2001) posits that the need for sexual affirmation may result from the decline in work opportunities. Moreover, with the breakdown of traditional institutions, traditional practices no longer paved the route to manhood, while with the limited role youth now play in the political arena, political credentials no longer endow men with status. As well, in the materialist culture that has

developed in Alex, working for a low salary and / or being a student does not carry status as it is not equated with the immediate gain of money as Kideo explained:

Maybe you see, like, when you are wearing a jean and I'm wearing a skirt, in order to get that skirt I'm supposed to get a boyfriend who's going to give me the money and I don't want the boyfriend who's a student. I don't want a student. I want someone who's working. ... No, we girls here, even if he's at university, we are not having that mind that another day he'll work. We are having the mind that I want it now, immediately-immediately.

Hence, previous and / or conventional ways of attaining manhood have not been replaced by new ways to attain manhood. Within this context youth in Alex developed new and realistic criteria for adjudicating masculinity, with sexual prowess and multiple sexual partners being chosen as an important indicator of masculinity.

3. THE REGTES AND THE CHERRIES

Like men, women in Alex are categorized. Women are designated labels corresponding to what type of relationships and sexual interactions they are involved in. There are four types of sexual interactions. One, a conventional prostitute⁶², a (usually) one off, sexual encounter based on a financial transaction generally with a stranger. Two, a one night stand where money is not exchanged, or not explicitly exchanged, and the person may or may not be a stranger but there is no ongoing relationship and the interaction is purely sexual. Three, a cherrie also known as the makwapheni (roll-on deodorant) or second best, where there is an ongoing relationship based primarily on sex and fun, but it is a temporary relationship and the man has a serious girlfriend and may have other casual girlfriends. Usually money and / or favours are exchanged by men for sexual favours. Four, a regte. Regte is a slang Afrikaans word, and literally translated means “the right one.” She is the steady girlfriend, also known as “mosadi” in Sesotho and “umfazi” in Izulu, or “mother⁶³” or “wife to be” in English. This is the woman with whom a fairly permanent relationship is established. Although children often result from this union, it is

⁶² The term street worker is used to describe women who sell sex for a living but in keeping with youth terminology, I have used the term prostitute.

⁶³ The discourses whereby women are portrayed as mothers and caregivers feeds into the social construction of women as sexually passive (Richardson, 1996, pp. 166-167).

usually not consummated by a marriage. (Regte can also be used to refer to a long term boyfriend.)

The focus of my study is on the relationships with cherries and regtes rather than prostitutes or one-night stands as, in the interviews, these relationships emerged as the dominant sexual interactions. As indicated in the exchange below with group 5, various categories of women are associated with different sexual behaviour and norms:

M1: I think there is love making, there is sex and there is fucking.

M2: Fucking is a quickie, just a one-night stand.

M1: [Fucking is with] ... a one-night stand not a cherrie... One-night stand is just somebody who, where you just put the pipe [penetrate them], just have a quickie, and then the next day, you don't even know each other, unlike a cherrie. A cherrie, you'll go through [know for a longer duration]. You just go to meet every so often.

M3: Fucking is a one-night stand, sex is with a cherrie, and lovemaking is with a regte. That's what I believe.

M1: I mean with a cherrie, maybe for a day or two, you just make it, just do sex the way you like, just fuck, fuck, fuck! Eish, but with somebody you love [the regte] you use all your skills and things, so that she can stay with you.

Thandi explained that a cherrie is often called a makwapheni or roll-on deodorant:

Maybe you are the second girl, the regte must not know about you. You must keep your relationship a secret so that the regte must never know about it. When he talks to his friend, he is going to say, that one is just a roll-on. [She is called a roll-on because]... roll-on is something that you put under your arm, it is hidden, no one can see it. Some other people won't even know about you [the roll-on] because you will not be seen going out with that girl. He will only come when he wants to have sex with you. He just comes and pick you up and have fun and have sex with you and then brings you back. You won't be seen with him, so it means you are a roll-on.

Although "roll-on" refers to the idea that the cherrie is hidden, as shall be illustrated, often she is not "hidden." Indeed, the term "makwapheni" seems ironic when one considers that it is important for males' friends to know about their cherries given that being a "real man" is seen as dependent on how many women a man "has," and hence involves a public display of cherries, moreover, as described further, often regtes know about cherries.

The cherrie is also occasionally referred to as the Fong-kong, as group one explained:

M1: In Zulu we call them Fong-kong. It's a tsotsi taal [township language] you see. A fong-kong is not an original lady. ... It is the one that you are using and pretend to love her you see. It's like you want to keep yourself busy with something, I mean with that girlfriend [the cherrie] you always sleep with her, but there is nothing that is serious that you are sharing with her.

Males reported that while cherries are selected for their good figures, ability to have fun and for good sex, a regte is selected because of her perceived ability to love and care for a man and her perceived maturity. Although the relationship with the regte is more permanent than the relationship with the cherrie, as a male in group one explained, unlike with a one night stand or prostitute, "With the cherries there is that little bit of feeling you know, like with a prostitute is just someone you meet on the street," and another male from this group added, "It's just somebody who's like maybe second best in your relationship." Jijobest elaborated on the difference between the cherrie and the regte:

... you can have a girlfriend that you will want to have sex with, just sex if you are bored. But there is this woman that you will say, "I love this woman. I want her to become my regte." But there are those woman that you say, "That woman is big [sexy], I only want to have sex."

Kwena further differentiated between the relationship with a regte and with a cherrie:

So a cherrie is somebody else that currently, I'm not too sure whether she is with somebody now, because I'm not like involved in her day-to-day life basis. But then in terms of the regte, my closest girlfriend, I know where she is right now. I know what's currently happening with her. I know where she is and then I can check on her. we are together everyday. ... We are trying to run the same life both of us. But with the cherrie, like if I can make an example about Thabi [one of his cherries]; I have about one month not seeing her, only speaking with the phone. It's like maybe, for example, if I can say I was with Kutluane [a cherrie] yesterday neh [not so], after two weeks that I saw her. So we only met yesterday. So I mean the two weeks that she was away from me, I mean I can't get to know what was happening in her life and stuff like that, so I can't get to take care of her serious and put her in my heart. I mean at the end of the day I say that you can't trust them. The reason being, you might say that you trust a person. At the end of the day, let me say that you get that person in bed with somebody. So I mean as to cherries, currently [if] I'm at work. I don't know what is happening with them. I'm not even as to sure whether they slept at their homes all of them yesterday. I'm not, I don't know anything. Up until we talk to each other on the phone. .. can I call it a temporary relationship because of I'm definitely sure we won't last. I mean before I had Kutluane I had Lindiwe, I had Candys, I had

Phindi. So you see, it's like that kind of life. I mean it's not something serious. ... I can't have a girl [cherrie] whom I can waste time with [spend time with] for about two years. Hey, I can't. We do it for months.

If we distil Kwena's monologue it is clear that the relationship with a cherrie is temporary, usually lasting for a number of months and may be an "on" and "off" relationship, and a male may have many cherries at any given time. Further, unlike with the regte, who can be monitored at all times the male does not have day to day contact with the cherrie, Similarly, other men, like Themba, stressed that:

... and then, yah, there's sex [with cherries] but eish...; I can't get to say whether I'm definitely sure that they are mine, I mean they've got some other people. You might find out that your makwapheni they've got regtes because I don't know their lives. But, the regte, that regte of mine, I can check her daily, then I do know what she is doing.

This "checking up" is one way males exert power over their regtes, a theme pursued in chapter ten.

The following metaphors suggest that cherries are "back up girlfriends" who can replace the regte if she "misbehaves."

Group 4 - M1: It's [the idea of having a cherrie] like a bucket, you cannot depend on one bucket to carry water, any mistake can happen to that bucket.

Group 5 - M1: You need to have a spare wheel, meaning that if something goes wrong, you know that maybe your car has a puncture, you know that I have a spare wheel, I need to take off that tire, I have another tire. That is why guys do have a spare wheel ... it's like with the cherrie, so she is like the spare wheel... you know that I guarantee, if the car punctures, you know you'll just put another tire.

Cherries compete to become regtes and a participant in group 4 explained this in the following way:

Group 4 - M1: Sometimes cherries become real ones. We are always judging them, comparing them, check their qualities, their behaviour and maturity. Maybe the girlfriend acts otherwise [in a way you don't like], only to find the cherrie is behaving sharp [ok, good], so the cherrie becomes the girlfriend and the girlfriend becomes a cherrie. Cherries apply to become girlfriends.

As discussed in chapter ten, the everyday language of youth reinforces sexual practices and the market language of “apply” and “promote” further encourages the idea that women are commodities to be owned and controlled.

3.1. WHAT DO WOMEN WANT FROM MEN?

There are two main things that men want from women; one, sex from a variety of partners, and two, to be seen in the company of many women in order to achieve status. Women, on the other hand, desire material rewards, favours, emotional and affective factors, protection, and, to a lesser degree, status. In addition, there is pressure on girls to have a boyfriend and girls who do not have a boyfriend are believed to have been cursed with “ibadhi,” and are laughed at and seen as stupid.

Sexual interactions in Alex are pragmatic, and, as Dali observed, “You get involved for particular reasons these days. You don’t just get involved for the sake of getting involved” and Sibongile pointed out that “Boys and girls are the same...they’re doing the same thing [having relationships to gain something].”

Constructs such as “all-in-one,” “minister,” “ATM” (automatic teller machine) and “chicken,” attest to the fact that women focus on what men can provide for them as discussed below.

The construct of an “all in one” signifies that females have many needs which are sometimes met by one man, in which case it may not be necessary to date other men, as Dali elucidated:

If he’s an-all-in-one he provides everything, [so] what’s the point of looking for somebody who would do the other stuff that you provide? Let’s say for instance you are my girl and when I’m with you all that I offer is love, tenderness, care and all that. Fine, it’s good, you’ll love me for that. But here comes this other guy who comes out, when he comes to you he takes you out and he goes and raves you with all these type of things. And you also enjoy that because you don’t get it from him. Then here comes this other guy who’ll always give you money, who buys you gifts. And at the end of the day you end up having three; Dali is doing this for me, Thabo is doing that for me and Sam is doing this for me.

Similarly Thandi maintained:

You can [don't need to] never do that [date more than one ingagara at a time] because they [ingagaras] will provide you [with] everything you ever need, so there won't be any need to have another boyfriend. ... They give you everything and they never accept the fact that you'll have another boyfriend. I mean if he's providing for you, what do you need another boyfriend for?

Innocentia explained that different boys have different desirable qualities, which may not always be "all in one":

They [girls] always wanna date more people. Maybe I've got this boyfriend because he's got a car. And I've got this boyfriend, because he gives me money. And I've got this boyfriend because he makes me laugh. And I've got this boyfriend because he's a good kisser. And then all, they are not all in one. They're just there and there and there.

Sibongile confirmed the role men play as "providers" with each man meeting a particular need:

They [girls] have many boyfriends, because she knows that if she is still going to school, at school she has a boyfriend, that boyfriend provides her with food, during lunchtime, and at home she's got a boyfriend, maybe who's working, the boyfriend which is working and provides her with clothes, things like that. And maybe she's got another boyfriend, which provides her with transport.

Dineo claims that she is lucky as her boyfriend is an all in one so she does not need more than one man:

Ok, it's like you have say, five boyfriends, maybe four, there's the one who's going to pay your school fees, there's the one who's going to give you pocket money, there's the minister of entertainment, with whom you can go to movies, restaurants and all that. During the week there's no contact, and there's the stable one, the regte one, there'll always be a regte, and the others to follow. But then I'm lucky to have, Eric. Eric is all in one. Ok, entertainment, minister of I dunno, counselling, give you all this kind of advices and all that. I don't lack anything.

Although Dineo is adamant that, unlike her friends, she is not dating Eric for financial gain, she makes constant reference to his money, his house and where he takes her on dates; reinforcing the idea of men for money. She also refers to him as a minister. The term "minister" is a reference to ministers who serve in parliament as a male in group two explained:

“Minister,” it’s one of the names that they give us. Maybe I am having a girlfriend and that girlfriend I don’t know whether she loves me the way I love her only to find out that she has three boyfriends. The other one is called the minister of finance because he is got money. The other if he has a car he is called the minister of transport because she is using him for transport. The other one maybe for studies if she got a problem with her studies she contacts that one, eish the minister of education, he has got brains.

An additional term that has been coined by women to refer to men whom they get money from is a chicken. A male from group 2 described a chicken in the following way:

They [females] call us [males] a chicken. Ok let me put it in Zulu, *ngiyibeke nge siZulu, mafaka inkunku emanzini mawuyicutha, nabafana bababiza kanjalo*. That means *imali bayayicutha*. [You put the chicken in water, very hot, and you pluck-off the feathers, that’s what boys are called.] That means they pluck off the money from the boys. They use the chicken symbolically; you put the chicken in the hot water to remove its feathers. So when you are rich they just milk money out of you.

Thandi further detailed what a chicken is:

You just say he [the man you are sleeping with for material benefits] is “*inkukhu yami*.” You just say, “That one is my chicken.” Maybe you have your real boyfriend, then you have the other boyfriend, that is the chicken. He is called a chicken because all you want to do with him is get him to give you whatever you want. We say “*uyamcutha*” [skinning the chicken]. You just want his money or his stuff and you do not love him.

Innocentia explained that a chicken is easily manipulated:

You see those feathers of chickens? Yah, even though you don’t put the boiling water on, they just come out. So, it’s like every time you ask them for the money he just, he doesn’t ask you for what or why or I don’t have it, he just takes it out. Every time when you call him, “Come pick me up.” He’ll come running.

The chicken discourse is elaborated on in chapter ten where I look at whether linguistic constructions can be forms of agency and power, or whether they are merely creative words.

3.2. MATERIAL REWARDS

In a survey conducted by Lifelove in 2001 (Abt. Inc., 2001, p. 3) it was revealed that sex is commonly used as a commodity in exchange for money or other rewards amongst

South African teenagers. Indeed, in Africa in the context of poverty, where women do not have marketable skills⁶⁴ and where there are limited economic opportunities, sex has become an important resource (Adams and Marshall, 1998; Caldwell et al., 1989; Obbo, 1995; Gruhndling, 2001, p. 28; Hunter, 2002; Hoosen and Collins, 2001; Strebel, 1996; Webb, 1997)⁶⁵. In addition to women's economic vulnerability (Tiefenthaler and Farmer, 2000, pp. 177-199), there is a "gift giving culture" in many countries in Africa (Leclerc-Madlala, 2000, p. 29), and it is common for relationships to be mediated by material goods (Pattman, 2001; Watts and Garcia-Moreno, 2000, p. 6), encouraging the growth of sex as a commodity. For example, in Durban, many women who did not label themselves as prostitutes, received "gifts" and help from lovers rather than one off cash payments after each sexual encounter (Preston-Whyte, 2000, p. 166).

The conditions under which women exchange sex for rewards varies considerably, (Wilton, 1997, p. 78) with some women exchanging sex for conspicuous consumption, for example, clothes and fashion items, and others engaging in sexual relations to pay for basic subsistence needs, for example rent and food (Hunter, 2001, p. 2; Leclerc-Madlala, 2000, p. 29).

3.2.1. Subsistence Needs

Kwena expounded on how poverty and hunger can lead to a sexual exchange:

... you may find out that at home it's very bad, there is nothing to eat and stuff like that so she knows that I can help. If she calls me and says "Kwena I'm hungry," I'll avail lunch because I get worried if somebody is hungry. So I'll say "No I'm coming" and bring lunch there, stuff like that, so then you can sleep together.

Innocentia elaborated on how, for many females in need of money, sex is the only form of payment:

Some [girls] you'll find that they are struggling of getting money and then they had to do by all the means to get money. Maybe they've got children and they cannot support children and some of them they don't have home so when you

⁶⁴ Although many young males also lack marketable skills, they often have access to money through their involvement in crime.

⁶⁵ This trend is not unique to Africa (de Zaluondo and Maxius Bernard, 1995, p. 158; Margillo and Imahori, 1998, pp. 55-59; Mays and Cochran, 1988).

walk around maybe you tell this guy your problem and then they said, "Okay, fine you will come in and stay with me." The only payment that he would have is obviously sleeping with him.

Vusi's comments, although referring to a one off encounter rather than a relationship with a cherrie, also offer insights into the relationship between poverty and sex as a commodity:

And then there's also this scenario about poverty. You go to squatter camps, you have a lot of them in Alex. ... A lot of people there are unemployed. And yah, that's where again you know money plays a bigger role. ... Sometimes just for two beers, buying two beers, you can get a nice one, you know, without a condom, you know. Because, simply because the woman is hungry, she needs to put food on the table. Because, it does not necessarily mean that each and every shack that you see around here is owned by a man.

In contrast to those who exchange sex for basic subsistence needs, as elaborated on below, there are those who exchange sex for conspicuous consumption, however at times the boundaries are blurred as illustrated by Kideo's narrative:

For girls yes [money is important]. Especially girls, girls, we girls. Like as my mother is the only person who is working, and I'm trying my best to do things so that I can work so that I can support. My mother is having four children ... And then she's supposed to support all of us. My mother is earning R1 500.00 [about \$ 250] a month and is working so far [away]. And when I see my neighbour's friend having R150.00 [about \$ 21] jean, that costs R150.00, I would want to get that jean, and by getting that jeans you are supposed to have a boyfriend who's having a luxury car.

3.2.2. Conspicuous Consumption

In South Africa exchanging sex for conspicuous consumption is not unusual (Leclerc-Madlala (2000, p. 29). Indeed, in the current culture of consumerism and materialism women look for the triple "Cs" in men; car, cell phone and cash (Thorpe, 2000).

In the paradoxical context of poverty and consumerism, having money and / or the lack of money occupies a key part of the world of Alex youth as argued by group 3:

F1: You know money, it is very tempting.

F2: You can do anything for money.

F3: ... [if] I give you ten thousand cash. Yoo. You forget about AIDS and everything... that's it ... in two seconds.

F4: Then they sometimes can say "money makes the world go around"

F5: And even a man, a man with money makes the world go round.

Group four corroborated that it was not because of poverty but because of the desire for material benefits that many women have more than one boyfriend:

F1: It's [the importance of money] not of poverty.

F2: money makes the world go round.

F3: Not to say money is not important, it's just that we girls, we like some clothes. If maybe at home they can't afford to buy me ... we just walk outside and find a man who would do that for me, then if he can't, I will find someone else then maybe he will do that for me and then maybe I will end up with three partners.

Kideo referred to the significance of what type of car a man drove:

.... especially here in Alexandra, we love the person who have the money. If you don't have the money you are nothing. And secondly, if you don't have a luxury car, you are nothing. ... If you are having a microbus you are a good person here in Alexandra. And so by doing that, we are doing this thing- prostituting, because I would see another guy having a microbus and then maybe he will come to me at six o'clock and then he'll arrive at half-past-seven, and then at eight I know that Siphos will come with Golf and then he'll arrive at nine, maybe Thabo will come with Polo, I will go with Thabo to sleep with Thabo. You see, if you are having money here in Alexandra you become the most popular person.

Youth also explained the importance of dressing "borgwa" (derived from bourgeois) and being fashionable and stylish as Nokuthula attested:

.... some other youth people, they don't have, maybe they do have parents, but maybe the parents can't afford to buy clothes, 'cause we girls, sometimes, we want to be fashionable, we want to be stylish, so like my parents can't afford so you might as well look for a boyfriend who has money and everything. And, you come to that extent that when you say to a girl, "I want to sleep with you, I give you this and that and that." And then you will obviously say "Yes," they will say "Yes, it's no problem as long as you give me what I want," and that's it.

The perceived importance of good clothes and luxury cars needs be understood not only in the context of the consumerist culture, but also as one way women can gain status. Indeed, McRobbie (2000, p. 39) argues that girls' self-evaluation depends on the degree to which their bodies and sexuality are publicly valued and that fashion can become a resource for girls through which they can assert their independence.

Although Dineo says she is lucky she has an “all in one” she knows friends who have ministers and she describes how there is a direct relationship between sex and conspicuous consumption:

You know, because, most of us, we don't really have money, you need a R 600 jeans, you mom's not going to give you that much of money, so you get a boyfriend who's going to deal with your wardrobe specifically, because you get those guys, who say “I want you to wear this and that, you look good in this and that,” and just buy you anything, like Nike shoes, moneys not a problem to them, you know. And you find that you don't really like him, it's just that you're doing it for the money and end up sleeping with them. Just for the money, or just because he drives a BM, or just because he does that or that or that. But I, I don't have to do that.

While Dineo is in a relationship and says she doesn't have to “do that,” i.e. engage in transactional sex or have multiple partners, she is aware of the advantages of going out with a wealthy man like Eric and she contrasts him with her ex-boyfriend who did not have money:

I used to go out with a guy but then we never, not even once went out to eat. I had to use my own money to go out with him and watch movies. And then we only had to buy quarters [a cheap meal]. We [Eric and her] have a lot of fun. He spends a lot of cash. Money's not a problem to him. So we get the opportunity of going out movies...anywhere...Sandton [an exclusive shopping mall]. I love all kinds of places. He takes me to all kinds of different places...Killarney Mall, like Eastgate...like all these hyped up plom [a place you hang out] places..., like where you can chill...some upmarket places where he is happy to spend [money] with me.

Although Dineo accepts certain gifts from Eric, she will not accept anything major like a car as she realises it would tie her into the relationship:

... but then [if she accepts a car from him],he's going to tie me into a relationship. I don't want anything that can enable me not to move on in my life. If he's going to get me a car, it's going to be like she's there always for him. I'm not prepared, yet. Ja, and besides what will my mum say? [her mother does not know about her relationship].

Implicit in Dineo's speech is an understanding that if a man spends money on a female she becomes dependent on him and “owes him.” Although, Dineo does not wish to marry Eric as he is “too old,” she spends much time describing the advantages of dating Eric.

These benefits include, gifts, going out to expensive places, the car he drives, status, emotional support, and having a “good time.”

Most men are aware that women like them for money as epitomized by Kwena’s portrayal of one of his cherries Kutluane:

Kutluane, she likes money (laughing). .. She sees me sometimes, maybe once in a month or twice or thrice in a month. But what I’ve noticed with her, whenever I speak to her, she must ask for something. So, then I begin to analyse that, no, she wants something from me. Money, as to be specific, not exactly love and stuff like that. Because of, whenever I call her she has to say something that, “Oh my hair, I’m with my friends. I need to go somewhere with my friends. I don’t have money” (imitating a woman’s voice). Even if there’s a trip at school, “There is a trip at school R150, I don’t know what to do.” You know stuff like that. I know that she likes money more than me. Eish, no, I am proud.

3.3. AFFECTIVE AND EMOTIONAL FACTORS

Affective and emotional factors were also mentioned as reasons why women dated men, witness for example Innocentia:

But then you really love this guy [even if you find out he is unfaithful] and you don't want to leave him. And you just gonna do anything to keep him because, he just make you so safe when you are with him. He makes you feel like your whole world is just there. You are in this planet. You are just happy. He just makes you happy. And most of the people, it's what they want; to be happy.

A minority of women mentioned that they get emotional support from men they are in relationships with. A case in point is Dineo who feels that Eric, as an older man with more experience, offers good advice in the context of a rough community and difficult family life:

Eric...I like his intelligence and his way of doing things. He makes me feel in terms of, I look up to him in terms of advices and how to go about living in Alex. It's a very rough place and all that. So he has more experience than I do, so I get advices from him. And he's very sweet. Not really gentle but he's stubborn but not really in an extreme way, just like that...He understands me in a way, 'cause I have a very rough life at home... I don't enjoy it at all, being at home. I fight a lot with my mum and he keeps me sane, sane, you know...It's like you when you're depressed, you can always call him. He can say something positive about the situation and all of that...

Although Kwena is aware that many girls like him for money and protection he believes that some females want to be with him because of “real love”:

So some others it's for protection but some other people it's for money and some others it's real love because of, like if I can make example about Thabile and Thembisa. They love me the way I am. They don't want to know if my girlfriend is pregnant or what. They just love me and they don't want my money, so they don't want anything from me. They just call me and say “No sweetie, I remember you. It's been a long time. Come and see me.” So I go there and sometimes they come around here so, but then others it can be money, others can be protection but then some others, it's real love.

3.4. PROTECTION

Given the violent context of Alex and high levels of sexual harassment, as Dineo explained, many women rely on ingagaras for protection:

If you are Eric and you messing up with his girlfriend, obviously he's gonna get you. People warn you, never ever do this and that. Ja, that's the nice part of it because it's not anyone who's gonna, like there's this concept where guys just takes you, goes somewhere with a girl, forced sex and rape and all that, but 'cause you're Eric's girlfriend then they know to leave you alone, that's it. Wherever you're going, that's the privilege, that's the kind of advantage...I can just walk around. Eish, they know Eric, so if they know you're Eric's girlfriend, they won't do nothing.

Kwena's narrative below further underscores the importance of being protected in the township and he asserts that:

And so if they are seen with me no one will touch them...Some others [like me] for protection. ... You see, the township, okay some other people they say it's rough. I mean, girls are the people that are hurt every day, you see. ... They [males] do this, they meet people, they swear at them and stuff like that, “Eish what's up” you know. So they know that if somebody knows that that is Kwena's girlfriend, no one can play next to her [cause trouble]. So that is, I mean, people knows me more especially the guys that are problematic to the community, I mean to the cherries as to be specific. They know that, that is Kwena's girlfriend if you hurt her Kwena will come to you and hurt you.

Although Kwena proudly showed me the scars he has on his chest as the result of protecting one of his girlfriends, as it was observed in the previous chapter, he is not adverse to “klaping” women. As such men are both “perpetrators” of violence and “protectors.” This is an example of one of the many mixed messages that women receive

in a culture saturated with contradictory discourses of hetero-sexual sex, love and male aggression (Phillips, 2000, p. 17).

3.5. HAVING A GOOD TIME AND STATUS

Status and fun are high on men's agendas for relationships, and were also mentioned by some women as reasons for dating men. For example Nokuthula said:

You know like this computer whizzes, they not really into going out and having fun, they always working and they always tired, you know they work too much in their jobs and all that, they want that kind of girl who will come over for weekend, sit there and watch movies on the TV, not spending money and that's it.

Dineo also attested to the importance of having a good time as well as the status she derives from being seen in Eric's car:

.... [I go out with Eric for a] good time, I guess.... It's just to keep myself busy.Ja, ingagara, he's very financially able. I'm sure he's outstanding, when you see his car, you know automatically. If I'm with him driving the BMW or the M Coupet, then everybody wants to see, "Who's the girl on his left side?" ... Every girl in Alex would like to be in that car, you know...

3.6. SEX

While the enjoyment and need for frequent and varied sex was continuously mentioned by men as a key reason for relationships, it did not emerge as a dominant theme in discussions with women. This is perhaps because women have internalized the dominant ideology that women are not meant to enjoy sex and are meant to focus on meeting men's needs rather than their own (Fine, 1992, p. 40; Holland, Ramazanoglu and Thomson, 1996, p. 146; Thomson and Holland, 1998, p. 63). In some ways the idea that women exchange sex for material rewards negates the idea that it is possible for women to enjoy sex as it is seen as a resource to trade and not something for pleasure and intimacy.

4. PROSTITUTES OF A SPECIAL TYPE

Males are conscious that females "want something from them," as Mpho explicated, "These females are just opportunists. ... They do not have real love, they go to you because of something. ... and it is because they are tempt[ed] by money," and a male from group 2 argued that females "sell sex in a polite-mannered way." A male in group 1

maintained that "...there are many kinds of prostitutes," and that "girls in Alex are prostitutes of a special type⁶⁶." In this regard Dali commented:

They are prostitutes of a special kind. Look, she expects you to bring money home, okay. Yah if you don't, if I get paid tomorrow and I don't give her money its gonna be war. ... That means I'm not going to have sex with her because I didn't give her money. She's trading with sex.

Similarly Vusi claimed that "they are prostituting but they are making it indirectly, because if you don't have anything they won't fall in love with you," and Dineo views many women in Alex as prostitutes despite the fact that they do not use the terminology "prostitutes," but rather call the men they exchange sex with "boyfriends":

Basically, it's just that now you tell yourself that he's some kind of a boyfriend, it's not like it's a one-night stand or anything. That's where they get their bucks. Basically, it doesn't really differ, you sleep with a guy who gives you money tomorrow morning, it's like hey.

While Kwena maintains that "all girls are prostitutes," he differentiates between a conventional prostitute which is a one off interaction with no emotion and a cherrie:

I call them, all girls' prostitutes. [But] prostitutes it's just that you need to pop up money and give her straight, but girls, they are a bit of a different but they are doing the same. Because of for example, if I'm saying I'm going to a party. So I take my girl there. So when I go with my girl there I need to organize her some food, liquor and stuff like that. It's all about spending and then at the end of the day I sleep with her. Which is just the same with prostitutes because of you just give a prostitute forty rand then you go to bed. So the difference with a girl is just that you talk, I mean you get closer and you just discuss some other things but they are just the same according to me. And you might find that you even spend more in girls than in prostitutes because of, I mean, going to a party and getting R30 plate and drinking five which is cost about R90. So, in a prostitute, you just give a prostitute R50 and then you go to bed. So that is to me, and I want to be open, to me all girls are prostitute, to me.

As Kwena continued, even though with both cherries and prostitutes there is a monetary exchange for sex, there is a difference between prostitutes and cherries as:

... when you propose a cherrie, it means that there is a certain feeling so going to a prostitute and buying [sex] in the same day, it's not a problem, but then it's not somebody that you feel and think of at some other time. So that is the reason for

⁶⁶ "Prostitutes of a special type" is most likely a reference to the political slogan used to refer to South Africa prior to 1994, "colonialism of a special type."

us to propose ladies, for me in fact to propose ladies. If, if I did not have feelings for someone I mean I'll go straight to prostitutes. But then it's all about feelings and as to say, "Eish that girl is nice. If I can be seen walking around with her, I mean it will be fine." So that is why we sometimes propose...

Similarly to Preston-Whyte et al's (2000, p. 166) study in Durban, in Alex, there is a large group of women who do not identify themselves as sex workers but who receive gifts or help rather than hard cash as payment for sexual favours, and their interactions with sex partners is relatively long standing with features of a "relationship" rather than a "one off" contract for a single sexual episode. Common to both self-identified sex workers and women in Alex is the idea of "pay back" in exchange for sex. Dali explained it in the following way:

...obviously if you have sex with a particular person, you must pay back. One must pay back in one way or the other. It's either you buy her something, a gift or something, maybe shoes or maybe, give her money to go and do her hair. ... When you get a cherry first thing you have to think about, being a man, is her hair. Whatever she wants to do with her head. Well it starts from hundred rands upwards. Then, the next thing that you talk about- cell phones, buy her these new cell phones 3310, and she's happy. She feels, "Yah, I've got a man who looks after me."

The above evidence suggests that most relationships involve an exchange between men and women, with, in the main, men providing material or other benefits and women providing sex. It is also apparent that youth are conscious that many sexual relationships are about these exchanges as Mpho explained:

... our ladies are just straight forward, you see, about exactly what it is they want, they need. Sometimes the intention is quite clear that you want to be involved in a relationship with another person. What he is interested in is that, you provide them with what he wants you to. She provides you with what you want. You keep that, you maintain that relationship, but it's not a special relationship.

According to My-Nigger the bartering of sex for money or favours is straightforward and uncomplicated and merely involves the exchange of one thing for another:

... you are looking for pussy, she is looking for something which is money. You do talk, lets make a deal, you give me this and I give you that "ka wena kamina, kamina ka wena." [I give you something, you give me something]. Now, this is a simple thing.

However, unlike My-Nigger, other youth see the exchange of sex as a tacit process, with no verbal agreement being made, but rather an implicit understanding that sex can be exchanged for money or favours, as a male from group four commented, "I'm looking for sex, you looking for money, it just happens," and a female responded by claiming that "You don't discuss it but in your mind it just happens. But you don't say "You want those new Levi's, give me sex, you want R 500,"...but there is an understanding." And Dineo says, although women and men do not speak about "a deal," they both "know":

You sleep with him, [you say] "Eric, I've seen these nice boots and I, why don't we go shopping tomorrow." Then that guy wants sex, that guy is obviously going to buy you something. Then it's like, OK, that's how it's going to be for your whole relationship, you know. That's it. Or, the brother himself might say, "I like that girl's body, if I can just give her and all that, if I can just bed her, I'll give her 500 bucks and all that." You don't speak about it, but, its like, you both know.

The implications of transactional sex for high risk sex will be discussed in chapter eight where I argue that when money or favours are exchanged for sex, women have less control over the conditions of sex. Moreover, where there is a degree of intimacy in a sexual transaction, as there is with cherries, it is less likely that a condom will be used.

5. BOY MEETS GIRL: WHAT HE TELLS HER

Most males reported that when they "propose love" they tell the cherries that they already have a regte. However, interviews with females and further probing with males indicates that men are not always honest about their relationship with other women and many women are not aware that the man they are dating has another woman /women.

Tebogo says that he always cautions women about his steady relationship:

.. I just make a pact with myself. Whenever I introduce myself to a girl, or you know, to a, ja, to a female, I make sure that I talk about my girlfriend, I have to make sure [about] that. "Don't get me wrong, don't ever get me wrong, you know that I've got a steady loving relationship."

My-Nigger claims that on meeting a girl and proposing to her, he immediately advises her that he has sexual relations with many females. Moreover, he says that females "understand" his need to "fuck" many women.

My girlfriends knows that I am a player. ... Like I fuck this one, I fuck that one, I fuck this one. I am like that. Even my girl knows, I am telling her, "You are not alone with me, you are not the only one for me." ... When I am proposing to you, I will tell you that thing. "Even if you meet with me and I am walking with somebody, do not be surprised because, me, I do have somebody else." [My regte knows I have other women but] she will understand, she knows ... she knows I need to fuck many.

In my first meeting with Kwena he said that prospective cherries "know, all of them know, that I have a regte who is pregnant, who is getting a baby in June [They know because] I told them. I am very clear to tell them first [initially]." However in later meetings with Kwena, further probing suggested that Kwena was not as transparent as he initially claimed:

I don't exactly put it like that as to say, "Eyi, I have a girlfriend, pregnant what, what [etc, etc]." What I usually tell them is that, there is a mistake that happened. So, they'll get interested as to what is the mistake. So I'm telling them that my girlfriend fell pregnant so she is definitely sure that the baby is mine. So, I'm awaiting to see the baby and to make the blood test and then we'll sort things after. That is what I tell them but deep down in my heart I know that that's my girlfriend, she's pregnant, we are getting a baby next month. So I'm just trying to make some other people feel better. Because if I can just say Anny [his regte] is pregnant, my girlfriend is pregnant, so it's going to be a problem for them. It's going to be a serious problem because I'll also lose them. They'll just get angry and leave me alone and go somewhere else to get some other people. But when like, I tell them like there is a mistake that happened, this and this is happening, so Anny fell pregnant, she says the child is mine. I can't just deny that or agree at present moment, let me await the test.

Vusi, like Kwena, is also dishonest to cherries about his regte, although he claims that he is upfront about setting boundaries with cherries in relation to his involvement with his children, emphasizing that they are most important in his life, and he says that he tells cherries that there is a regte, the mother of his children:

I always express and stress my important things like the only thing who are important in my life are my children. So when time for my children comes I don't want somebody to disturb me. So Lebo [his cherrie] she does understand that. ... She knows there is a regte, it is like that, she must accept....

However, although he has no intention of leaving his regte, he tells his cherrie, Lebo, that:

You know life is a challenge. You don't know what comes to you. Maybe for me it's possible for me and Lebo tomorrow to get married. We don't know. Let's try what we are having at the moment. If you behave good I think I'll marry you. If you don't behave good for me, automatically it's over.

Evidence from female's conflicts with males in relation to their stated honesty about telling regtes about cherries. Often men tell a woman she is the regte, whereas she is not, and many women, like Nokuthula and Sibongile, discussed below, relayed that there were occasions when they entered into relationships under the impression that the man did not have a regte.

6. HOW SHE RESPONDS

As highlighted previously, often regtes know about cherries, (sometimes from the beginning of a relationship, but sometimes only finding out about them during the relationship), with some choosing to stay in the relationship and others choosing not to. Jijobest observes, that when women find out he has a regte and a baby:

Some of them will say, "No, I do not have a problem." Some of the girls know that you have a baby and a girlfriend, and they would still want to be your girlfriends. You go to a girl and propose to her and tell her that you have a girlfriend and a baby and you want to have a relationship with her. Some of them will say "No," and some they do not mind.

Similarly, Tebogo maintains that women have varied responses about having a relationship with him upon finding out about his steady relationship:

Some say, some girls say "But you know I don't mind, you know, you've got your girlfriend, I've got my boyfriend. It's o.k. so what?" Sometimes they'd say "No, you've got a girlfriend and I want a serious relationship with you." Sometimes they see you and say "You know you really disappointed me, because when I saw you I said that, 'no gosh, this is the perfect person that I want to be with' " and I tell them "Ok, sorry, unfortunately you came too late, I'm covered and that's it."

Although women respond differently to knowing that their boyfriend has many partners, I identified three predominant approaches namely; staying; staying with conditions; and leaving.

6.1. STAYING

While, as Jijobest and Tebogo reported, some women do not mind being in a relationship with a man who has many partners, other women, particularly regtes, get angry upon finding out that their man has other women, but usually men manage to rectify the situation so that their regte does not leave. Jijobest does not tell his regte that he has cherries, but if she finds out she is angry and he tells her “There is a girlfriend [a cherrie] but she [the regte] is the one that I really love, and then after that, no, she is okay.” Dali says that “Sometime she [the regte] does find out [about cherries] and gets very angry,” and that “It does affect our relationship here and there but I work on it and I put things back to normal.”

As discussed above, females believe that there are many advantages to being in a relationship with a man even when he has other women. Witness for example Dineo. Dineo, is a cherrie, and she accepts the presence of her boyfriend’s regte but she derives many benefits from doing so. Dineo is conscious of her status as the “second one” and says “I’m the makwapheni. Unfortunately, he’s got a woman with a child, ...I know she’s around, it’s up to me to accept the situation.” Although she knows she is a cherrie, she is unclear about the nature of Eric’s relationship with the regte:

I mean that I don’t think that the other woman knows about me. I don’t want to know her, although I do know her like, I’ve seen her photo. One day, like, when we went to her place, ...so that woman was not around, ... I saw her photo... and although they don’t live together, they still have contact because they have a child together, so its kind of that, because I did accept that, that woman’s part of his life, ‘cause of the child. That’s what I had to accept from the first onset, because he told me everything about that. So although they’re not on good terms, I would still regard her as being there. ... he bought her [the mother of her child] a car and a townhouse in Suninghill [a fairly exclusive area]. That’s where she stays with the child. I think it’s a way of like, “I got you a car and a house, you shut up, don’t mix up with my life.” That’s the way I see it.

Dineo accepts her status as a makwapheni although when her boyfriend can’t be with her due to commitments to his child, Dineo says, “[When] he can’t be with me because of the child and the woman...I sometimes feel neglected. I feel ignored.... He knows I don’t have any other boyfriends.” However, she receives many benefits from being Eric’s cherrie and she says “I know there’s that other woman but I don’t want to feel second

best. It's up to him to make me feel I'm the only one, so that there'll be some stability in our relationship.”

6.2. STAYING WITH CONDITIONS

Some women, like Anny, remain in a relationship even when they know their boyfriends are not loyal to them, but they make requests about sex with other women. Although Kwena did not tell Anny, his pregnant regte, that he had cherries, Anny was once confronted by one of his cherries. Kwena reported the interaction as follows:

Candys [one of his cherries] once went to the house. It was not exactly her plans [to meet Anny] but then Anny came to the house. I was not around so she found Candys in the house. And then when I came, I found Candys, she was very bitter, she was angry So, in about four for five days she came back and she went straight to Anny and she told Anny that she is the real regte, Anny is just wasting her time and stuff like that. And so she [Anny] came to me and asked me if that was happening. So I told her that, “No, that's my girlfriend. Candys is my girlfriend. There is nothing I can say. I don't know what you spoke about. But then at the end of the day Candys is my girlfriend.” Well, she [Anny] felt angry with me for about a week. But then we sorted things out. ...I said “No,” I apologized, in fact, for what I did because at the end of the day I did not tell her when we fell in love that “No, I have so much girlfriends,” I just said, “No, I'm alone.” So, she was angry with me but then we sorted out. ... Then she knows now that I have girlfriends. So, she accepts that, she knows my girlfriends. Most of them they visit her. I mean, she understands now that she is the regte.

Anny now accepts that Kwena has cherries, as she “understands” that she is the regte, but she asks Kwena to use a condom with regtes (something he says he does not always do):

That is when, it is only now that she's clear as to whether she is a regte or not. Because of, before I mean, she had many problems, she did not understand what was going on with me and her and other girlfriends. But now she understands that she's a regte. So, she's just giving me a spirit of saying whenever I sleep with them [cherries], please use a condom. That is what we speak. That is our language. ... Yah, yah, she's pleading to me that I must use a condom [with cherries].

This type of agreement, whereby a regte accepts that her lover has cherries, but knows that she is the regte and asks her boyfriend to use a condom with the cherries, is common and relates to the symbolic status of being a regte as, as discussed in chapter eight, condoms are symbolic and not using a condom is associated with serious and long term relationships.

6.3. LEAVING

Some women leave relationships upon discovering that their boyfriends are not loyal to them. As Sibongile explained, when she was 17 she was unaware that her boyfriend had another girlfriend who subsequently became pregnant during the course of Sibongile's relationship with the said man:

I didn't know at first [that he had another girlfriend], but when I ask him he was always telling me that "No, listen to me. That girl and me have been separated for a long time. Don't listen to those people." But then that, that lady was pregnant, she was carrying her child, his child. And when I ask him, he was always denying that, that he was only going to take care of his child and he had nothing to do with the mother, but at the end of the day I was the one who was foolish, I was the one who was stupid. I just walked out on him without saying any word. And my friends were always telling me that but I couldn't believe it until I saw it, until I heard that he was getting married to that girl.

Nokuthula was aware her boyfriend, Tsietsi, had a child from a previous relationship but when she discovered that he had a current girlfriend who was three months pregnant, and who had become pregnant while she was under the impression that she was the regte, she decided to end the relationship as she realised then that she was no longer the regte:

So, my ex-boyfriend, ... he has a firstborn, a small child ... I understood everything, you know, I was calm, I was o.k., cause I loved the guy very much, so now it's for a second time. It's like a second girlfriend, and she's pregnant and all that stuff, and so I dunno really what's going on, I'm trying to find out ... that maybe I was a fool or something, you know, 'cause he used to say to me "I love you, I love you so much, call me." You know he used to call me like everyday, anytime, and he used to come anytime and you'll find me at home ... and he used to bring me lunch sometimes, so I'm just asking myself I was a fool or something, I don't understand.

I pursue the question of "to stay or to leave" and the "choices" available to women in chapter ten where I argue that due to structures and power relations, often women have very little choice about whether to stay or whether to go.

7. DOUBLE STANDARDS FOR MEN AND WOMEN

The South African Love Life survey (Abt. Inc., 2001) reported that while 35% of sexually active males agreed that "Having many sexual partners means I am cool or hip," only 9% of sexually active girls agreed with this statement. These "double standards"

whereby promiscuous boys are praised but promiscuous girls are looked down on, have also been reported in the UK and USA (Edwards, 1997) and Australia (Moore and Rosenthal, 1993, pp. 11-12). Indeed, it is common for conventional heterosexual identities to be enforced through the mechanisms of sexual reputation, where young women risk being called whores or sluts for being sexually assertive, whereas young men are encouraged to be sexually assertive, and are given derogatory labels if it is perceived that they are not sexually active (Holland, Ramazanoglu, Sharpe and Thomson, 1996; Thomson and Holland, 1998, p. 64)⁶⁷. These “double standards” were also apparent in Alex and are animated by group 4’s dialogue:

F1: It’s ok for a guy to have many girlfriends, but for a girl to have many boyfriends it’s not right.

Female voices call out: They call her isifebe [bitch], skebereshe [bitch], bitch, spermdish, itiye [tea, meaning that once you have used up the tea bag you throw it away or that everyone drinks tea anytime], sechaba.

F2: Sechaba, It’s like a lowlife prostitute...

M1: [interrupting] Sechaba it’s like when you say a nation or people. She is like a people’s cherrie.

F2: Like a low life person because she belongs to everyone

F3: She’s very unpopular ‘cause they think now she’s sleeping around so they call her a makosha [prostitute].

F1: They don’t give us nice names.

M2: We give them nice names sometimes you know; chocolate, sweetie, pumpkin.

M3: It’s o.k. for a guy to have many girlfriends, but for a girl to have many boyfriends, it’s not right.

The derogatory names given to girls who have multiple sexual partners, stands in direct contrast to the complimentary names allocated to males for the same behaviour. Indeed, while men who sleep with many females are complimented, called King of the Week and given ingagara status, if a girl is perceived to be “sleeping around” she is called “makosha” [prostitute], as Lerato indicated:

She’s very unpopular ‘cause they think now she’s sleeping around so they call her a makosha. Then those boys can also warn their friends, like, eish, she has AIDS. So then you need to be careful because you don’t want to be seen as makosha.

⁶⁷ Margillo and Imahori (1998, p. 61) report that amongst low income African-American women, women who engaged in sexual relationships with multiple partners was not perceived of as “bad girl” behaviour but was the accepted practice.

And Mpho confirmed the derogatory names given to women who are perceived to be promiscuous:

... if you are girl and having a lot of boyfriends, they will call you a bitch, a hooker, such people like that, they do not end up anywhere, because girls do not have enough guarantee to do such things. So, they will call you a hooker or a bitch ...

The connotations and denotations of words such as “iteye,” are explored in chapter ten. As well as keeping their multiple relationships secret for fear of being given a derogatory name, many women are scared to have more than one boyfriend as they are afraid of being beaten up if this is discovered, as Thandi observed, “He will slap you, he will beat you. If he knows that you are cheating on him, he will beat you,” and Kideo explained:

I want to have one boyfriend so that, firstly, I am so afraid to be beaten up. ... Hey, I'm afraid. ... Because if, most of the boys, maybe if he will find me with another boy they are going to fight. Both of them are going to fight and fight and fight, from there the one that come to us [wins] he will beat me again. He will say, “Why did you go with this person,” e.g. you see, “I do things for you. Every time I buy you such things, you see, shoes, ing-ing [such things], I want my things back,” you see.

8. CONCLUSION

The above discussion has offered some insights into the hegemonic and subordinate masculinities in Alex. While the identity of the ingagara is multi-layered, of particular significance in this research is the multiple relationships that ingagaras enter into, related to the criteria by which men are judged to be “real men.” This not only fosters promiscuity but it encourages the ideology that women are objects to be possessed and used by men. The construct of ingagara must be read within the context as described in the previous chapter, where there are few ways for males to achieve status, and as I shall argue in chapter eight, the immediate (or apparent) pay offs of having multiple partners outweigh any perceived future risk that such sexual relationships may lead to. Although the isithipa is constructed by youth as an extreme opposite to the ingagara, as I have illustrated, these two masculinities exist on a continuum and should be understood as ideal types.

I have demonstrated that sexual relationships in Alex are pragmatic and that while men depend on women for sex and status, women derive material benefits from engaging in

sexual relationships with men. I emphasise that in the paradoxical context of poverty and consumerism, sex has become an important resource. Men view women as prostitutes of a special type and women view men as chickens, all-in-ones and ministers. The language that is used by youth, and how this reinforces harmful gender relationships, is pursued in chapter ten. While women are constrained by the structures in Alex, the focus of chapter nine, some women do leave relationships when their boyfriends are not faithful to them. In the last part of the chapter I focused on the double standards that operate in relationship to gender and sex, illustrating that while men who have multiple relationships are praised, women who have multiple relationship are degraded. In the following chapter I explore the contradictory consciousness of youth in relation to what youth know about sex and HIV / AIDS.

CHAPTER SEVEN KNOWLEDGE OF HIV / AIDS

1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I explore what youth know about HIV / AIDS. I argue that in Alex youth obtain information about HIV / AIDS from a variety of sources, but primarily from friends who have an inadequate and contradictory understanding of HIV / AIDS. I explore the myths and misperceptions in youth's understandings of HIV / AIDS and examine whether knowing an HIV positive person leads to a change in sexual behaviour. I conclude by arguing that conventional notions of awareness of HIV / AIDS and how knowledge is measured needs to be challenged.

2. WHERE DO YOUTH GET INFORMATION FROM?

In the following sections I explore how Alex youth obtained information about HIV/ AIDS. There are many sources of information about HIV / AIDS in urban South Africa, such as advertisements, workshops, television, radio and newspapers (Abt. Inc., 2001, Kelly, 2000, p. 18; Skinner, 2001, p. 5). In interviews, parents and friends emerged as the dominant source of information and therefore form the basis of the discussion.

2.1. TELEVISION, RADIO, NEWSPAPERS AND SCHOOLS

In South Africa there is a high level of media exposure to HIV / AIDS, including newspapers and talk shows on television and radio (Abt. Inc., 2001; Kelly, 2000, p. 18; Kelly, Parker and Oyosi, 2002, p.34; Skinner, 2001, p. 5). The many television and radio programmes and newspaper inserts that focus on HIV / AIDS were only mentioned by youth in passing and therefore I did not cover them in- depth. Other research has evaluated the impact of media messages and campaigns (Coulson, 2002), with varied results⁶⁸. One or two youth I spoke to had been actively involved in HIV / AIDS awareness campaigns although, as noted further, this did not seem to influence their own sexual practices. In South Africa there is limited HIV / AIDS awareness input at the

⁶⁸For example, Parker, Dalrymple, and Durden (2000, p. 13) argue that although media contributes to maintaining general awareness about HIV/AIDS and, over time, facilitates the internalisation of key messages, media messages, by nature are usually simplified.

school level (Kelly, 2000, p. 5) and in Alex there was little discussion about sex or HIV / AIDS in schools⁶⁹.

2.2. PARENTS

As discussed in chapter five, over the last four decades there has been a decrease in the role parents play in regulating adolescent sexual activity (Kelly and Parker, 2000, p. 2). Although some teenagers would prefer to learn about sex from their parents rather than friends and siblings (Mitchell, 1998, p. 109; The Star, March, 6, 2002, p. 12), South African parents are reluctant to discuss HIV / AIDS and sex with their children^{70, 71} (Abt. Inc., 2001, Kelly, 2000, p. 18; Sibanda, 2002, p. 26; Skinner, 2001, p. 5; The Star, March 6, 2002, p. 12). With some exceptions, Alex youth do not talk to parents about sex and HIV/ AIDS. There are a number of reasons why youth do not speak to parents about sexual matters. These reasons relate primarily to issues of respect, cultural norms and the breakdown of family life and erosion of parental authority as discussed in chapter five.

A male in group one argued that many parents would prefer their children not to be exposed to issues relating to sex at all, "Most of them [parents] are not involved in talks about it [HIV/AIDS]. When we are watching Yizo-Yizo⁷² parents switch TV [off] and tell their children to go to bed." Despite the fact that sex education does not promote or increase sexual activity but in fact leads to safer sex (Filgueiras, 1995, p. 119), in Africa many parents feel that discussing sex is akin to promoting promiscuity (Obbo, 1995, p.

⁶⁹ Recently, Kader Asmal, the Minister of Education, instructed his department to urgently implement sex education in schools, technikons and universities (Cape Times, 2002). However, the introduction of sex education at schools raises issues related to increasing concerns about whether teachers are credible guardians for children. This is in the context of the report released in February 2002 by the South African Medical Research Council, which stated that a high percentage of rapes of students, sexual harassment and indecent assault are committed by teachers (Jewkes, et al., 2002; Mohlala, 2002, p. 10; Sapa, 2002). Sex education opens up a new dynamic between teachers and students and, given the current context, would need to be carefully planned. This is not an area I pursued in my research, and it would be worth exploring further.

⁷⁰ In a recent survey in South Africa it was revealed that while 50% of parents talk to their children about AIDS, only 20% of parents speak about risky sexual behaviour as the cause of HIV (The Star, March 6, 2002, p. 12)

⁷¹ In the United States of America there is also limited discussion between parents and children about sexual matters (Deven and Meredith, 1997, p. 151).

⁷² Yizo-Yizo is a controversial edu-drama screened on television which contained explicit sex scenes meant to stimulate discussion between adults and youth.

90), and therefore parents avoid discussing sex with their children. In this regard, Thandi observed that:

They [parents] do not feel comfortable to talk their children about AIDS or using condoms. They think that if you tell your child to use condoms, then, they are telling you to go out and to have sex. So, they do not talk to their children about this HIV / AIDS thing.

As Mpho's comments illustrate, talking to parents about HIV / AIDS is difficult because older people do not believe that they can be infected by HIV⁷³. Moreover, Mpho feels that talking about sex would be seen as disrespectful:

It is very difficult to approach my parents and talking about AIDS because for them, it is something that it happens and it happens to the youth. It kills youth mostly, so for me, to talk about AIDS and HIV to my parents is very difficult. ... Even that, sex, I do have that respect, I grew up in a very respectful, very respectful family. So, we have never had that [talking about sex] and I never heard my father talking about that. That is why I do not have powers to say something about sex.

Themba, like many other youth, related the lack of discussion about sex between parents and youth to "culture":

I think it should be a link that parents and children must talk about sex. But I understand. Like my parents, they've got this cultural thing. They don't talk to me about sex. I'll try to talk to my mother or my father. She'll say to me I must shut up...

While, in the main, communication channels about sex between parents and children are closed, there are some exceptions, like Nokuthula who occasionally talks to her mother about sex in response to television:

We do talk [about sex], like, not often, my mother, not my dad 'cause, um, actually our culture and our religion, its not the same like you [white people], like you open to your mom and dad, you tell them everything, but no, we can't do that, 'cause we just...when we see something on TV then we talk about it, like if there's something ...sex on the TV, we talk about it, but not often.

⁷³ In South Africa HIV / AIDS only assumed a high visibility in the mid 1990s with most campaigns focusing on youth, so the older generations may assume it does not concern them personally, and / or may not understand it well, an issue for further investigation.

Sibongile's mother talked to her about the danger of having multiple partners, but not explicitly about sex. Indeed, Sibongile would feel ashamed to ask her mother about a sexually related problem and, like Themba, she relates this lack of discussion to culture and respect:

[I did not speak to my mother about sex] because I felt ashamed. You know, we Blacks believe too much in tradition and respecting. When you think about talking about sex in front of your mother or your father, you feel ashamed. Even to ask your ma, even, maybe if you have a problem, maybe you have a transmitted disease. You can't talk about it to your mother 'cause you feel ashamed. What is she going to say? No, never. So it was something you just didn't discuss. ... Oh, well she used to advise me all the time about boyfriends; that I don't have to change men. I don't have to be with this one today and then the other guy the next time and then the next day, and things like that, because life is too short. But sex, no. She didn't like talking about sex, it was the way they were raised by their parents.

Some parents do talk about sex to their children but may convey a negative and scary message as illustrated by Lerato's comments:

... my parents are always telling me about boys, how boys are playing about with girls. It is like, he is having sex with you, when you get pregnant or get AIDS, he goes. He leaves you like that, he does not want to know if you are pregnant or what.

One exception to the general rule that parents do not talk openly and directly to their children about sex was Voyakazi's mother, who strived to have open channels of communication with her daughter:

... my mother was just saying to me that she wants me to be open to my children. My children must be able to communicate everything they want to communicate with me. Ja, because she is telling me she has done a lot of mistakes in her life because the mother wasn't there for her. She didn't know about a lot of things and she couldn't even say a word to her mother. So that's why she wants all of her children to talk to her nicely and get whatever information it is that one should get from a parent and she's telling us also "Please when you grow up once you have your own child be relaxed with her, be open to her, communicate with her, talk to her about everything; she must feel free to converse with you in any issue."

While tradition and respect are commonly cited by youth as reasons why parents do not speak to their children about sex, the general lack of communication between children and parents around sexual matters needs to be seen in the context of the breakdown of the

family⁷⁴ (Musi, 2002, p. 8; Smith, 2002b, p. 13) and the fact that under apartheid many children were not brought up by their parents (Ramphela, 1992). The lack of general discussion about sex, contributes to an atmosphere where girls do not tell their parents about their boyfriends or where they are going when spending time with their boyfriends.

Witness, for example, Dineo:

Actually, today I'm leaving, going to some... what did he say, he's got a business meeting in Kruger National Park [an expensive game park] or something, so we'll be there. So we had to make a couple of phone calls to my friend in Kew [a neighbouring suburb]. So I told my mom that I was going to sleep over, I mean I had to lie. Now I mean to go and see the place and there's no way I tell my Mum "Mum, I've got a weekend date with so and so, we gonna spend the night there." Ja, ahaha, I don't want to mention it.

The current loveLife campaign⁷⁵ has, as a key component, the promotion of parents discussing sex with children using prominent personalities, political figures and celebrities such as ex-President Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Jacob Zuma (the deputy president of South Africa) and Shado Twala (a radio DJ). However, as Dali's comments highlight, despite campaigns such as Lovelife, even parents who understand the significance of talking to children about sex and who want to talk to their children about sex find this a daunting task:

And it's very, very, very rare that you find in our own African culture, that you find parents talk to kids about sex. It's a very difficult task. I have a daughter who's nine years old. I find it difficult now to ... , when I start thinking about the day she is going to start being involved sexually. I still have a problem as to how I'm going to talk to her about it. Although I think I am more assertive to do it because I think the mother wouldn't even be brave enough to do that you know. I think my daughter is even more closer to me than the mother you know. And I would, I would think it will make me happy if I could, you know, talk to her. But I find it so difficult. ... Lovelife have got a big campaign now. They've got President Madiba [Mandela] to speak to the children and Shado Twala but it's a difficult... These things are reflected on television every day but I'm telling you maybe only 20% of the parents do that in our culture. Only 20% of the parents speak to their kids about sex.

⁷⁴ At the South African Moral Regeneration Summit in 2002, it was agreed that it was necessary to "strengthen the moral fibre of South African society, as a matter of priority, by rebuilding the family unit as a family is the place where good values and respect are constituted" (Mkhuma, 2002, p. 13).

⁷⁵ Lovelife is the biggest mass media campaign aimed at educating youth about HIV / AIDS.

There has been little research into the influence of communication between parents and youth about sexuality and HIV / AIDS (Moore, Rosenthal and Mitchel, 1996, p. 41), and future research in this area would be useful.

2.3. TALKING TO FRIENDS

Historically peers have played a significant role in the sexual socialization and monitoring of youth⁷⁶ (Delius and Glaser, 2001, pp. 6-11). In Alex, talking about sex is a pervasive theme in youth discussions, with most youth feeling more comfortable about talking to each about sexuality than to parents.

Kwena, like many youth, does not feel comfortable speaking to his parents about sex, and although he has an older brother who he can seek some advice from, he finds it easier to talk to friends about sexual matters:

I don't exactly talk to my parents. I have only a mother. My father passed away this year in February so I'm just left with mother but I have my brother, the second born, at home. Yah, maybe sometimes I go to him for some advises but we don't exactly go into details as to talk about sex, but advises that I need from him. I just tell him that, "Mfo [brother], that, no, I slept with a girlfriend and then Annie [his regte] came and then she caught us so what must I do?" I mean those are the kind of advises that I need from my brother uyabona [you see] but at the end of the day what I believe in is that the people that you waste [spend] most of your time with are the people you can talk to them about day-to-day life advices. So with sex I talk to my friends mostly.

While discussing sex with peers can be educative, discussions with Alex youth suggest the contrary and, as it shall be confirmed further in this chapter, many youth discussions on HIV / AIDS are not factually based.

2.3.1. What Prompts Youth To Talk About HIV / AIDS?

Jijobest noted there are a number of issues that trigger discussions of AIDS:

Everyone is talking about AIDS here [in Alex] because people are dying. If you have someone passing [walking past] and we are say standing somewhere, and that someone passing is having that affect [symptoms] of HIV, everyone is going

⁷⁶ It was not common for youth in the cities to attend school until the late 1960s and because youth unemployment was high (Hartshorne, 1992; Riordan, 1992), young males played a dominant role in male socialization instead of adults playing the role (Delius and Glaser, 2001, p. 15).

to say, "Ouch, this person is dying, AIDS is killing." A discussion will start about condoms, why people are not using condoms. The discussion will start that way.... We do talk about it, but it is mainly when we see someone with this disease, when that person passes us by and we will start talking. Sometimes, even if you do not have AIDS, people will say, you are dying because of AIDS. Maybe you have an affect [symptom] in your body, and the topic will start. Maybe we would be watching TV and they would be talking about AIDS, so, what happens is, the topic starts when they talk about these things. What is happening is, we would be having people like we did now in December, we had people running, distributing condoms, it is then that people start talking about AIDS.

Youth discuss HIV / AIDS in response to a number of issues, such as death; seeing someone who is believed to be HIV positive; TV; and campaigns such as condom distribution. Some youth feel that it is their duty to talk to friends about sex and HIV / AIDS to prevent their friends from dying, in this regard Jijobest said, "But if you are my friend I must ask you [about condoms] because you are just discussing if you are using a condom and why don't you use a condom because you will die next time," and similarly Nokuthula commented "We girls talk, hey. We don't want to see our friend tomorrow hurt, because of a boyfriend, so we, we just talk to each other: "No, you must use a condom, or no condom, no sex." Voyakazi relayed the type of advice her friend gave her:

I went to my friend, the one I'm staying with, I talked to her about it [the fact that her boyfriend had cheated on her]. My friend said "Just tell him you are going to use a condom otherwise he cannot have anything" or "It's best if you break up because if he is going to go on like that you'll end up like Tenjiwe," [their friend who died from AIDS], ... she always refers to my late friend.

Extracts such as the above, suggest that discussions about sex could promote healthier sexual behaviour, however in addition to these discussions, as discussed in the previous two chapters, youth spend much time discussing sex and promoting high risk sexual behaviour.

2.3.2. Inadequate Knowledge

Many youth believe that other youth do not have adequate knowledge of HIV / AIDS and, as Thandi observed, this leads to a fear of talking about HIV / AIDS:

We [me and my friends] do talk about it [HIV / AIDS], but the conversation ends nowhere. ... because we all do not know anything about it. We know there is AIDS and it kills but... like if you want to go for blood tests, and then what

happens when you test positive? What is going to happen to you? Things like that. ... Ja, even AIDS, some people think you must not talk about it. ... I do not know why but some people become scared when you talk about it ... maybe because it kills, there is no cure for it.

2.3.3. Talk The Talk And Walk The Walk

Some youth feel frustrated about the fact that even though they speak to each other about the importance of practicing safer sex, it is not possible to know whether youth actually do use condoms, and even youth who preach the use of condoms do not “walk the talk.”

Nozipho expanded on this aspect:

No, the only thing I mean the thing we are talking about it with my friends. We all say “No guys we use condoms.” We don’t know when you are with your partner what guys are doing, you know, because I can preach “Guys, guys let’s use condoms,” but I don’t practice what I’m preaching.

And Dali commented:

You know there are times where I am alone and nobody sees me and I say “Who cares you know?” I mean I want to be honest with you here and I say “Who cares, nobody sees me.” And the next moment I’m with my friends and I’m talking about this woman I had last night and one of them would go on and ask me and say “Look, did you use a condom?” and I say “Yes I did,” whereas I’m lying. When I’m only lying to myself, I didn’t [use a condom] you know.

Tsepo concurred that talk may lead to fear but it does not always translate into action:

We can talk about it but the next two minutes when you go back it might be, that people are having unsafe sexual practices. So it’s there, people have been speaking about it. They have been talking about it in schools, they have been talking about it in the ... , I mean there have been some, statistics which we could also, fear them if they are going to be saying this is the number of people, approximately suffer from AIDS/HIV from Alex. They are very fearsome but people doesn’t really take it serious.

2.3.4. Peer Education: Each One Teach One⁷⁷

The only formal example of peer sex education I came across was a campaign that Jijobest and Kwena referred to run by COSAS (Congress of South African Students) and the ANCYL (African National Congress Youth League). Kwena explained the campaign in the following way:

⁷⁷ Each-one-teach one is a reference to a political slogan used by youth during the school boycotts in the seventies.

That is what they say: “Abstain, be faithful and condomise.” I mean we are promoting, like that culture that the condom must be used, so like in the township we embarked in a campaign Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Just with COSAS, COSAS is a student body. It’s a political student body so we embarked on a campaign with them for the last past three days. Just to go around distributing condoms and leaflets so that people can read at least. Get to know the information and stop being ignorant. We also have a motto that we usually speak in our meetings, that says “One condom, one round, no condom, no sex.”⁷⁸

Despite what Kwena and Jijobest advocate, their own sexual practices involve having multiple sexual partners (indeed this is a key part of their ingagara identity), and inconsistent condom use, suggests that campaigns do not necessarily lead to behaviour change even on the part of the advocates, and for peer education to be successful, it is not adequate for peer educators to only talk about safe sex, they need to reflect changes in their own personal lives and to act responsibly (Jackson, 2002). Jijobest, referring to the campaign above, talked about the frustrating fact that although youth take condoms this does not mean they use the condoms:

Many people did take those condoms and stickers. They did listen to us [referring to condoms distributed during his participation in an AIDS awareness day]. I think there is a problem because when you talk to a person like I am talking to you now, when you talk about AIDS and say, please use condoms but when you are not there or when a person is drunk, they are not going to use the condoms. Many people know that there is thing AIDS but I am not sure why they are not using condoms.

2.3.5. Learning From HIV Positive People

Many youth claimed that it is important to see people who are HIV positive, to facilitate awareness that AIDS is “real.” Voyakazi’s story illustrates some of the lessons she learned from her friend who was HIV positive:

[Knowing someone who died of AIDS] It affected me a lot ... I told her [her HIV positive friend] to learn to accept it and I will support her throughout the way. But then she didn’t take it very well. ... I’m sure if today they tell me I’m HIV positive I would react very differently. She had that thing that she is going to die; I think that’s why she lost hope totally, she gave up and she was still fit to live a healthy life. But she just gave up emotionally and then that was it and then through her I learned that HIV is there; one needs to use a condom to be safe. You know you don’t want to see yourself like your friend and I learned that if something happens and I’m being tested and they say I’m HIV positive I’m gonna

⁷⁸ This is most likely a reference to the political slogans popular pre-1994, “One settler, one bullet” and “One person, one vote.”

have a very positive attitude towards it because I mean really it's just one of those things that are throughout the whole world now, you can't escape from it. You can play safe but you can never be 100% so if something happens that's for one to accept and go on with your life and take a good care of yourself that is what I learnt because I saw the way she resorted to drinking, smoking and everything you know? ... Then [before I had a friend with HIV who died of AIDS] I used to be ignorant. ... But seeing her like that I learned one should just actually take good care of yourself and be responsible for your life because she was a very-very close friend of mine. We used to sleep together, she had her own room I had my own room, but we used to sleep together and do everything together. So the way it had affected her it was so painful because she started by being blind you know?

Lessons include not discriminating against HIV positive people, leading a healthy life and having a positive attitude if you do become infected, and using a condom. However, despite Voyakazi's testimony, as elaborated on further, Voyakazi does not always use a condom, raising questions about the relationship of awareness of HIV and sexual practices.

Dineo learned about HIV / AIDS from her boyfriend's friend, Lucky Mazibuko⁷⁹, who is HIV positive and this changed her perceptions about HIV positive people:

I learned a few things. You know it's always better when you hear it from someone who has AIDS himself, and he's so open about his status, he has his own column on Tuesdays. ... I've seen documentaries on AIDS, but never anything you can relate to. Now you have this of "It will never happen to me," but then he changed it. If, say, my sister somewhere gets AIDS, at least now I know how to handle it. Instead of turning her away out of my life, at least I accept it, and it's not her fault and all that, you know. I told myself if I can sit in a restaurant with Peter, why can't I sit with positive people in a place, or why can't I talk with someone with AIDS, why should I differentiate people? ... So he changed me in a big way.

Although Dineo did not speak about whether meeting Peter had changed her sexual behaviour, clearly meeting him changed her views about people with HIV / AIDS. As the issue of stigma and discrimination is crucial, these are important lessons she learned from Peter. Dineo was not the only one who felt that "it's always better when you hear it from someone who has AIDS himself," and many other youth stressed the importance of

⁷⁹ A journalist who has made his HIV positive status known and who writes a weekly column in a popular newspaper.

seeing HIV infected people to not only learn about HIV / AIDS but to make it real. Participants in group 5 believed that youth would listen and learn from HIV positive people, but they felt that this education would be more effective if it was given by someone who actually looked “like death:”

M1. Yeah... You know those who are infected and those who have AIDS, they are the ones who must tell us.

M2. Ja, but not Lucky Mazibuko's fit, we don't have a problem [he doesn't make us worry], he's not weak, he's not worried.

F1. Ja [he has AIDS], but you can't see that...

M3: Those very sick ones, the ones who look like death, they must speak.

However even knowing a person who is HIV positive does not necessarily increase personal levels of risk for many youth (Zimet et al., 1991).

3. AWARENESS

In the previous sections I focused on where youth get their knowledge about HIV / AIDS from, and in the sections that follow I explore youth's awareness of HIV / AIDS.

Universally, there are varied reports about to what extent people are knowledgeable about HIV / AIDS , although it is generally agreed that knowledge is spread unevenly, with youth in high risk groups being the least knowledgeable (Kelly, Parker and Oyosi, 2002, p. 20; Moore, Rosenthal and Mitchell, 1996, pp. 35 – 36). Although there may be myths that South Africans are not currently AIDS aware (Marais, 2000, p. 49) researchers generally report that most South Africans are aware of HIV / AIDS (Hunter, 2001, p. 1; Kelly, 2000, p. 11; Skinner, 2001). Indeed, in South Africa, articles concerning HIV/AIDS are featured daily in newspapers, HIV/AIDS is discussed on talk radio, and large billboards prominently display HIV/ AIDS messages along busy roads. The governments “Prevention through better education and awareness strategy” has ensured that it is impossible to live in South Africa (at least urban South Africa) and not be exposed to HIV / AIDS issues in some way or another, and, as evidenced in the preceding discussion, Alex youth have access to HIV / AIDS messages via a number of sources.

Although South Africans are aware of HIV / AIDS, there are some misunderstandings in their knowledge and people still have unanswered questions (Crew, 2000, p. 24; Kelly, 2000, p. 22, Kelly, Parker and Oyosi, 2002, p. 20; Parker, Dalrymple and Durden, 2000,

p. 14). Although people struggle to answer questions where a deep understanding is required and where application is required, most people can answer factual “yes / “no” type questions about HIV / AIDS (Kelly, Parker and Oyosi, 2002, p. 34; Moore, Rosenthal and Mitchell, 1996, pp. 37 – 39) and Alex youth easily repeat catchy slogans from awareness campaigns such as “A.B.C.,” “safe sex,” “it’s not about trust, it’s about life,” “get wise, condomise,” and “AIDS does not choose whether you are white, black, green, or gold.”

4. MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND MYTHS AND CONTRADICTIONS

Awareness of HIV / AIDS is infused with contradictions, misunderstandings, myths and unanswered questions (Abt. Inc., 2001; Cohen and Hubert, 1997, p. 209; Crew, 2000, p. 24; Gilbert and Walker, 2000; Hoosen and Collins, 2001; Kelly, 2000, p. 22; Kelly, Parker and Oyosi, 2002, p. 2; Marais, 2000, p. 50; Parker, Dalrymple and Durden, 2000, p. 14; Scott and Mercer, 1994; Skinner, 2001, p. 3; Strebel, 1996, p. 358; Wilton, 1997, p. 45). Some common misunderstandings relate to modes and symptoms of infections; a cure; who constitutes a high risk partner; and the belief that “AIDS as an invention.”

4.1. MODES AND SYMPTOMS OF INFECTION

Many people have myths and misconceptions in relation to modes and symptoms of infection (Cohen and Hubert, 1997, p. 209; Crew, 2000, p. 24; Gilbert and Walker, 2000; Hoosen and Collins, 2001; Kelly, Parker and Oyosi, 2002, p. 20; Scott and Mercer, 1994; Skinner, 2001, p. 3). Tsepo observes, if someone has bad skin or has lost weight, it may be believed that they are HIV positive:

Z3 [a nickname for HIV related to the fact that it gets someone as quickly as the BMWZ3 and, like BWM, has three letters in its name], yah, it’s a very serious problem. In fact it’s so serious to the extent that even if you lose weight you are immediately alleged to have HIV or AIDS. Or anything which is not normal with you, like for instance maybe your hair got kind of to move [you lost some hair] and then we start saying that person has HIV /AIDS. So it’s a very serious stigma.

As will be discussed further, there is also a belief that if you look healthy you are not infected. Sibongile’s comments illustrate some of the misunderstandings that exist about how HIV is transmitted:

It's just that Black people, you know, Blacks are not like Whites, Whites are more understanding than Blacks. We Blacks, I don't know, how are they taking this disease, like if I can touch you, you're already having that disease...[If I had AIDS] they not even coming to my house, they won't even talk to me. No, I don't think that they understand. [They think you can become HIV positive from] touching, maybe from the saucer, or anything, anything.

The myth that HIV / AIDS can be transmitted by touching and sharing utensils contributes to the ostracising of HIV positive individuals. In addition to the belief that HIV can be transmitted by casual contact with an infected person, some youth believe that condoms, rather than preventing the spread of HIV, can actually lead to HIV infection. Mpho commented:

They are saying that maybe, like one minute, when we are discussing, we are discussing this disease. Most of them are saying, "No, what's the use of being, um, of using condoms? Because these condoms from clinics, they are the one's which are bringing, which are giving us AIDS; we can't protect ourselves."

And Kideo confirmed this belief:

Mostly most of the boys are not using condom because they always tell the children that that oil on the condom, that is inside the condom, when you open up the condom, is the one that causes AIDS. If we tell them that it's not the one that causes AIDS, it's because that the condom can move so that you can take it out. They say that "No, it's the one that causes AIDS," and it's not so. Yah, that's the thing with boys here in Alexandra, they do not want to use a condom.

Jijobest corroborated the belief that government condoms and condoms from clinics are not safe:

Another thing is that, some of the condoms are not quality, they are not strong. There are those condoms that make people not to use them, people say, these condoms are not good ... I am not sure what happens maybe when they were making them, there was a problem or something.

And Kwena expressed a similar view:

The other problem is that some other people are not sure as to whether the condoms are hundred percent protective or what, the reason being, there are other shops that are selling condoms; what is the difference between those condoms and the one that the government is giving free? It means the government's condoms are very weak and you can get AIDS through them. Some other people's perspective is that the condoms are not hundred percent protective.

In addition to this, there are some myths about condoms, such as the idea that they explode and that they are actually responsible for the spread of the HIV virus as Thandi explained; “It is like, if you use condoms, maybe you sleep with someone for more than thirty minutes, then the condom will explode. So it is useless to use condoms.” Dali confirmed the myth about condoms and also pointed out that some people believed that HIV was not transmitted through sex:

You know, in our culture we see nothing wrong with that [polygamy] so it’s fine. Until AIDS was introduced we start thinking “Well oh, this looks like trouble.” But there’s also this concept about AIDS not being transmitted through sex. I think it’s doing a lot of damage on people’s lives. ... People think that it’s not from sex...., some would go on and say “Look if I go to hospital I don’t allow them to put an injection on my buttock. I don’t trust the needles. They might not been sterilized, maybe that’s how one gets infected.” You know that type of thing. And yes some will talk about, for instance, air pollution. You know, we live in an area which is very inhumane, lots of flies flying around and all sorts of things. There are, there are a lot of myths around AIDS. I must tell you the most striking myth that I heard, and mostly among young people, was about the condom. They think the lubrication on the condom has got something to do with spreading AIDS.

While the myth about condoms contributes directly to high risk sex, the belief that HIV can be transmitted in a range of other ways beyond ones control could lead to an attitude that you can “get it anyway” regardless of behaviour. Witness for example comments made by group 4:

- M1. About this issue of AIDS I think everyone should start having babies now, because everyone’s gonna be infected one day.
- M2. You can get AIDS, not only from sex, but also using drugs, and touching someone in an accident.
- F1: Exactly, whether you’re sexually active or not, there is a high possibility of you getting AIDS...

This type of fatalism forms part of the *tata ma chance* logic as discussed in chapter five.

4.2. A CURE

Some people believe that AIDS can be cured (Abt. Inc., 2001; Hoosen and Collins, 2001; Kelly, Parker and Oyosi, 2002, p. 21; Marais, 2000, p. 48; Skinner, 2001) although this was only believed by a minority of youth in my study. My-Nigger referred to the myth that sex with a virgin cures AIDS, “They know, people in Alexander know about AIDS,

but they are ignoring that thing, like they do not know They say, if it affects you, then you should sleep with a virgin...⁸⁰.” Thandi commented:

Some people believe in sangomas [traditional healers] - that I have a very strong sangoma and I can't get AIDS. Maybe twice a month, he gets some treatment from that sangoma, they give you stuff to drink, that stuff will clean you.

The idea that there is a cure for HIV / AIDS, may encourage some youth to be negligent about protecting themselves against the transmission of the virus, as they feel they can be cured. Most youth, however, believe that there is no cure for HIV / AIDS and this leads to an attitude of despair and avoidance of testing.

4.2.1. No Cure And Testing

Most youth believe that HIV infection leads to imminent death and they were not aware of anti-retrovirals and how these can improve the quality of life of HIV positive people and prolong their lives⁸¹. Zandile observed:

.... of HIV & AIDS most of the people think, you know this, this thing already it has damaged most of our youth brain that the fact that if you are HIV positive you are going to die now. People are “Ja I'm HIV I'm going to die.” Eish, then they are thinking that this thing of death it will come tomorrow.

The sense of looming death leads to psychological anguish and, as such, most youth say they would rather not be tested⁸² as anyhow one cannot do anything about the illness.

Youth from group five commented:

⁸⁰ It has been proposed that the myth that sleeping with a virgin will cure AIDS, has led to an increase in the raping of babies and children, although this explanation of the increase in rape of minors is controversial (Chege, 2001). Jewkes et al. (2002) report that at the Teddy bear clinic, a referral point in Johannesburg for child rape cases, there has only been one rape case where the perpetrator believed the myth. Kelly and Parker (2000, p. 2) note that although South African youth are exposed to many myths about HIV, youth do not necessarily act upon these myths.

⁸¹ This general lack of awareness of the medication and lifestyle changes that infected people can implement to improve their health and prolong their lives is despite the publicity about these issues that the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) has achieved in its struggle to make anti-retroviral drugs accessible to all people. This lack of awareness is indicative of youth's general lack of interest in political issues as observed in chapter five.

⁸² In a survey conducted in South Africa only 18% of youth had been for HIV tests, and African males were less likely to have been tested than their female counterparts (15% compared to 26%) (CASE, 2000, p. 39).

M1: [People avoid HIV testing because] I think that if I know now I will just not be able to see a future, so if I have AIDS now it's better that I just don't know. 'Cause I think some people are very weak so they can't really handle the pressure of being HIV positive or having AIDS.

F1: If I am positive, I will die, we must not now so then we can [must] avoid the test.

Not only would some youth avoid testing but, as Tsepo observed, even if they become ill, they may avoid the doctor for fear of hearing that they are HIV positive:

You see if you are suffering, or for example, I can catch a flu today it will take me a lot of time to decide to go to the doctor or not. You see, even people when they've got these sick [diseases] they don't want to go to the doctor because that they start to fear maybe I [the doctor] could say, I have AIDS, you see. Although they might have it, but they hesitate to go to the doctor, diagnose it and look if there are any possible process that you can undergo and which could help you maybe to prolong your life. But because of that stigma people hear, even if they catch flu they won't go to the doctor, so they deteriorate you see. So that's the problem.

While most youth feel they would be "suicidal" if they were to find out that they were HIV positive and they would therefore rather not be tested, there were some exceptions such as Voyakazi whose close friend had died of AIDS. Indeed she felt that testing was imperative so that if you were HIV positive you could take the necessary steps:

I think so [that young people should be tested], I think one should be tested because really if you find out that you are positive I think you should start taking good care of yourself and you find that you are someone who like stressing about a lot of things those are the things that you going to try and avoid once you know because now if you going to go on without treatment living your life like any healthy person the day it attacks you, you are gone. It is the best if you know and then you take good care of yourself.

As illustrated in the conversation below with Sibongile, a further myth in relation to testing is that if your partner tests negative then you are also negative:

I told him we need to use this thing of a condom. I told him "It [unprotected sex] is dangerous, because you're going to make me sick. I'm going to become sick, because you don't even consider to go to the doctor, and draw the blood." ... He told me "If you are fine which means I'm also fine. If you're blood is negative, which means mine's also negative." [Sibongile had just had an HIV test as she had given birth].

4.3. HIGH RISK PARTNERS

Youth's personal sense of risk is very low (Hausser, 1997; Ingham and van Zessen, 1997, p. 86; p. 235; Kelley, Parker and Oyosi, 2002, p. 22; Leclerc-Madlala, 2000, p. 29; Masiomabuka, 1999; Moore and Rosenthal, 1991; Moore, Rosenthal and Mitchell, 1996, pp. 36-37, 84; Strebel, 1996) and they often have a stereotyped view of what type of people can become infected with HIV, linking HIV to high risk groups rather than high risk behaviour (Moore, Rosenthal and Mitchell, 1996, pp. 45, 84). As evident from Tsepo's comments below, a common misunderstanding about HIV / AIDS is in relation to who constitutes a high risk partner, with youth believing that prostitutes, foreigners, and poor people are high risk partners:

You see, other people think they cannot get it... . But it means that the same person that the one we are talking about it might be me. So now I'm not gonna go in many relationships; I'm not gonna go around in the shebeens; eh I'm not a prostitute; I'm not sleeping around with truck drivers; I'm not sleeping around with the people who are foreigners- there is this believe that foreigners, those are the people who are carrying AIDS; people who are in shacks, poverty stricken. Because you see, most of the emphasis around South Africa is that AIDS is related to poverty [my emphasis], so to us when you see people in the shack dwellers and you will think they are responsible- they are the people who have AIDS but not me because I'm staying somewhere in the East Rand, some middle class you see. That perception cooks.

Such perceptions about high risk people goes against the grain of understanding high risk activities rather than high risk groups⁸³. Stereotypes of groups who can become infected are likely to be maintained because many youth do not know anyone who is HIV positive. Moreover, stereotyping acts as a distancing function and allows youth to focus on differences between themselves and those who are infected rather than possible similarities (e.g. sexual practices) (Moore, Rosenthal and Mitchell, 1996, p. 45).

Some males perpetuate the myth that they can judge a female's HIV status by her behaviour and outward appearance. A male from group four said, "You don't use condoms...when you see a girl, she's smart, clean and sexy, she's clean she doesn't have

⁸³ HIV / AIDS activist are trying to promote the idea of high risk activities rather than high risk groups and to emphasise that HIV transmission is a consequence of behaviour or activities (with some behaviours such as having sex with multiple partners being classified as high risk activities) rather than as a result of what group you belong to.

any STDs, AIDS.” Dali believes that he can judge a woman’s HIV “status” by finding out about her life and behaviour:

Look, because naturally I don’t plan to sleep with a woman, I don’t. ... It just happens ... I look at them and say “Yah, that one I can go for.” And, yah, if a condom is found easily nearby, I’ll use one; but I’m also looking at the status of the woman as well. I think the status has a lot to do as well. ... When I talk about a status, I’m referring to things like, when I engage, when I get involved with a woman and I try, I always, always try my best to find out about her life you know. How she behaves and what-have-you. Well sometimes I do come across some women that I’ve always known for some time and I’ve always wanted to sleep with, you know. But knowing that she’s a playa, I insist on using a condom. Look, like the other woman in my life, she’s a housewife. With has no husband. She has four kids ... and the first time we made love we did not use a condom. She trusted me. I don’t know why she trusted me. ... Well, I absolutely did trust her. For me she was an older woman and I thought...the way she represents herself as a person ... she is a responsible kind of person who has to look after her house and do this and what-have-you.

Many males, like Dali, believed that they could identify partners who were not HIV positive based on the women’s “respectability.” In addition, as discussed further, it is believed by youth that if you are in a steady relationship for a period of time or have known your partner for a long time, your partner is not high risk. This has implications for condom use with many youth initially using condoms but as time progressed, believing it was no longer necessary to use a condom.

Most youth felt that a three-month period of knowing someone was adequate time to trust them enough to have sex without a condom. The issue of “trust” is further developed in chapter eight.

4.4. AIDS IS AN INVENTION⁸⁴

Although most South Africans do not deny the existence of AIDS, a minority see AIDS as an invention by whites. For example, in a study in Alexandra (Stein and Steinberg, 1994) some youth believed that AIDS was part of propaganda created by whites to prevent the black population from increasing. Jijobest explained it in this way:

⁸⁴ In the mid 1980s AIDS was termed SIDA (Syndrome Imaginaire pour Decourager les Amoureux) [Imaginary Syndrome Invented to Discourage Lovers] by groups in Zaire (Schoepf, 1992).

I know that there are some people that say, there is no AIDS. Some of them will say, "This thing is things of whites, these people are playing with us, there is no AIDS. They want us to waste our time, so I do not use a condom." ... They think that white people are fooling them. They will say, these people are playing with us, some of them will say, they [whites] do not use them [condoms] and they want us to use them. [If a black person says there is AIDS], they will say, "That person is mad, there is no AIDS."

And a male from group one said:

... in the township there are people coming from the rural areas and some are illiterate and they think that this [idea of AIDS and promoting of condoms] is coming from somebody trying to prevent them from making babies- something like that.

Such views can be understood in relation to the previous government's racial policies and strategy regarding population control of black South Africans (Gruhndling, 2001; Kelly, Parker and Oyosi; 2002, p. 34; Strebel, 1996). While this type of conspiracy theory is not prevalent there is, as Sibongile points out, a perception that "[The] government or even the doctors or people are lying because we have never seen these people." As discussed below, "not seeing" HIV positive people leads to a perception that HIV / AIDS is not real.

4.5. HIV / AIDS IS REAL BUT IT'S NOT REALLY REAL

Group four said:

M1: I think it's this thing of "it doesn't exist, it will only exist if I get it," they know about it, but they believe it won't happen to them.

M2: I don't use condoms. I just like having sex without the condom. In my mind I said, "If I have AIDS, then I will believe AIDS is there, but if I don't have AIDS, I won't believe AIDS is there." I never see people with AIDS, then I can tell myself it isn't really there.

As the above quote illustrates,⁸⁵ for youth, there is a sense that HIV / AIDS exists but it is somewhere out there and can't really infect them. This feeling can partly be attributed to the fact that they do not actually see infected people or witness deaths relating to AIDS

⁸⁵ In a survey conducted in South Africa, 18% of youth knew someone with AIDS and 28% knew someone who had died of AIDS (CASE, 2002, p. 36).

(although ironically, youth speculate about whether people are HIV positive if they loose weight or have bad skin).

4.5.1. Seeing Infected People

In contrast to research which suggests that a critical factor in developing a sense of the realities of HIV / AIDS is exposure to HIV / AIDS stories, principally through mass media (Kelly, 2000, p. 22), youth in my study maintained that HIV / AIDS does not seem real as they have not seen infected people. In this regard, youth feel that exposing youth to infected people would be a more effective prevention strategy than strategies currently in place. As Nkululeko argued:

Another thing is that we don't have a hospital where people who are HIV positive are being kept in these places. So where you can take them [youth] to see that this thing is really happening.

And Jijobest claimed:

... this thing of contributing [distribution] of condoms has been going on for long. Maybe, if you can [rather] organize transport, take those young people to the affected people who have got the HIV/ AIDS, let them see these people. These sick people must talk to them [the youth]. Those people are scary, if you can see them talking, you become scared. I think this thing of distributing condoms, is out, they must change. The government must change, ... they must show these people who are affected [infected]. [Although they sometimes] do see those people, [HIV positive people], ... they will say, they are not having HIV; that person is having his problems. When you take them to the centre, I don't know whether you call them the school or centre for affected [infected] people, maybe people can change. ... They must show them that this is really this thing that is killing people.

As the last part of Jijobest's comments illustrate, although there are people in Alex who are HIV positive, there is tendency to deny that their symptoms are related to AIDS⁸⁶, and to rather maintain that their symptoms are related to "other problems." One of the reasons why AIDS is attributed to "other problems" is because of the stigma attached to AIDS. Themba raises the issue of denial and stigma attached to having AIDS, and people not coming out openly to say they are HIV positive.

⁸⁶ In addition, there can be a lag phase between HIV infection and the first visible signs of disease of up to a decade.

People don't believe that there is AIDS. They don't believe that there is AIDS because, most of the time, most of the time we youth don't think that there's AIDS. ... And I think in Alexandra I don't think that many youth have seen a person who has AIDS. [They haven't seen a person who has AIDS because] around the township, I think they are afraid to say that [they have AIDS]. Like me, I won't say in front of the public that I've got AIDS. ... Because they are afraid to say that, because if you say in Alexandra that you have AIDS, whoe! They will kill you. ... if we can see a person dying, we think, I think this will change everybody's mind that it [AIDS] is here.

However, Themba's views are despite the fact that many people, including public figures, are choosing to openly state their HIV positive status. Sibongile echoed Themba's views:

Although there are people in Alex with AIDS, you know we Black people, we've got a problem, a huge problem. If, maybe I am positive I can't talk about that to anyone, because I'm afraid that, that person is going to tell everyone that I am positive, I'm going to die from AIDS, you know, and those people are going to swear at me, are going to point me with fingers, some... You know that's why people, they can't just come out, they just can't face the reality that they are sick, they can't talk about it until they go to the grave.

Leclerc-Madlala (2000, p. 29) reports that in Uganda, Kenya and Zambia, it was only when youth "started to see the coffins and had to attend countless funerals that they started to wake up⁸⁷," and could no longer deny that AIDS was a reality, and Zandile argued that it is only when youth start to see people "dying of AIDS" that will they realise that "AIDS is living." One reason why youth in Alex do not see the "reality" of HIV / AIDS is that often ordinary families are reluctant to disclose the cause of death as AIDS related and it is usually claimed that individuals who died from AIDS died from "other" causes⁸⁸, and in this context there is much speculation when people die. So while funerals and deaths are visible they are shrouded in mystery in a climate where the stigmatizing and ostracizing is rife. Tsepo said:

People are not taking it [HIV / AIDS] serious. One problem is that I think in Alex there is no grave with somebody who have been buried with AIDS you see. They bring all these fictitious accuses [accusations / excuses], "No he suffered from the headache, no he suffered from pneumonia, no he suffered from TB

⁸⁷ Anecdotally when I attended a funeral in Alex during the data collection phase of my research, the cemetery was full and therefore the burial had to take place outside of Alex.

⁸⁸ Recently some families are choosing to disclose AIDS related deaths. For example Mandela's recent announcement that members of his extended family had died from AIDS related illnesses.

[Tuberculosis]” So it is very difficult for people to say there is AIDS. Unless they say, these people who have died, “he died because of AIDS,” and people will start taking it serious. So AIDS to them is a myth, there is something existing but not around them. Somewhere far from them. Yah, it's far from them and that's the problem why people doesn't take it serious. ... people think there is AIDS but somewhere far from them. So it's not nearer to them, it cannot happen to them.

4.6. STIGMA, DISCRIMINATION AND OSTRACIZING OF PEOPLE WITH HIV AND AIDS

Despite campaigns⁸⁹ geared towards ending discrimination against HIV positive people, comments such as those by Sibongile, Tsepo and others suggest that the issues of stigma, ostracizing and discriminating against people with HIV / AIDS is widespread. As noted above, this is one reason why people are reluctant to disclose their HIV status.

Voyakazi in talking about the death of her best friend from AIDS related illnesses, claimed that many people discriminate against HIV positive people and much of the stigma attached to HIV / AIDS is related to myths about how the virus is contracted:

People do discriminate and I'll just say people are just naïve because really you can never know how one contracted a disease. It's just that the first time it was said that it is sexually transmitted. They gave it a wrong explanation so people think if you HIV positive then it means you were running around with all these men whereas you can contract it on your first day of having sex. ... They just don't know anything about AIDS. If you just going to say someone is HIV positive then they think it's because of sex with so many guys and they don't want to be next to that person.

Voyakazi's comments draw attention to the fact that when women are HIV positive, they are discriminated against as they are perceived as having been promiscuous (although men are encouraged to have multiple partners). Voyakazi also alluded to the myth that HIV can be contracted by casual contact with an HIV positive person. This incorrect belief contributes to the discrimination of people with HIV / AIDS so that people “don't want to be next to that person,” and, as Kwena says, people “stay away” from anyone who is suspected of being HIV positive:

⁸⁹ In August of 2002, the government launched the Khomanani campaign (Khomanani is a Tsonga word meaning caring for or supporting each other). The campaign is aimed at encouraging people with HIV / AIDS to live positively, and to increase their awareness that through doing so the virus need not be a death sentence. It is also aimed at tackling the stigma and discrimination associated with the disease (de Beer, 2002).

Yah we avoid them [people who are perceived to be HIV positive]. So that, I had arrived in a party and seen my friend with one girl I've seen going around with many men and say "Hey Mzala, upheth' ureks [hey cousin/ brother, she's carrying AIDS]. Like "Hey my friend, that person is untrustworthy. Stay away! Don't put your trust in that person." So it's like that kind of a thing. Then they know Z3 is coming.

5. KNOWING AN INFECTED PERSON AND CHANGES IN SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

Although South Africans are largely AIDS aware, they have not necessarily turned this awareness into personal behaviour change (Crew, 2000, p. 24; Parker, Dalrymple, and Durden, 2000, p. 6). Although youth say that seeing infected people might convince them of the reality of AIDS, there are mixed responses as to whether knowing an HIV infected person actually changes sexual behaviour. Thandi explained, that although she knew about HIV / AIDS, it was only seeing her cousin die of AIDS that really led to significant behaviour change:

[I changed my behaviour] because I saw how she suffered from it [AIDS]. She was suffering a lot. ... It is like, I changed my attitude, maybe like, I used to go to the parties, so, these nowadays, it's not safe to go to parties. Because sometimes it happens that some gangs come and take girls there at the parties and they get raped. And you can get AIDS from there, it is no longer safe to go to the parties. ... [It also changed my sexual behaviour and] I now practice safe sex, [although] before my cousin had AIDS, no, I was not so worried. But now, eish, I changed 'cause I saw that it kills, how bad you can get when you have AIDS.

Although Thandi modified her behaviour, knowing an HIV positive person does not necessarily lead to behaviour change for all youth as Themba, Kwena and Vusi's cases illustrate. Kwena asserts that knowing an HIV positive person has not changed his behaviour at all:

What I would say is, it [knowing someone with AIDS] has not changed my behaviour. ... Ja, it has not changed at all. ... I am not a bad behaving somebody. What I believe in, I do it. Like I said, it happens to me sometimes that I don't use a condom.

Themba said:

I did not make any steps [to change my sexual behaviour after hearing that someone I know is dying from an AIDS related illness] but I'm talking to my brothers and sisters, my younger brothers and sisters, that there is AIDS.

Despite the fact that Themba has not changed his sexual behaviour, he talks to younger youth about HIV / AIDS; indeed as pointed out earlier, people who “talk the talk” do not necessarily “walk the walk.”

After the death of Vusi’s sister, who died from an AIDS related illness, Vusi changed his sexual behaviour, but he still reverts to old patterns of unsafe sexual behaviour, although he wishes to change his behaviour:

Last year my sister passed away on the eight of April. Yes, that changed me, but at a later stage I went back to my normal state [old behaviour] and said “No, but this thing, it’s HIV but I believe maybe it won’t hurt me.” But at the moment, definitely, because I’m having three children, I’m taking it [HIV / AIDS] serious, I don’t want my children to suffer.

Voyakazi’s story offers insights into a number of key issues and I have quoted her at length as her narrative raises a number of germane concerns:

I always use a condom, but I’ve been in the relationship that I didn’t use a condom. [Even after I knew about AIDS], we [she and her regte] were using a condom and then one day the condom busted and then the next time we had sex without a condom, so we had sex and then we went on like that without a condom. [After I discovered he had another girlfriend] ... I told him, “You know what; I went home, you decided to get a girlfriend, so it means that me and you we’ll start using a condom from now.” Then he said to me “No when I slept with that girl we used a condom.” So this guy --- you know guys? After telling me that he was using a condom, the very same night I was sleeping [with him], two ladies came to the house, and they knocked, and they came to report that, that girlfriend, that answered the phone the other day, was pregnant from my boyfriend. You know, that day I said “Ag man, shit on these guys.” You know we had such a close-close relationship that I felt he wouldn’t even go out and, you know, and he gave me the assurance. But, can you imagine, I’m sleeping with him and there’s this noise “Hey wake up, you know, what this lady is pregnant and you are ignoring her.” I just told him “You know what, go and take good of your child, you must support that child throughout, I’m out [ending this relationship].”

Voyakazi’s narrative touches on a number of key issues that are explored throughout this research. These issues include condom usage and negotiation and the fact that most men in this study are not loyal to their partners. Of particular relevance to this discussion is the fact that although Voyakazi knew about HIV / AIDS, and indeed had a close friend who had died from HIV / AIDS, she still engaged in high risk sex with her boyfriend.

Voyakazi's experiences suggest that changing sexual behaviour is not a simple matter, as sex always occurs in a complex social milieu, and changing sexual behaviour cannot be understood in a cause and effect way; knowledge or experience does not automatically lead to changes in sexual behaviour.

6. CONCLUDING SUMMARY

Throughout Africa HIV / AIDS education and prevention efforts have produced limited results (Obbo, 1995, pp. 80-81) and it is increasingly acknowledged, both in Africa and elsewhere, that factual knowledge about HIV / AIDS, although necessary, is a weak determinant of sexual behaviour (Campbell et al., 1998, p. 50; Hausser, 1997, p. 235; Hoosen and Collins, 2001, p1; Ingham and van Zessen, 1997, p. 86, Leclerc-Madlala, 2000, p. 29; Marais, 2000, p. 50; Moore, Rosenthal and Mitchell, 1996, p. 37; Parker, Dalrymple and Durden 2000, p. 6; Scott and Mercer; 1994). Indeed, the idea that there is a linear and consequential relationship between knowledge and behaviour has been heavily criticised (Guizzardi et al., 1997, p. 159, Hausser, 1997, p. 235).

In Alex, youth have some knowledge about HIV / AIDS, although this knowledge is infused with misunderstandings, misconceptions, contradictions and gaps. Youth obtain information about HIV/ AIDS from a number of sources. Schools and parents are not as involved in AIDS education as youth would like them to be. In relation to schools, the climate of sexual abuse prevalent in many schools needs to be addressed before schools can participate in effective sex education. For parents to engage meaningfully with youth about sex and AIDS, a number of cultural barriers and misconceptions about discussing sex with children need to be overcome. The key source of information about sex and AIDS for youth is friends. However, friends are not always adequately informed about sex and AIDS, and there is a culture that promotes multiple sexual partners and sexual activity amongst youth. As such, the messages youth get from each other pertaining to sex and AIDS may not promote healthy sexual behaviour.

Youth have a factual knowledge of HIV / AIDS with some gaps and misperceptions. Furthermore, their knowledge of HIV / AIDS is infused with myths and is filtered

through their own day to day realities and experiences. I thus suggest that notions of awareness and measuring knowledge need to be reconceptualised and, as I propose in chapter nine, this can best be done by using the Gramscian notion of commonsense whereby “commonsense” is understood as disjointed beliefs that are derived from everyday experience and that do not form a coherent view of life.

HIV / AIDS does not seem real to youth due to the invisible nature of this disease and youth maintain that seeing infected people would make AIDS more “real.” Despite this claim, seeing or knowing infected people does not necessarily lead to changes in sexual behaviour.

The evidence in this chapter disputes the usefulness of the biomedical model, and the idea that once people are informed about HIV / AIDS, they will not engage in high risk sexual behaviour, a theme discussed in chapter three and pursued in chapter nine.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ABC: WE NEED A NEW LOVE LITERACY⁹⁰

1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters I examined the sexual behaviour of youth and to what extent youth are knowledgeable about HIV / AIDS. In this chapter I draw on the findings from the previous three chapters and explore their implications in relation to abstinence, being faithful and condomising (A.B.C). I illustrate that youth engage in high risk sexual practices; abstinence is not seen as a likely option, being faithful to one partner is uncommon and condom use is low and is inconsistent. I argue that the nature of youth's relationships and sexual practices and the fact that sex is a resource (both symbolic and material), coupled with youths' common sense awareness of HIV / AIDS, and risk taking culture, leads to a high risk context calling for a more comprehensive and context sensitive approach than ABC.

2. ABSTINENCE

Many practitioners argue that abstinence is not a realistic option, hence most official AIDS messages focus on monogamy and condom usage rather than abstinence (Parker, Dalrymple, Durden, 2000, p. 5). Four key reasons emerged from my data as to why abstinence is a difficult choice for Alex youth. These reasons are; the belief that if you do not have sex you are crazy and stupid; the importance of being in a relationship and the centrality of sex within a relationship; perceived biological reasons; and violence against women.

2.1. YOU ARE CRAZY, STUPID OR CURSED IF YOU DO NOT HAVE SEX

Comments by group two youth illustrate the common belief amongst youth that refraining from sex means that you are stupid:

M1: If you don't have sex they will take you like stupid

M2: Especially your friends, they will think you are stupid.

M3: They will think you are mentally disturbed." If you're not doing it, you're "dom" [stupid] and crazy."

⁹⁰ Selikow, 2005a.

Thandi explained:

Uyisishimane” is the term that “means that you do not have a girlfriend or boyfriend. Maybe you are a stupid person. [You are seen as stupid] because you do not know what you are missing when you are not in love, like having sex, and all that.

As detailed in chapters five and six, central to being a real man is having sex and Jijobest reiterated that males who do not have sex are believed to be narrow minded:

In our township, if you do not have sex, it seems you become crazy There is this popular thing that when you do not have a woman or a girlfriend, you are stupid. You don't think well. You must have a girlfriend so that you can have sex with her; you [will] think broader or something like that. ... Everybody wants to have sex. When you are chatting you say, “Yesterday, I was with my girlfriend, we did this and that.” So you would want to get one girlfriend and maybe have sex with her so that what that other person was saying, I could understand.

Not only are youth seen as stupid if they are not in a sexual relationship⁹¹, but, as Jijobest observed, there may also be accusations that they have “ibadhi” [bad luck] and have been cursed by “muti” [traditional medicine]:

... No, I do not think that [abstinence] is going to work in our township. I do not think in our township only but in our country. Sex is popular! If you do not have a boyfriend or a girlfriend, they will tell you that you are frustrated, you are stupid or have this thing of, we call it “ibadhi,” when boys or girls do not want you, what is the problem with you and you must go and see a traditional doctor so that they can make you have someone who loves you. ... They will see them [virgins] as stupid, they will say “Uyasha,” meaning, you are afraid of guys. They will say you must go out and get someone.... They will tell her that she is having a problem, why [because] boys or men not propose love to her, she must maybe do something because all men or boys do not propose love to her. They will say, maybe she is using muti or she is ugly.

Given the priority youth place on having sex, it is not surprising that, as Themba explained, pressure is put on youth to have sex, with virgins being objects of ridicule:

⁹¹ This is in contrast to traditional societies where it was expected that women and sometimes men would remain virgins until they had reached a certain age, or until they were married. There has been much controversy in South Africa where some communities have tried to reintroduce this practice.

Me, I think those people [virgins] are blessed. But I don't think the community will think the same about what I've just had said. They'll try to make them [virgins] to have sex, to push them. They'll be under pressure to have sex because you come and tell your friend that "I'm a virgin." Your friend will laugh at you, they'll do anything to see that you have sex. You see, and then if you have sex, you are no longer a virgin.

2.2. THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING IN A RELATIONSHIP AND THE CENTRALITY OF SEX WITHIN A RELATIONSHIP

Kelly (2000, p. 6) argues that there is increasing evidence that abstinence is an attractive option for some youth, particularly for women who are ambivalent about sexual relationships. However, although abstinence may be an appealing option for women, it means not having a boyfriend and there are many pressures on young females to have boyfriends (Kelly and Parker, 2000, p. 4). As well, there are many pressures on men to have girlfriends, and, as detailed in the previous chapters, there are a variety of reasons why having a boyfriend or girlfriend is an integral part of Alex youth culture. Given this reality, many practitioners promote abstinence within relationships and encourage methods other than penetrative sex for achieving pleasure and intimacy (for example, mutual masturbation). However, abstinence within relationships is not seen as feasible according to youth, as Thandi observed, "Nowadays, when you are in a relationship, they only think about sex and all that stuff." Thandi further elucidated the importance of sex in a relationship by explaining that:

We are convinced that if you are in-love then you owe him sex. ... Because you are in-love, you said you loved that guy, then you have to prove it. They say you prove it with sex. There is no other way to prove it. You can do everything, you can wash his clothes, and clean his house but as long as you did not have sex, you did not prove that you are really in love.

According to Tsepo, promoting the idea that love can only be proved by having sex, is a commonly shared strategy amongst males to get females to have sex:

... that's the way of boys manipulating girls for sex. I'm from that background, I know about it myself, you say "You really love me can you prove it?" And the only way to prove it is to have a sexual intercourse. Yah, yah, I'm from that [I used to do that], I know that. I inherited it from somebody else, because you see, boys in a township, they'll always get a group of "us" as a team. So we share strategies that you know, "You should have slept with that woman." ... Listen, this is a strategy that we share, this is a usual thing; you are saying to her "The only way to prove that you really love me is to have sex."

The idea of “proving” love by sex is a covert form of violence. Indeed, feminists have challenged conventional definitions of violence and definitions upheld by the law, arguing that coercion (such as pressure to have sex) and threats of violence should also be considered abusive (Heise, 1995, p. 118)⁹².

Moreover, sex is seen as a duty⁹³ which women are not able to refuse (Hoosen and Collins, 2001) and if a women refuses sex she may be beaten (Leclerc-Madlala, 2000, p. 29). As well, as discussed in chapters five and six, in the context of transactional sex, it is a common belief that if a male spends money on a female she “she owes him sex.”

2.3. PERCEIVED BIOLOGICAL NEEDS

“Biological” reasons were offered by youth as reasons why abstinence is not a possibility; witness for example My-Nigger:

No [we cannot abstain from sex], If you are not sleeping with girls, they will say “uphethwe yitswayi.” It means, you have salt inside and you should take it out, meaning, you have to have sex so that you became fluidly.

Similarly a male from group two claimed “They say if you don’t have sex your testes will burst” and another male in this group noted “When pimples come out they call it salt, they say salt is coming out because you have not had sex.”

2.4. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

As detailed in chapter five and six, violence against women, both within intimate relationships and by strangers, is common in Alex. Violence undermines the idea of abstinence, and Lerato put forward the view that as you may be violated anyhow, you may as well be complicit in having sex:

⁹² Although there have been some studies that explore how rape or sexual abuse impacts on women’s sexual functioning, there have been few studies about how more covert forms of coercion affects women’s sexual lives (Heise, 1995, p. 118).

⁹³ In both formal and informal sex education, the focus is on male sexual pleasure so often young women are aware of the sexual needs of young men but lack a sense of their own sexual needs (Thomson and Holland, 1998, p. 63).

Then we are saying to ourselves, like we are just telling ourselves, they can take you anyway, those boys for sex or what... so then we can rather decide to just have sex... just think and then do it, because sometimes you do not have to decide [have no choice].

3. BEING FAITHFUL

Although HIV / AIDS education campaigns call for monogamy, South Africa is characterised by social norms of multiple partners, especially for men (Abt Inc, 2001; Gilbert and Walker, 2000; Kelly, 2000, p. 37; National AIDS Bulletin, 1999; Skinner, 2001), and increasingly for women, although for different reasons. Multiple partners in Alex are ubiquitous as was described in chapters five and six.

Youth like Mpho say “Now [after having attended an AIDS awareness programme] we do understand that it [having multiple partners] can be bad,” illustrating an awareness of the risk of engaging in multiple sexual relationships, but he also says, “but we are still doing that [having multiple relationships] because in this township, you must have many, many, because that is how we life our life.” In the discussion below, I interrogate why youth “must” engage in multiple relationships. I focus on knowledge infused with misunderstandings; being a real man and the needs of women and perceived biological needs.

3.1. KNOWLEDGE INFUSED WITH MISUNDERSTANDINGS

A youth from group two observed, “You are destroying yourself [by having multiple relationships], but in the township you will be a joke if you don’t do it.” Such comments indicate that youth have some understanding that multiple relationships can be harmful, but, as detailed in chapter seven, this understanding co-exists with misunderstandings and gaps in knowledge which undermine the idea that multiple partners put one at risk of contracting HIV. As it was observed in chapter seven, some youth believe that you can tell if someone is HIV positive by their appearance, and believe that if you know someone for a period of time you can trust them. Further, some youth underestimate the degree to which a sexual partners’ previous sexual history can lead to HIV infection. Moreover the focus on high-risk partners, for example prostitutes, rather than high-risk

activities, such as having sex with multiple partners, means that youth underestimate the danger of engaging in sex with multiple partners.

3.2. BEING A REAL MAN; THE NEEDS OF WOMEN AND “BEING FAITHFUL”

As I demonstrated in chapters five and six, the hegemonic masculinity in Alex is characterised by multiple partners for men and this is a central explanatory factor in why “being faithful” is not adhered to. As well, in these chapters it was illustrated that women have many needs that are met by men and often these requirements cannot be met by only one man (the all-in-one), hence undermining the message to be faithful. In a context where multiple partners are the norm, youth believe that it is highly unlikely that their boyfriends / girlfriends will be faithful as Sibongile concurs:

Most of them are saying: “If I am sick, I am sick. I’m going to die from AIDS,” because sometimes you are stable [loyal]; you are true to one partner and he is running around. What’s the use of being true and honest to someone, while he’s going around, he’s going to give you that disease. That’s why they can’t be true.

And Mpho further confirmed the unlikelihood that youth in the township could be faithful:

It [monogamy] will never prevent you in having AIDS. Why? Because to be honest, firstly, you have to be honest, even your partner needs to be honest. Your partner needs to be honest and you need to be hundred percent faithful for your partner. This is not real.

3.3. PERCEIVED BIOLOGICAL NEEDS

The myth that men have an inherent need for constant and varied sex from multiple partners (Collin and Staddler, 2001; Moore and Rosenthal, 1993, p. 99; Pattman, 2001, p. 19; Posel, 1992; Rao Gupta, 2000, p. 5; Strebels, 1996) was evoked by many men to explain why men engaged in sex with multiple partners. Witness for example Themba who maintained:

...you can’t eat cabbage everyday. It means you need to change women, like you cannot eat the same one everyday and all day. Then they are not really talking about cabbage. Like it is, that, for men, we cannot have the same one everyday. That thing [the need for sex with many women] it is in us because we can get bored quick, and that is, because that is how we are.

And Jijobest, like Themba, used biology to “make factual” the notion that men “need” many partners. Indeed Themba brought closure to the possibility of debating this by arguing:

With men, that is how it is like. ... If we can see different ones [women], then that is how we become aroused. So we take many girlfriends. It cannot only be the regte, we need to have more than the one. ... It is because we are born in that way, [but] women can sometimes just be with one [man].

Not only is biology drawn on to affirm that having multiple sexual partners is unalterable, but as it was discussed in the preceding chapters, tradition and culture are also drawn on to reinforce the idea that men “need” multiple partners. The idea of innate and biological needs that can only be satisfied by sex with multiple partners needs to be challenged if successful intervention programmes which advocate having one sexual partner are to succeed.

4. CONDOMS⁹⁴

Contraceptive methods construct the practice of sex in significant ways (Thomson and Holland, 1998, p. 66) and in this section I focus on the “C” in “ABC.” Abstinence and monogamy are not seen as realistic within the context of Alex, and youth suggest that condoms are the most realistic solution to prevent the spread of HIV, however, as it shall be illustrated; using a condom is not a straightforward issue. In the sections below I focus on condom usage; the nature of the relationship and condoms; awareness of condoms, access to condoms; condoms and trust

4.1. CONDOM USAGE

Internationally HIV prevention methods focus largely on promoting consistent condom use (Raffaelli and Suarez-Al-Adam, 1998, p. 8). Although there have been a number of campaigns focusing on condom use in South Africa there is still widespread resistance to condom use (National AIDS Bulletin, 1999) particularly amongst men (Adler and Qulo,

⁹⁴ In the 1960s the condom and the withdrawal method were the most common forms of contraceptive, but with the move to the pill in the 1980s and 1990s there was a paralleled shift from men to women for the responsibility for sexual safety. Unlike the pill, which is non-intrusive, the condom is visible, requires negotiation, disrupts the sexual act and brings to the fore the potential for both pregnancy and disease (Thomson and Holland, 1998, p. 66).

2001, p. 307) and males' attitudes to condoms are extremely negative⁹⁵ (Ndiaye, 2000, p. 64). This trend is not unique to South Africa (Fullerton, Holland and Oakley, 1995, p. 99; Moore and Rosenthal, 1993, pp. 18 – 22, 132)⁹⁶.

Condom usage varies vastly depending on a multiplicity of psychological and socio-economic factors (Ahlemeyer and Ludwig, 1997; Kelly and Parker, 2001, p. 7). Although there is no consensus amongst researchers about whether condom usage has increased over the last few years, of significance in my study is that it is widely reported that condom usage amongst urban youth is low (Gilgen et al, 2000; Hlongwa et al., 2001; Skinner, 2001). Despite this generally agreed upon finding, condom usage is a complex issue and, as Kelly (2000, p. 6) points out, it would be too simplistic to divide youth into those who use condoms and those who don't. Indeed interviews with Alex youth revealed an array of possibilities in relation to condom usage. For example, youth who sometimes use condoms; youth who use condoms with cherries but not with regtes; youth who sometimes use condoms with cherries and youth who plan to use condoms with cherries in the future. As well there are youth who currently do not use condoms but who plan to change their behaviour. For example Kwena plans to use a condom with his cherries when his baby is born as he fears that the death of his firstborn was due to him having sex with cherries and not using protection:

I do [plan to use a condom with cherries] because of, I mean I've changed my life. I can say, I've changed than before. Eh, like ...pregnancy changed my behaviour. I had a child before she died, I don't know the reason, so I have a pregnant lady now so I must just try to change because of I might just find out that the cause of my baby to die was because of what I was doing away from my girlfriend so that is why I've changed. When the baby is here, I can only use condoms with the cherries, with those casual girls.

⁹⁵Negative attitudes to condoms do not necessarily have a direct correspondence with failure to use a condom and many youth who have negative perceptions of condoms accept the pragmatic benefits of using a condom (Kelly, Parker and Oyosi, 2002, p. 23). Conversely, even if attitudes towards condoms are becoming more positive, this will not necessarily result in increased actual or intended use, partly because the sexual encounter is complex and rooted in socially constructed practices (Moore, Rosenthal and Mitchell, 1996, pp. 49-51).

⁹⁶The double standards that apply to sexual relations also apply in relation to condom usage, and it is not acceptable for a female to carry a condom or suggest its use, while this is acceptable for a male (Edwards, 1997, p. 169, Margillo and Imahori; 1998, p. 51; Moore and Rosenthal, 1993, pp. 19-20; Ndiaye, 2000, p. 60; Posel, 1992, p. 14; Susser and Stein, 2000; Strebel, 1996).

4.2. CONDOMS AND THE NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP

The nature of the relationship is a key factor in determining whether a condom is used or not and research findings suggest that condom use is higher with casual partners than with regular partners (Cohen and Hubert, 1997, p. 214; Gilgen et al, 2000; Leclerc-Madlala, 2000, p. 29). This is congruent with condom usage amongst Alex youth; although there are no rigid rules about condoms with either cherries or regtes and condom usage with both regtes and cherries is erratic as evidenced in the dialogue with group one:

- M1: Yes we do [wear condoms with regtes].
- M2: No, we don't with the one girl I am going to marry.
- M3: No
- M4: Eiyee, and with casual girlfriends.. it's sometimes we.
- M5: We do wear them, ... but sometimes not.

The fact that condom usage is erratic with both cherries and regtes was reinforced by group two:

- M1: It is like this, maybe I have three cherries, this is the regte, and these two cherries. These cherries, I sleep with them using condoms. But if this regte of mine, I trust her and I love her, I have to sleep with her without using a condom.
- M2: I don't trust any girl, I rather trust my shadow.
- M3: With my regte I use a condom sometimes (laughing) but not most of the times.

Themba said:

If you want to use a condom [with a cherrie] you can use it, if you don't want to use a condom, you just go [have sex].... If your casual doesn't want a condom you don't talk. If you want to use a condom you can use it, if you don't want to use it you never use a condom, you just go [have sex]. Ja [yes]! Because if you can see this neh [right], ... if you have a steady girlfriend you can sit down and talk ... but if you can go to the casual one, you don't speak. You just take her and just go and have sex. And then she'll say "no," but you'll force her to have sex with you because you don't care about her but you care about the steady one. The casual one you don't care about her. You can tell her that if you don't want to have sex with me you can go away. "I don't care about you I'll find another one who'll have sex with me."

Although Themba asserted that with a regte "you can sit down and talk" about a condom, evidence here suggests that this is usually not the case, and both regtes and condoms have little say about whether a condom is used.

Nokuthula claimed that if a cherrie does not want to have sex, or wants to use a condom when having sex, men will find another cherrie who is prepared to have condomless sex:

So its like “O.k., if you don’t want to use a condom, it’s O.k., sharp,” and then he goes to take another girl and says, “I’m asking you out” and everything, then the girl says “Ah, no problem, even though you don’t use a condom, there is no problem.” Yes, and there are many of those who will sleep with no condoms.

As there is no shortage of cherries in the township, males can easily find a replacement cherrie. As being a cherrie has a financial payoff, cherries would not want to lose the opportunity to have sex and therefore may agree to condomless sex. However, as Innocentia claimed, if there is the prospect of getting a new “minister,” the cherrie may refuse to have sex without a condom:

... some of them they don't [insist on a condom] because they don't want to because they'll lose the minister of the transport. But then, if you know that there would be another minister of the transport then you would just walk out [the minister of transport is a man who has a car].

While cherries find it difficult to negotiate a condom, sometimes men use condoms with cherries of their own accord, but it is highly unlikely that a male will want to use a condom with a regte as Voyakazi’s explained:

They [the regtes] are the ones who are dying ‘cause with makwapheni they use a condom and with the regte they don’t. Eyhee, yhaa, the regte is in a worse position because they [men] own you, they give you money for your hair, your clothes, your everything; you don’t have a say, “No I gave this what more do you want?” Then he goes and come back tomorrow you don’t know what was he doing and he gives you AIDS. Being a regte, I can be a regte, but I must use a protection ... eish but that is difficult....

Condoms may be used in early phase of relationships but cease to be used when relationship is said to be serious (Thomson and Holland, 1998, p. 66-67), as a male from group 2 claimed:

Even with us boys, we don’t use a condom. Sometimes you can be in a relationship with a girl maybe for six months using condom. After six months you told yourself “I trust this girl now” and you say “this girl is good girl now.”

I now turn to look at the issue of condoms and trust.

4.3. CONDOMS AND TRUST

Condoms are not neutral objects and decision making about condoms is partly predicated upon the symbolic meanings attached to condom use. Condoms are associated with certain types of sex, (namely sex outside a serious relationship, illicit sex and casual sex) and with certain groups of people (namely people who have sexually transmitted diseases, people who sleep around and with casual relationships) (Gupta and Weiss, 1995, p. 263; Hoosen and Collins, 2001; Skinner, 2001, p. 9; Thompson and Holland, 1998, p. 66-67; Weiss, Whelan, Gupta, 1996).

Negotiating a condom is often seen as an accusation or admission of an illness associated with promiscuous behaviour. It is assumed that if you use a condom you do not trust your partner or you are not to be trusted (Leclerc-Madlala, 2000; Skinner, 2001, p. 9). In contrast to sex with a condom, condomless sex is associated with the demonstration of trust and loyalty and “can in itself become a euphemism for monogamy or love,” as such the use or non use of condoms is deeply symbolic (Thomson and Holland, 1998, p. 67). The word “trust” is used to justify not using a condom with a regte and many youth take it as a given that if you trust your partner, it is not necessary to use a condom. Tebogo says that he does not use a condom with his regte, and his testimony below illustrates how the word “love” has become intertwined with the notion of “trust”:

Trust is a, you know, trust is a very, very, big, big, big word. You trust, you trust but you don't see. Once I start developing those, that thinking pattern that, I'm here and I'm thinking that she's at work, and maybe she might be somewhere, fooling around with someone, I would be miserable, I would be miserable. In fact she hasn't done anything, you know, that would warrant me not to trust her. Like I said, when I use the word love, I really mean the word love, because I respect the word love, I understand the word love. What does it mean? Love means trust.

Tebogo's regte lives in another township, so unlike most men, he does not have daily contact with her. However even though he does not see her everyday he believes he needs to trust her. For most males, however, the issue of “trust” is tied up with the fact that they have daily contact with regtes and know their whereabouts so it is unlikely that they have other boyfriends. Indeed, a key defining characteristic of relationships with regtes, as

compared to cherries, is that the male is involved in the day to day life of the regte and knows her whereabouts at all times as discussed in chapter six. Nkululeko explained:

No, for now as far as I know she [his regte] doesn't have another boyfriend. The reason for that [how I know that], we are on a daily contact. She stays with her sister so every time I go to visit she's with her. So after hours every time I go [see her]. So, for now I am convinced that there isn't anything. I don't realize [suspect] anything, so I trust her, we don't need a condom.

Vusi says he does not use a condom with his regte, as, like Nkululeko, he knows her whereabouts at all times, but he uses a condom with his cherrie:

We [his regte and him] never use, I never use a condom for such time then when she became pregnant. Then when she became pregnant automatically she took a blood test. Then she came and show me the result then I trusted her. Automatically even now I trusted her because I never found her with a boyfriend or maybe [if] she's not at home, she's at a friend's place. So with Lebo [his cherrie] we always use a condom because I'm, I always stress to Lebo that "I understand that we are together but I don't trust you." And even Lebo she's not preventing and I don't want a fourth child. That's the other thing that makes me to use a condom. That's the other thing, because I don't want to have another child.

In a long term relationship, the request to use a condom may be seen as an accusation that you do not trust your partner or an admission that you are not to be trusted, or that you may have an illness associated with unfaithful behaviour (Skinner, 2001, p. 9; Leclerc-Madlala, 2000; Collins and Stadler, 2001, pp. 333-334; Kelly, Parker and Oyosi, 2002, p. 23). In this regard Mpho attested:

Yes [if I ask my regte to use a condom], she might think otherwise [be suspicious] because she will think that you are thinking she is doing something when you are not there. She will also think that you are also doing something outside, so, it [not using a condom] is based on trust.

Indeed, this type of thinking has undermined the negotiating power of the regte to use a condom as illustrated by Thandi's account below of the difficulties a regte has in negotiating a condom, when the issue of trust and faithfulness is raised:

Sometimes you can you say you want to use condoms but when you partner forces you not to use it, or maybe he will say, you are not faithful to him or you do not trust him, why do you want to use condoms and such stuff. He will come with the saying of "Don't you trust me?" Eish, what can you say? ... You end up accepting sleeping with him without using condoms. ... You sleep with him even then [if you know you could become infected] Maybe if you love the guy, if you

refuse to sleep with him without using a condom, maybe you will lose him. He can think you cannot trust him.

Group 5 further attested to how issues of trust are used by men to persuade women to have condomless sex:

F1: So mostly they [males] say “We don’t want to use a condom.”

F2. And they’ll [males] make you feel guilty for using the condom, the guys.

F3: [To make us feel guilty they will say] “Like you don’t trust me. Now you think I’ve got other girlfriends, but now you know [I haven’t],” and they’ll make you feel insecure. So the next time they come what you gonna do? You not gonna use a condom.

Trust is not a straightforward issue. On the one hand youth trust steady partners, and want their partners to trust them, on the other hand, by their own admission, they realise there are many reasons why they should not trust their partners. In this regard Innocentia raises some perplexing issues:

But then [when discussing the use of a condom] I would tell him, “It’s not a matter of trust. It’s a matter of life here.” He might say “You’ve been cheating on me because now you want to use a condom?” Not it’s not like I’ve been cheating on him, but then, I don’t know what he does when I’m gone to school. I will tell him, “I don’t know what you do when I go to school and it’s not that I don’t trust you. I do trust you; but I don’t trust you completely.”

Although Innocentia trusts her boyfriend, she realises that using a condom is a “matter of life,” and thus chooses not to trust her boyfriend “completely” as she does not know what he does when they are not together. However, while realizing the implications of trusting someone completely, if her boyfriend says he doesn’t trust her, Innocentia feels insulted as a steady relationship is supposed to be “based on trust,” a sentiment echoed by many youth:

If my boyfriend comes to me and is like “Innocentia, I don’t trust you.” I would say to him, “What’s the reason of having a relationship when you don’t trust me?” I mean, a relationship is based on trust. Yah, but then people in nowadays, they just, you can trust them but then there is something you cannot trust them with. For instance, you don’t know what he does when you are not there or who he is being with before you. So you see, I think people should always use condom. It doesn’t matter if it’s your husband, [if] it’s your boyfriend, [if] it’s your chicken, or if he’s the minister of the transport you just have to use a condom.

Voyakazi, reflecting on the scenario where she and her regte had sex without a condom and she subsequently discovered that he had not been faithful to her, claims that regtes are more in danger of contracting HIV than cherries as they think they can trust their boyfriends and hence have condomless sex:

The regtes are more, more in a much more risk situation you know, because you think that I'm with him everyday he sleeps with me, yes, he is my boyfriend you are thinking so you can just trust him, and we don't use a condom. [But] you don't know what he does during the day even at work.

Men choose to sometimes use condoms with cherries and are more likely to use a condom with a cherrie than with a regte. Moreover, as not using a condom is a symbolic reaffirmation of status in relationship, regtes may choose not to try and insist on a condom in order to affirm their regte status, witness for example Kwena's regte Anny upon finding out that Kwena had a cherrie:

But now she understands that she's a regte. So, she's just giving me a spirit of saying whenever I sleep with them [cherries], please use a condom. That is what we speak. That is our language. ... Yah, yah, she's pleading to me that I must use a condom [with cherries].

Hence, perceived notions of love and condom usage are contradictory as, while "love" and trust is expressed through unprotected sex rather than by wearing a condom, wearing a condom is perceived as related to infidelity and lack of trust (Bastard et al., 1997, p. 55; Cohen and Hubert, 1997, p. 216; Hoosen and Collins, 2001, p. 12; Wilton, 1997, p. 50).

4.4. KNOWLEDGE

Although, as pointed out in chapter seven, there are a number of myths surrounding condoms, most youth know the benefits of using a condom in relation to HIV prevention. However, even when youth know the benefits of using condoms, they often do not use them (Fullerton, Holland and Oakley, 1995, p. 99; Gilgen et al., 2000, p. 75; Moore and Rosenthal, 1993, p. 132). Indeed, there is no direct correlation between awareness of the benefits of condoms and condom usage. Comments such as those made by Jijobest bear witness to the above:

Yah, we know we must use them, for sure. It's A.B.C., and then the "C," it's the condoms. Condomise. We know, we are telling ourselves that these things

[condoms] can save our lives. We even tell the other youth [to use condoms] ... but then sometimes we do it [use condoms], and other times not.

4.5. ACCESS

Condoms are widely available in South Africa in most areas however; availability does not necessarily entail access. Problems relating to condom distribution include: condoms only being available during clinic hours; condoms being available in places that are not easily accessible; obtaining a condom meant an interpersonal interaction which some youth found embarrassing; although condoms were distributed on request they were not proactively promoted; stocks were often depleted; particularly in close knit communities, it was embarrassing for youth to collect condoms as everyone was aware that the place in the clinic was a condom distribution point; people felt that they were treated by some clinic staff with disrespect; at some centres expired condoms were distributed; the condoms distributed at clinics were not seen as satisfactory, e.g. they were seen as “smelly,” “too thick” and inclined to tear (Kelly, 2000, pp. 6-36).

Youth in my study all reported that condoms were readily available, although some questioned the quality of the condoms. Although condoms are available, Jijobest dispelled the idea that access to condoms equates with using a condom:

Maybe you can have condoms in your pocket or in your house, when you must use them, you say, I am wasting my time. Maybe the girl is busy saying, “I want to go home” and you want to have sex with her, so you think, condoms are going to waste my time. It’s because when you are a man, then it’s because you, you need to have sex now.... And then when you tell yourself you need sex, sometimes it is not possible for you to wait.

As Jijobest’s comments indicate, youth purport that males have a “biological” sexuality associated with urgency and uncontrollable sexual desires when aroused (Collins and Staddler 2001; Hausser, 1997, p. 24; Moore and Rosenthal, 1993; p. 99; Pattman, 2001, p. 19; Posel, 1992; Strebel, 1997; Thorpe, 2001). This is given as a reason by males to explain why condoms are not used even when they are accessible⁹⁷. Other perceived

⁹⁷ In contrast to the perceived “biological” sexuality of males, female sexuality is associated with emotional needs (Moore and Rosenthal, 1993; p. 99).

biological and physical needs that are used to justify not using a condom are discussed below.

4.6. PERCEIVED BIOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL NEEDS

As attested to by group one, it is common for youth to argue that they do not use condoms because condoms reduce the pleasurable feeling of “flesh to flesh” sex:

M1: We say nama nameng [flesh to flesh]. That is real sex. Whereas the pleasure with a condom is not there, you will tell her, you can't eat a sweet with the wrapper on, it

M2: If we are using that sheet [a condom] you cannot feel as you are meant to do, so it is not like proper sex.

M3: Condom makes you feel bored. I can't eat sweet with a paper or cover.

Males object to condoms as they detract from pleasure and it is common to privilege male sexual pleasure (Thomson and Holland, 1998, p. 69; Wilton, 1997, pp. 33-34). The focus on the immediate pleasure of sex, despite the associated high risk of an illness that may only manifest in the future, needs to be understood in the context of the *tata ma* chance logic (Bujra, 2000, p. 14; Hausser, 1997, p. 24; Skinner, 2001, pp. 7-8), and biology is drawn on by youth to explain why condoms are not used.

As well, Seal et al. (1997, p. 159) argue that unsafe sexual practices often occur because they feel sex is a duty to please men owe men and, as they believe that condoms reduce pleasure for men⁹⁸, they find it difficult to assert themselves when it comes to using a condom. In addition, Fine (1992, pp. 38-47) maintains that young women internalize femininity as being self-sacrificing and this puts them at risk.

⁹⁸ Condom usage threatens masculinity and is seen as feminising. If a male agrees to use a condom, he is letting a woman define the terms of the sexual engagement and, as the hegemonic construct of masculinity portrays sexual knowledge and control as the male domain, this is seen as a threat to masculinity. Further unmediated penis/vagina contact is the “culturally” agreed upon norm of ultimate pleasure so a male who uses a condom is seen as deprioritising his own sexual pleasure. This may be deemed feminising because male sexual pleasure is a defining feature of being a man in a heterosexual relationship. Indeed, sex is sometimes not seen as “real sex” unless the male ejaculates inside the vagina. Moreover, risk taking is seen as a masculine activity so men who prefer to use a condom may be seen as effeminate because they do not want to engage in risk taking behaviour (Wilton, 1997, pp. 33-34).

4.7. TRANSACTIONAL SEX AND CONDOMS

When money is exchanged for sex, it is unlikely that women will succeed in negotiating a condom (Heise and Elias, 1995; Hoosen and Collins, 2001; Leclerc- Madlala, 2000, 29; Mane et al., 1994; Ndiaye, 2000, p. 60; Rao Gupta, 2000, p. 4). Moreover when women do not perceive themselves to be sex workers, it is even more difficult to negotiate the use of a condom (Preston-Whyte et al. 2000, p. 188) as, while the relationship between a sex worker and her client is generally “business oriented” and impersonal, the relationship between women who engages in sex in exchange for favours with a man she knows may have some level of intimacy or emotional involvement (Margillo and Imahori, 1998, p. 45). As it will be recalled from chapters five and six, with both regtes and cherries there is some type of relationship and usually money and / or favours are exchanged for sex with males referring to women as prostitutes of a special type, hence making the negotiation of a condom a difficult task:

Themba’s comments draw attention to the fact that males feel entitled to sex if they have spent money on a female:

If I buy something for my girlfriend she’s not independent. I buy something. I buy! I buy! I buy! If I want to have sex with her I’ll have sex. She’ll never tell me that she don’t want to have sex with me because she knows that I’m buying something for her. Buying some clothes, some food, everything... you can give her money to make hairstyle, to buy some food, to buy some clothes. You see, that’s where you control the girl. ... If I don’t want to use a condom I will never use a condom. ... [If she wants to use a condom]. I will be angry and I would tell her that "If you don't want me to have sex with you just tell me. Don't tell me that I must use a condom. Can you eat a sweet in a plastic?" I know she'll say "No," and then let's go [have sex], “If you don't want to, just fuck off.”

Nokuthula echoed that above view:

Some of the ghetto guys will say, “Ok, I took you to the movies, we went for supper, we went for this, blah, blah, blah, and now why you wanna go home? No, don’t go home” and everything, “We’re going to my place.” Fine you go to his place and after that, all of a sudden he wants to have sex with you. He’s like, “No, I did this and that for you so now why you don’t give me something in return,” and all stuff like that, you know, and then still he refuses a condom.

4.8. BALANCE OF POWER AND VIOLENCE

Clearly, the balance of power in sexual relations is crucial in determining sexual practice (Bastard et al., 1997, p. 52; Rao Gupta, 2000, pp. 2-3) and issues around condom use touch on core elements of negotiating power in heterosexual relationships (Becker, 2001, p. 11). As discussed previously, South Africa is a patriarchal society where men exercise power over women and where violence against women is common. It is not unusual for a female to be beaten for requesting to use a condom (Heise, 1995, p. 122; Leclerc-Madlala, 2000, p. 29; Wilton, 1997, p. 31) as amplified by a conversation with group one:

M1: [if a regte asks me to use a condom] I will beat her.

M2: I'll ask her why she wants me to wear a condom?

M3: I'll tell her that I use a condom when I am with my cherry not with her.

M4: I beat her because she is my "regte."

M5: Uwumtshela ukuthi uyinzula [tell her that you are a Zulu].

M4: I am a Zulu - I beat her.

Although Kwena has reached an agreement with his regte that he would use a condom with his cherries but not with her, once, after catching him with a cherry, she requested that he use a condom with her, however Kwena's response was violent and resulted in her being beaten and ultimately they had sex without a condom:

She [his regte] wanted us to use a condom. We once fought over it and I even klapped [hit] her that "No I can't use this. This is useless for me." So then we slept [had sex], so we didn't use this thing [a condom].

This type of response is not unusual in the context of accepted violence against women and in the context of violence against women and the imminent threat of a beating, the potential risks associated with requesting safe sex may seem more daunting than the potential future risk of HIV / AIDS (Wilton, 1997, p. 31).

While both cherries and regtes are often beaten for requesting a condom, a key reason why a regte may be beaten is because her boyfriend will accuse her of not trusting him if she requests that a condom be used. As well, requesting a condom may also be seen as implicitly challenging a male partner's rights to conduct affairs outside relationships (Heise, 1995, p. 122).

Universally, contraceptives are primarily the women's responsibility (Ahlemeyer and Ludwig, 1997, Wilton, 1997, p. 71). However, for a range of reasons interlinked with gender and power, women find it difficult to negotiate the use of condoms (Becker, 2001, p. 2; Hoosen and Collins, 2001, p. 1; Posel, 1992; Tallis, 2000, p. 65). Internationally STD prevention campaigns have encouraged women to use condoms without sufficiently recognising the barriers confronting women in negotiating safer sex with males (Seal, 1997, p. 159). It needs to be acknowledged that women are not necessarily in a position to make decisions about sex as, due to the above factors, men are often in charge of decision making, thus removing power from women (Hoosen and Collins, 2001).

5. CONCLUSION

The task of this chapter has been to look at the ABC and I have argued that there are a number of factors that militate against abstinence, being faithful and using condoms. Indeed, the ABC can be viewed as a rather simplistic approach to a multifaceted problem as, as I illustrated in this chapter and in the preceding three chapters, high risk sexual practices occur within complex material and social structures.

In conclusion, the key factors that need to be considered when advocating ABC and when understandings what factors militate against its implementation are myths and misunderstandings about HIV / AIDS; perceived biological needs; the hegemonic construction of masculinity that is based on multiple sexual partners; the fact that sex is a symbolic and material resource; the exchange of sex for favours and rewards; and violence against women. In the following two chapters I explore these issues using a critical realist approach.

INTRODUCTION TO PART FOUR: A CRITICAL REALIST APPROACH

In the following section of the dissertation I use the methodological and theoretical framework I detailed in chapters three and four to analyse the thematic reading of my data presented in chapters five to eight. Part four consists of two chapters:

- chapter nine: Of Structures and Agency; and
- chapter ten: The Semantics of Sexuality.

In chapter nine I focus primarily on the external structures that constrain and enable youth's sexual practices. I begin the chapter by focusing on agency and awareness. Agency is not only the ability to act as one would choose to regardless of structures, but it is also the necessary knowledge. Therefore, I argue that it is necessary to interrogate notions of knowledge and awareness of HIV / AIDS. While knowledge of HIV / AIDS is necessary, it is a weak determinant of sexual practices, and I maintain that approaches such as the bio-medical approach that over-emphasise knowledge as a determinant in sexual practices, have an inadequate understanding of awareness. I argue that a Gramscian conception of knowledge and awareness is more appropriate than positivistic and quantitative approaches which are common in bio-medical models. The Gramscian notion of common sense replaces a "yes /no" understanding of awareness with a more complex and nuanced understanding of youth's awareness of HIV / AIDS. It recognizes that there is more than one discourse and that discourses co-exist, conflict and compete with each other. Moreover, although one discourse becomes hegemonic, as common-sense is contradictory and fragmented, and partly derived from everyday experience, the scientific discourse will never completely over ride youth's conceptions of HIV / AIDS. Thus, regardless of how much knowledge is channelled to youth, it does not automatically translate into a scientific awareness. Hence, the "knowledge equals agency" equation needs to be challenged.

In the next part of the chapter, section two, I illustrate the centrality of a realist ontology that acknowledges realities that may exist independently of human perceptions and understandings. In section three of the chapter I illustrate that while youth's perceptions

of HIV / AIDS are central, regardless of these perceptions, there are realities, such as the HIV (the transitive dimension), which can lead to death irrespective of the terms used to describe it (the intransitive dimension). I then focus on the centrality of material structures in understanding sexuality and I illustrate how the *tata ma chance* logic can be best understood as partly emanating from the existing material realities of the township.

In section four of this chapter, I reintroduce the concept of intertextuality. I demonstrate that to understand why a particular sexual practice becomes dominant, it is necessary to locate sexual practices within pre-existing structures as sexual practices are always produced in specific contexts.

I explore structures and power in section five of the chapter. I argue that women's choices are seriously constrained by external structures and by the physical and economic power that men exert over them. A focus on material elements of power is an acknowledgement that sexual practices are not purely determined by discursive constructions. Moreover, I illustrate that to understand the power dynamics inherent in sexual relationships, it is important to move away from abstract conceptions of power and to rather look at how power functions through social practices on a day to day basis. In this regard, Foucault's micro-physics of power is useful; however, I contend that the micro-physics of power needs to be read with a Gramscian conception of hegemony that recognizes the broader structural or macro workings of power. Such an understanding of power allows a focus on the day to day but it is understood that these local power relationships take place within a context where patriarchy may be institutionalized so that some forms of power function as structuring and overarching principles.

In section six of this chapter I propose that despite the constraints imposed on women, women's actions are not determined by structures and women do exercise a degree of agency. To illustrate how women exert agency I explore three possible responses to unfaithful men. These are the hegemonic response (women who remain in the relationship, "accept" that their boyfriend is having sex with others and continue to engage in condomless sex with their boyfriend); the negotiated response (women who

remain in the relationship and “agree” to condomless sex with their boyfriends on condition that it is stipulated that they are the regte. They “understand” that their boyfriends will engage in sex with other women and they plead with their men to use a condom with cherries; and the oppositional response (women who leave the relationship).

In section seven I focus on how men’s choices are constrained. I demonstrate that the ingagara identity is, in part, a response to the pre-existing structures in Alex where traditional ways of attaining manhood and status are limited. In the final section of the chapter, section eight, I briefly focus on the reproduction and transformation of structures and I illustrate how both men and women reproduce the conditions that encourage high risk sexual practices.

In chapter ten, I use a CRA to language to explore youth sexuality. I argue that there are inherent sexual drives, and that although sexual acts are experienced via the physical body, sexuality is made sense of through available discourses and it is partly constituted in language; hence, the necessity of focusing on the day-to-day language of Alex youth.

Drawing on the work of the later Foucault, I demonstrate how youth’s bodies are linguistically classified and coded with particular types of sexualities being ascribed to particular bodies. I maintain that to understand sexuality, it is useful to challenge essentialist and biological notions of identity and to focus on how identity is discursively constructed. I look at how sexual identities are performative, i.e. what youth do at a given time, rather than a universal who youth are. The focus on what youth “do” at a given time helps explain how youth can have sexual identities which may conflict with each other. Youth’s identities are based on the construction of differences and I illustrate how the dominant masculinity of ingagara is constituted in opposition to the subordinate masculinity of isithipa. Binaries are used to fix the seemingly mutually exclusive ingagara and isithipa identity, so that language is used to repress alternative versions of masculinity. I also demonstrate how, through binaries, language operates to establish and maintain a normative order in Alex as oppositional concepts are positioned so that one set of values and meanings is privileged over the other. In this way, the cherrie is seen as for

sex and fun, while the regte is seen as suitable for a long term relationship and being the mother of a child; and the ingagara is perceived as the “top dog,” while the isithipa is seen as the inferior masculinity.

I show how the use of metonymy, is a further mechanism whereby language creates and recreates sexual practices. I also illustrate how through the process of interpellation, women are hailed into particular subject positions. I explore how metaphors are used to justify the view of male sexuality as uncontrollable and violent and how market language is used to promote the idea of women as objects to be possessed. I argue that the language of biology and of tradition is used to reinforce myths about male sexuality and to obscure the partially socially constructed nature of sexuality.

In investigating how power operates in part via the symbolic, I show how connotations reinforce the normative order whereby male promiscuity is valorised but females who are perceived to be promiscuous are demeaned. I illustrate how power operates at a discursive level by excluding those who do not conform to the dominant discourse.

I argue that poststructuralists undermine the role that shared meanings play in creating and maintaining sexuality. I demonstrate that the reproduction of sexual patterns of behaviour is facilitated by figurative languages which become shared codes for youth. I also claim that the use of language is not as arbitrary as poststructuralists posit, but rather, it is rooted in material and cultural structures. I argue that while language influences sexual practices, it does not determine sexual practices. I posit that language functions to reproduce sexual patterns, but that language is also a potential arena of resistance and transformation. However, I caution that even when language seems empowering, semantics can be mere words whereby new words simply (re) describe old behaviours.

CHAPTER NINE OF STRUCTURES AND AGENCY

1. INTRODUCTION

The central organising theme in this chapter is structure and agency. I use a critical realist approach to agency and structures to understand the sexual practices of Alex youth that were detailed in chapters five to eight.

A CRA to structure and agency was outlined in chapter four. By way of reminder, agency is not posed in opposition to structures, but rather a CRA asks how structures enable and constrain actions and a structure is conceptualised as the pre-existing conditions in which actions take place. Structures are both internal and external (a purely analytical division) and hence take account of both the symbolic and the physiological and material, respectively. As such, the reductionism of particular approaches that only focus on one phenomenon at the expense of others, such as biological reductionism, material reductionism and linguistic reductionism, are avoided.

I argue that neither the bio-medical approach nor the poststructuralist approach offers the types of insights that a critical realist approach does as they lack a coherent conception of structures and agency. I suggest that it is necessary to reconceptualise “awareness” and to ask questions about agency and structures when considering why knowledge of HIV / AIDS does not translate into changes in sexual practices. I conclude the chapter by focusing on power and illustrating how the agency of women is constrained due to the power balance that favours men.

2. AGENCY AND AWARENESS

Key to debates on youth sexuality is the issue of agency. Agency is the necessary knowledge **and** the ability to act as one would choose to regardless of internal and external structures (Lewis, 2000; Porpora, 1998), and hence issues of agency are germane in considering why knowledge and awareness of HIV / AIDS does not necessarily translate into changed sexual practices.

Although the bio-medical approach has placed much emphasis on knowledge of HIV / AIDS their conception of awareness is inherently flawed. As I argued in chapter three, bio-medical models assume that once individuals are well informed about HIV / AIDS, they will avoid high risk sexual practices. However, it has been well illustrated that while awareness and knowledge of HIV / AIDS is necessary, it is a weak determinant of sexual practices (Campbell et al., 1998, p. 50, Hausser, 1997, p. 235; Ingham and van Zessen, 1997, p. 86, More, Rosenthal and Mitchell, 1996, p. 37; Parker, Dalrymple and Durden, 2000, p. 6; Scott and Mercer; 1994). My findings are congruent with this, as detailed in chapter seven. To partly explain why awareness does not translate into changes in sexual behaviour, I argue it is necessary to redefine definitions of awareness. I maintain that the bio-medical approach, in assuming that individuals will change their sexual practices based on their knowledge, accords too much agency to individuals. My critique of the bio-medical model in this regard is based on the following tenets

- their conception of rational is weak, an argument I pursued in chapter three, and which I shall not revisit here;
- they lack a conception of how structures constrain sexual decision making and they fail to take power and how power impacts sexual choices into account, issues I pick up on in sections 5 and 6 below; and
- their notion of “awareness” is problematic, the focus of the ensuing discussion.

2.1. AWARENESS AND INFORMATION

Researchers and practitioners working within the biomedical model assume that once youth are presented with “the facts” about HIV / AIDS, youth will change their behaviour accordingly and avoid high risk sexual practices. As such, researchers working within the bio-medical model focus on questions such as

- whether youth have access to accurate HIV / AIDS information;
- whether the media (e.g. television, radio, brochures, etc) used to disseminate this information is appropriate;

- who the best mediators of messages (e.g. parents, teachers, health professionals, teachers, etc) are; and
- how much knowledge of HIV / AIDS youth have.

While the bio-medical model asks important questions (some of which I explored in chapters five to eight) by focusing on these questions, often posed as dualistic “yes or no answers”⁹⁹, it is not possible to glean the types of insights that are needed to understand why youth engage in high risk sexual practices even when they have been presented with knowledge about HIV / AIDS. Indeed, as illustrated, particularly in chapter seven, Alex youth have access to HIV / AIDS messages via a number of sources however they still engage in high risk sexual practices. As such it is necessary to interrogate notions of “awareness” of HIV / AIDS and to extend the notion of “awareness” from “aware or not aware” to a more complex and nuanced conception of youth’s understandings, awareness and knowledge. I argue that in order to do this, it is useful to build on the Gramscian notion of commonsense as outlined in chapter four.

2.2. NO COHERENT MASTER DISCOURSE

The bio-medical notion of awareness is implicitly premised on the idea that there is one central discourse and that once the scientific discourse has been introduced to youth, this scientific “master” discourse of “awareness” will replace youths’ previous understandings. Unlike bio-medical models, both poststructuralists and critical realists recognize that there are many conflicting discourses operating simultaneously at any given time, although some discourses become hegemonic. Moreover, the bio-medical model does not take cognisance of the fact that youth consciousness does not form coherent wholes that can be replaced by another coherent whole discourse (i.e. the scientific discourse). To be sure, youth discourses are often contradictory and fragmented, as captured by the Gramscian concept of commonsense whereby

⁹⁹ Bio-medical research is rooted in positivism and, as I pointed out in chapters two and three, positivistic research designs tend to focus on measurable quantifiable data such as knowledge, attitudes and practices, and do not capture the complexities of sexual behaviour.

“commonsense” is described as an episodic and disjointed complex of beliefs that guide everyday life but lacks the potential to put forward a coherent view of life (Gramsci, 1971, pp. 323, 324, 420). Moreover the Gramscian notion of commonsense recognizes that knowledge is not read in a vacuum, and that views about HIV / AIDS are constructed and reconstructed based on real day to day life experiences of youth. The implication of this, is that youth’s awareness and knowledge of HIV / AIDS will not be based primarily on what they are told by educators. An example of how “knowledge and awareness” is based on day to day experiences can be witnessed by focusing on youth’s views about the existence of HIV. Although urban youth in South Africa are exposed to a myriad of messages proclaiming the existence of HIV, based on their day to day experiences, youth maintain that HIV does not seem “real” as they have not seen infected people as summed up by Themba:

... in Alex there is no grave with somebody who have been buried with AIDS you see. They bring all these fictitious accuses [accusations / excuses], “No he suffered from the headache, no he suffered from pneumonia, no he suffered from TB [Tuberculosis]” So it is very difficult for people to say there is AIDS. Unless they say, these people who have died, “he died because of AIDS,” and people will start taking it serious. So AIDS to them is a myth, there is something existing but not around them. Somewhere, far from them. Yah, it's far from them and that's the problem, why people doesn't take it serious. ... people think there is AIDS but somewhere far from them. So it's not nearer to them, it cannot happen to them.

As Themba’s comments indicate, it seems as if there are no people in Alex who are HIV positive or who have died from AIDS related deaths. As indicated in chapter seven, due to the stigma attached to being HIV positive, many people keep their HIV status hidden and families do not reveal when a family member has died from an AIDS related illness. This, coupled with the fact that HIV may not manifest in physical ways for many years means, that youth “do not see HIV,” and hence despite all the messages about HIV, it is difficult for youth to believe in HIV / AIDS as their everyday experiences negate the existence of the virus. As such although youth’s say they know that there is HIV, based on the continuous exposure to HIV messages, this knowledge is combined with, and competes with, knowledge based on youth’s day to day lived realities and this latter

knowledge negates the existence of HIV. The knowledge based on messages combined with knowledge based on lived experiences is what constitutes commonsense.

The notion of commonsense is well illustrated by looking at the HIV / AIDS discourse and how it is comprised of lay conceptions, gaps, myths and misconceptions, as well as aspects of the scientific discourses. Although lay discourse co-exist with scientific discourses, often the lay discourse directly contradicts the scientific discourse, as was illustrated above and as was discussed in depth in chapter seven. The notion of commonsense is summarized in the diagram below.

Table 9.1. Commonsense

| | Commonsense | |
|--|--|---|
| Issue / question. | Scientific discourse. | Lay conceptions, myths and misconceptions. |
| 1. Does the HIV virus exist? | There is a HI virus. | It doesn't seem real, "it is somewhere out there." |
| 2. How is the virus transmitted? | Through sex and contact with blood. | Casual contact, pollution, condoms. |
| 3. Can it infect anyone? | Yes. | It is more likely to infect black people, poor people, people who are promiscuous, especially women. It is less likely to infect people who seem trustworthy and responsible. |
| 4. Can the transmission of the virus be prevented? | Yes. | No. Fatalistic attitudes, "it is beyond our control, we are all going to get it anyway." |
| 5. How can the transmission be prevented? | Condoms, being faithful, abstinence. | If you have sex with someone who seems responsible, clean and trustworthy. If you wait a certain amount of time before having unprotected sex (3-6 months). |
| 6. Can you tell if someone is infected? | No. | Yes. You can tell by looking, if the person looks clean and healthy and their behaviour seems trustworthy they are not infected. If someone loses weight or has pimples they are likely to be infected. |
| 7. Is there a cure? | No. | Minority: virgins and sangomas (traditional healer). |
| 8. Is there a treatment? | No. | No, once you have it you are doomed to an imminent death, no sense of interventions that lead to healthy and long life. |
| 9. Testing. | There is a test which indicates if you are -ve or +ve. | You should avoid testing as you will become very depressed if you test positive and anyhow there is nothing you can do (minority exceptions). If your partner tests negative, you are negative. |

The above diagram confirms that youth do not operate within either one discourse or another, and as such, it is fruitless to see discourses as binary opposites, i.e. scientific discourse versus the lay discourse, rather youth operate between and within discourses.

Indeed youth consciousness is not divided into neat categories but it can be better understood by the concept of commonsense. While youth have some understanding of the scientific discourse and have “bought into it” it does not replace their own understandings which are derived from everyday experiences. It is this hybrid and contradictory discourse that informs their understanding of HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, the common sense worldview is often taken as a self-evident truth, through which youth construct their understandings of the world and their sexualities. In conclusion, there is no “master discourse” that erases and replaces other discourses, hence the “knowledge equals agency” equation implicit in bio-medical models, needs to rework its understanding of knowledge if choice and agency are to be meaningful concepts.

3. AGENCY, PERCEPTIONS AND A REALIST ONTOLOGY

Often voluntaristic approaches are grouped together with subjectivist approaches (as opposed to deterministic and objectivistic approaches). The former approaches lack a realist ontology and tend to focus on meanings at the expense of structures and hence err on the side of according individuals too much agency. A realist ontology acknowledges the realities that may exist independently of human perceptions and understandings (Sayer, 2000, p. 12; Scott, 2000, p. 14; Stones, 1996, pp. 29-30), and I argue that such an ontology is key to the study of sexuality.

While some bio-medical models have a realist ontology in the sense that they are aware biological drives and the physical nature of the HIV, they do not pay sufficient attention to material realities such as poverty. As well, they under-emphasise perceptions and social constructions of HIV / AIDS and how these may influence sexual practices. At the other extreme, approaches (such as poststructuralism) focus on meanings and perceptions, but their lack of ontology detracts from the fact that regardless of what youth (or anyone) think or say, there are material and physical realities that exist independently of humans and their knowledge¹⁰⁰.

¹⁰⁰ In this regard, as pointed out in chapter three, it is argued that it is only because the lived reality of postmodernist intellectuals is not characterized by the violence, terror and degradation of an “obviously existing reality” related to poverty, starvation, AIDS, drugs, and gang warfare, that these intellectuals can engage in the idea that reality is entirely a mental construction (Rosenan, 1992, pp. 111-115).

A CRA is able to overcome the above mentioned weaknesses of the bio-medical and poststructuralist approaches. Indeed its realist ontology and relativist epistemology means that while it recognizes that material, biological, physical and physiological phenomena are central components in an analysis of sexuality, it also pays attention to the social meanings and perceptions of humans.

3.1. A REALIST ONTOLOGY AND THE PHYSICAL: BIOLOGICAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL REALITIES

A convincing argument of the centrality of a realist ontology and the physiological aspects that exist regardless of linguistic constructions can be witnessed by focusing on youths' perceptions of the HIV virus, and noting how, regardless of youths' views, descriptions and / or knowledge, there is a virus that leads to "AIDS" and ultimately to death. I will draw on two examples from my interviews to elucidate this point. First, while HIV was originally referred to as "slim's disease," it is now commonly referred to as Z3 in the township. Z3 is a reference to a speedy BMW; analogous to the fact that once HIV "gets you," you will vanish as quickly as the BWM Z3. While youths' perceptions, accounts and the labels they use to refer to HIV are transitive, HIV is a (relatively¹⁰¹) intransitive reality, based on scientific and physical evidence, and it exists regardless of what youth call the virus. Second, regardless of how youth understand HIV, it does exist, and so even though youth believe that HIV / AIDS "is not really real," this perception of "unrealness" does not detract from the fact that HIV / AIDS is real and does kill. As discussed above, the perception of "unrealness" is partly due to the fact that it is not possible to tell if a person is HIV positive, and partly because of the stigma associated with being HIV positive and the discrimination against HIV positive people, so that many people choose not to disclose their HIV positive status and often AIDS related deaths are covered up by families. As such, although youth have heard about HIV, most youth say they have not seen an HIV positive person, nor attended a funeral of someone who has died from an AIDS related illness. Hence youth find it difficult to accept that AIDS is real and that it can happen to them. Although youths' perceptions are critical, and understanding where these views arise from is imperative, indeed fictitious views and

¹⁰¹ The virus does genetically mutate, especially in response to anti-retrovirals.

myths need to be corrected as what youth believe does impact behaviour, a purely subjectivist approach is not adequate. Indeed focusing on meanings and perceptions or knowledge or social constructions of HIV / AIDS is important, but, it needs to be complemented by a realist ontology that recognizes realities regardless of perceptions. As such, a CRA argues that while the meanings youth attach to HIV are important, regardless of youths' beliefs, there is a physical HIV virus which is transmitted in a particular way and leads to AIDS and ultimately to death. In addition to physiological and biological realities, a realist ontology takes account of material structures. In addition to focusing on biological and physiological realities, it is important to consider material realities and by exploring the tata ma chance logic it is evident that material realities are central in an analysis of sexuality.

3.2. A REALIST ONTOLOGY AND MATERIAL REALITIES

As discussed in chapter five, the tata ma chance philosophy encourages high risk sexual activities. It is based on hyper-masculinity characterised by sexual prowess and multiple partners for men, it is characterized by fatalism and pessimism about the future and it espouses a "live for today and enjoy life while you can" rhetoric.

Both bio-medical models and poststructuralism underplay the material structures that are key to understanding the tata ma chance logic. Bio-medical models focus on the fact that the tata ma chance attitude is "not rational." They purport that once youth know about HIV / AIDS they will abandon the "irrational" tata ma chance logic and change their sexual practice into safer ones. However, youth are not focused on their future health but are present focused, as epitomized by the "live for today" slogan. As Tsepo explained, "I think most of the girls they don't look at the future. They want to fulfil their needs now.... Eish, eish, that's the life. It's about living for today."

Poststructuralist models, like bio-medical models, lack a conception of structures. Indeed, poststructuralists primarily regard the tata ma chance logic as a cultural and linguistic construct, thus ignoring the material level and lapsing into idealism. While a CRA recognizes the significance of the symbolic, thus avoiding reductive materialism, it

equally recognizes the importance of material structures. As such, the “live for today” attitude which forms a central part of the *tata ma chance* logic must be seen as partly emanating from the external material realities of the township. Indeed the views expressed by participants from group one and two below cannot be understood without locating such attitudes within an obvious existing reality and as outlined above, youth views are partly derived from day to day lived experiences:

Group 1. M: I don't see any future. People, when they finished school, they knew they were going to work... [Today] there's no life for you.... you just stay at home, and there's nothing you can do anyway, except to be a criminal or something.

Group 2: M: [Youth just take chances because]... we don't have a future because we are doing many things which may find ourselves dead in hospital or in jail, so we don't know where we are going with our future.

A CRA correctly understands the above pessimism about the future as partly emanating from the material structures in Alex; to be sure, as evident in chapters five to eight, there is a high level of crime and violence in Alex, there is a lack of access to education and training, there are high levels of poverty and unemployment, and it is a fact that many youth do end up dead or in jail. Hence the material realities of Alex influence youth's views and practices and the fact that violence and death are ubiquitous in Alex leads youth to maintain that as one is constantly aware of death, it is necessary to make use of opportunities as they present themselves. As My-Nigger said:

If I do not make use of this opportunity [to have sex], which I had, if tomorrow I die, I do not know ... You will not know the day for you to go up. You must fuck when the time is there. ... It is not you who decides when it is your time [to die.]

Thus in understanding youth sexuality it is imperative to have a realist ontology that takes account of material structures. A CRA is able to do this and its interpretive structural method, allows an account of material structures as well as meanings and perceptions.

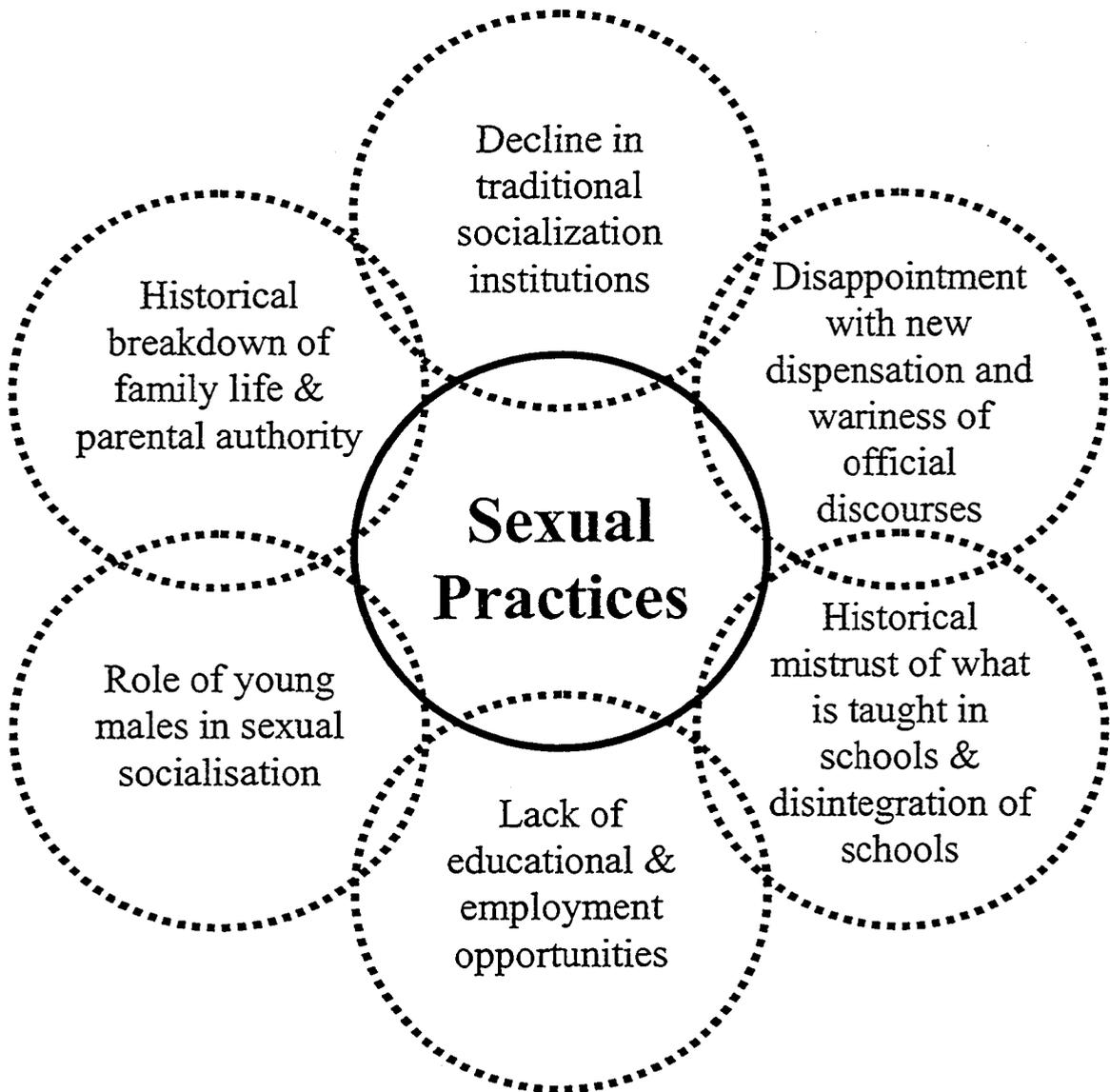
4. STRUCTURES PRE-EXIST ACTIONS: INTERTEXTUALITY

A CRA emphasises that sexual practices occur within pre-existing structures that are the result of actions taken in the past and that structures are not ontologically reducible to people and their actions (Lewis, 2000; Archer, 1995). The concept intertextuality

(Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, pp. 272-280) captures how sexual practices develop within pre-existing structures. Intertextuality offers some insights into why peer norms, which may be mediated by other messages (for example messages from parents and school), in most communities, tends to be stronger in South African townships¹⁰². The intertextual factors, as discussed in chapters five to eight, are represented in the diagram below.

¹⁰² The influence of media on youth is also significant; however, this was not a focus of my discussions with youth.

FIGURE 9.1
INTER-TEXTUALITY



By locating sexual practices within pre-existing conditions, a CRA recognizes competing ideas and discourses and helps to explain why particular sexual practices become dominant, something neither the biomedical nor poststructuralist approach does. Intertextuality also reminds us that, other than for analytical purposes, there is no clear break between the past and present, and that although structures “pre-exist” actions, actions transform and reproduce structures so that that structures are constantly in flux.

5. STRUCTURES AND POWER

As I argued in chapter four, a CRA avoids dualistically phrased debates of “structure versus agency” and rather asks “how do structures enable and constrain actions?” By asking “how do structures enable and constrain actions?” structures are not positioned in opposition to agency and, as such, both extreme voluntarism and extreme determinism are avoided. In the next chapter I explore internal structures by focusing on the language that youth use, hence in this chapter I focus on external structures to show how women’s sexual choices are constrained; by way of example I focus on power.

In understanding structure and agency it is imperative to explore “power” as the balance of power in sexual relations strongly influences sexual practices (Bastard et al., 1997, p. 52; Baylies and Bujra, 1995; Rao Gupta, 2000, pp. 2-3; Tallis, 2000; Wilton; 1997). Although a major weakness of the bio-medical model is that it ignores power, power is both a focus of poststructuralism and a CRA. However, as argued in chapter four, while the poststructuralist conception of power is useful in some regards, it is also flawed as it lacks an analysis of the material and physical nature of power and it does not have a conception of hegemony. In the section below I look at how a CRA to power contributes to understanding high risk sexual practices amongst youth. Like poststructuralists, a CRA recognises that power operates through the symbolic, but a CRA rejects the poststructuralist overemphasis on language as this undermines the concrete basis of power. Hence a CRA takes both the symbolic and material aspects of power into account. Moreover, although the poststructural call to focus on micro narratives reminds us of the centrality of exploring how power works at a concrete day to day level with its own

nuances in each local context, this understanding of power ignores hegemony, a concept which is central to a CRA.

Symbolic and linguistic power is discussed in the subsequent chapter and in the sections below; I will focus specifically on power as it pertains to physical power and economic power.

5.1. MEN'S PHYSICAL POWER

If, as Foucault posits, power is a relationship whereby one agent's actions affect another's getting them to do what they might not otherwise have done in a situation where there are choices (Mills, 1997, p. 36; Sawicki, 1991, p. 21; Tagg, 1981, p. 285), then it is clear that men's physical power undermines agency and contributes to women engaging in high risk sexual behaviour.

As outlined in chapters five to eight, Alex is a violent context and violence against women by both strangers and within intimate relationships has become normalized. In chapters five to eight I provided many examples of the physical violence men exert over women. There are a number of "reasons" why men beat girls, including if a male does not get his own way, requesting a condom, perceived disobedience or lying, going out against a male's wishes, being found in another man's company or being perceived to be cheating, wearing unacceptable attire, to demonstrate love, and for wanting to leave a relationship. Innocentia highlighted three pervasive forms of sexual violence, namely: violent coercion by strangers at gunpoint to have sex; being pressured to "have sex everyday" within a relationship; and being assaulted for leaving a relationship. She, like others, also alluded to the sense of powerlessness due to the lack of police support in these matters and concluded "... you are not gonna have that power to say no or to do anything to him." This is a powerful testimony to the fact that women's choices and actions are seriously constrained.

While physical coercion undermines women's agency and decision making, this does not imply that women have no choice, but rather that their choices are limited; as summed up by Lerato's comment that:

They can take you anyway, those boys for sex or what... so then we can rather decide to just have sex... just think and then do it, because sometimes **you do not have to decide** [you have no choice]. (my emphasis).

Lerato's statement highlights the complexity in issues of "choice," indeed Lerato says "we can rather decide to have sex," but she also says that women have sex because they "do not have to decide," (have no choice). Lerato says that women "just think and then do it," showing a degree of consciousness, and thus one cannot argue that all sense of agency is undermined. Rather the question that needs to be asked is "what are the other available choices?" When choices are limited and each choice is as unappealing as the next, then it needs to be argued that actions are constrained and agency is limited.

A further example of limited agency is evident in relation to condom usage and being beaten and as discussed in chapters five to eight, it is common for women to be beaten if they request a condom. Witness for example Anny, Kwena's regte who requested that he use a condom with her after she caught him cheating. The consequence of her "asking" and asserting her agency was a beating followed by condomless sex, as Kwena reported; "We once fought over it [using a condom] and I even klapped [beat] her that 'No I can't use this. This is useless for me.' So then we slept [had sex], so we didn't use this thing [a condom]." Kwena went on to state that now Anny "accepts" that she and Kwena will not use a condom, although she pleads with him to use condoms with his cherries. This vignette underscores how men's physical power influences women's "decision making." While Anny may have chosen to "accept" that Kwena and her would not use a condom, her other choices were not very attractive. One choice would have been to be beaten each time she requested a condom, a fate more tangible, more imminent and more definite than the potential risk of contracting HIV / AIDS. A second choice was to leave, something that would be very difficult as she was pregnant, had no family and was unemployed. Moreover, as detailed in chapter five, as group 2 maintained, women who leave relationships often risk a violent response by doing so:

M1. These girls, when they tell him they want to leave him, he takes a gun and tells her "I'll kill you if you tell me that." My friend, he almost killed her because she wanted to leave. No, then she had to stay and today, I do not know."

M.2. If you tell him this is the end of our relationship, they make sure they hurt you. Cos I told this guy and he slapped me

In light of the above, Anny "decided" to stay with Kwena and to continue engaging in condomless sex with him, while hoping that he would use a condom with cherries. Annie's choices and actions, like most other women in Alex, were restricted and constrained by the physical power that men exert over women, making the notion of consent problematic (Richardson, 1997, p. 162). Indeed, while Anny could have decided "not to sell her labour power," so to speak, the alternative choice of "starving to death," leaves the concept "choice" as a highly ironic and empty category.

A further way in which power is exerted by men is via the physical policing and monitoring of women. While a male only sees his cherrie from time to time, he has daily contact with his regte as way of monitoring her. Indeed, as explained in chapter six, a key defining characteristic of relationships with regtes, as compared to cherries, is that the male can keep the regte under scrutiny. As Kwena noted in this regard:

Yah, so a cherrie is somebody else that currently, I'm not too sure whether she is with somebody now, because I'm not like involved in her day-to-day life basis. But then in terms of the regte, my closest girlfriend. I mean, I know where she is right now. I know what's currently happening with her. I know where she is and then I can check on her. ...

Policing of regtes is an "everyday practice" of youth that reveals how power works. In addition to men's physical power, men have economic power over women and this too constrains women's agency.

5.2. ECONOMIC POWER

As noted in chapters five to eight in the context of a culture of consumerism and poverty (Tiefenthaler and Farmer, 2000, pp. 177-199) and where women have limited resources, many women are financially dependent on men for both subsistence and / or conspicuous

consumption. This financial dependence on men is evident in the terminology women use to describe men, such as “providers,” “ministers” and “ATMs.” As sex is often the only resource women have access to they often trade sex for favours and the transactional nature of sex introduces a further power dynamic into sexual relationships as males believe that they are entitled to sex and to control the conditions of sex, as they have “invested” in a woman. This sentiment was powerfully summed up by Themba:

... if I buy something for my girlfriend she's not independent ... She'll never tell me that she doesn't want to have sex with me because she knows that I'm buying something for her. You see, that's where you control the girl... If I don't want to use a condom I will never use a condom.

Paradoxically, the very same structures that constrain women's actions and choices, enable men's sexual practices and Vusi draws a direct correlation between poverty and the ability of men to determine the conditions of sex:

And then there's also this scenario about poverty. ... Sometimes just for two beers, buying two beers, you can get a nice one without a condom. ... **because** the woman is hungry, she needs to put food on the table (my emphasis).

Indeed as illustrated in chapters five, six and eight, when women swap sex for money, it is less likely they will be able to exert agency and more likely that men will control the conditions of sex.

Power is both overt and covert and the ramifications of power for sexual practices are far ranging. For example, women may exchange sex for protection against violence from strangers, or stay in a relationship even though a boyfriend is unfaithful and / or abusive as she is afraid to leave and / or agree to condom less sex. Clearly, in the sexual arena, men dominate women, and their physical as well as economic power contributes to their ability to decide on the conditions of sex undermining any theory of extreme agency.

In addition to the material structures that enables men's sexual behaviour and constrains women's choices, it is important to reject reductive materialist approaches (Porpora, 1998, pp. 346-347) and to understand the symbolic and cultural structures in Alex that

enable men but constrain women. Language and the symbolic will be explored in the following chapter.

5.3. POWER AND HEGEMONY

In understanding agency and power, while Foucault's micro-physics of power and negation of a top down theory of power is useful to reveal local instances where women challenge men the micro-physics of power is most usefully read with a Gramscian concept of hegemony (Hall, 1997; Morrow, 1991). Indeed women's struggle for agency always occurs in a hegemonic context where patriarchal relations are institutionalized and it is evident that patriarchy is a structuring principle or overarching regime (Fiske, 1996, p. 216; Hall in Grossberg, 1996, pp. 135-136). For example, as illustrated above, in a patriarchal society such as South Africa, women have little access to education and jobs, hence often their only resource is sex, so that they are vulnerable to men as men's economic power and this affords men advantages over women and creates an unequal balance of power. Indeed, the *cherrie / regte* discourse, which categorises women partly based on their sexual functions, may not be able to function in a material environment where women have access to resources other than sex.¹⁰³

6. WOMEN'S "CHOICES" – AGENCY

Although women operate within constraining structures and hegemonic structures of power where their choices are limited, women do have a degree of agency (Baylies and Bujra, 1995, p. 194; Flax, 1990, p. 181; Heise, 1995, pp. 124-125), and the structures which limit women's actions constrain but do not determine how women act. To be sure, the nature of the real constrains and enables what happens but does not pre-determine what will happen (Sayer, 2000, pp. 11-12). Moreover, a CRA avoids determinism as human agency is not reduced to an epiphenomenon of pre-existing social structures and it acknowledges that people have the ability to engage creatively with historically given material and cultural resources (Lewis, 2000; Porpora, 1998).

¹⁰³ Of course sex is often a commodity even where women have other choices and in material environments which are not characterized by poverty, and we need to avoid reductive arguments which explain transactional sex as resulting purely from material factors and lack of resources. Moreover, it is necessary to stress that it is also the cultural milieu that facilitates transactional sex.

In the discussion above and in chapter six I discussed the structures that constrain women's choices and I outlined why regtes stay with boyfriends who are not faithful to them. However, although there are structures which seriously undermine the ability of women to choose, women do make choices. In the diagram below I represent three possible actions that regtes take upon finding out that their boyfriend has been unfaithful. These responses can be seen as existing on a continuum ranging from acceptance of hegemonic practices to an oppositional response with a negotiated response in the middle (adapted from Hall, 1980a, pp. 136 – 138; Morely, 1980).

Table 9.2.

| Hegemonic Response | Negotiated Response | Oppositional Response |
|---|---|--|
| Women remain in the relationship and they accept that their boyfriend is having sex with cherries and they continue to engage in condomless sex with their boyfriend. | Women remain in the relationship and "agree" to condomless sex with their boyfriends on condition that it is stipulated that they are the regte. They "understand" that their boyfriends will engage in sex with other women and they plead with their men to use a condom with cherries (although they have no way of knowing whether or not their boyfriends do actually use a condom with cherries.) | Upon finding out that their boyfriend has a cherrie, women leave the relationship. |

Both the hegemonic response as well as the negotiated response are high risk sexual activities and put women at an increased risk of contracting HIV. Although women are aware of the dangers posed by unprotected sex with unfaithful boyfriends, most women still engage in condomless sex (the hegemonic response), and the reasons for this were detailed in chapter six. There is limited research on women who actually do leave relationships and future research to explore factors that enable women to leave relationships (oppositional response) is necessary.

Like regtes, cherries also exert a degree of agency. Although cherries know that they are for fun and sex, and they usually are aware that the man they are having sex with has a regte, some cherries negotiate for concessions and privileges. Witness for example Dineo who says:

I'm the makwapheni [cherry] unfortunately. He's got a woman with a child ... I know she's around, it's up to me to accept the situation ... I know there's that other woman but I don't want to feel second best. It's up to him to make me feel I'm the only one.

Thus although Dineo is a cherry and operates within the cherry framework, accepting the presence of a regte, she exerts agency by ensuring that her boyfriend makes her feel like the "only one."

A further example that I shall draw on in the following chapter to explore issues of agency is the chicken discourse. The chicken discourse, as was described in chapter six, is an interesting example of how women exert agency by (re)inventing their sexuality and subverting the dominant patriarchal discourse by defining men as chickens and redefining their relationship to men from that of being passive objects of men (cherries or regtes who are fucked or made love to and provided for) to agents who do something to men (extract money from them in the same way that a chicken is plucked).

Although in the above scenarios, it can be argued that women do have choices and exert agency, even when women do exert agency, agency should not necessarily be equated with resistance or with the transformation of structures, and women's agency and choices often do not challenge the power dynamics between men and women.

7. HOW MEN'S CHOICES ARE CONSTRAINED

Although, as discussed above, many of the structures that constrain women enable men's sexual choices, there are also structures that constrain men's choice. For example, if one considers the ingagara identity and the fact that masculinities are created as responses to particular pre-existing conditions, then it is apparent that the construction of the ingagara identity is a response to a constraining set of structures that Alex youth find themselves

in. For example a lack of access to further education and training; a high unemployment rate, the new political dispensation where youth do not play the political role they used to, and the decline in significance of traditional institutions whereby manhood was attained via very specific processes means that men have had to find new ways to illustrate their “coming of age.” Within this context young men had to develop realistic and creative ways of attaining status, and hence the construct *ingagara* whereby a “real man” is defined by how many women he has sex with and being involved in crime to facilitate access to wealth, smart clothes and fancy cars. Witness for example Kwena:

If I have many girlfriends, then I see myself as *ingagara*. Wherever I go, no one can claim he is better than me. ... Yes. If you have six ladies, you are in control, if you are driving a BMW, always with good ladies in the car, playing good music, wearing nice clothes, then, I am *Ingagara*.

Within the constraining structures of Alex, *ingagara* has become hegemonic because youth needed to find a new way to achieve the status of manhood.

8. THE REPRODUCTION OF STRUCTURES

As sexual practices are enabled and constrained by structures, it is important to understand how structures are reproduced and transformed. A CRA argues that, structures pre-exist actions and are the conditions in which actions take place, and actions transform and reproduce structures. Ideally research that explains reproduction and transformation needs to be longitudinal in nature, and the reproduction and transformation of structures needs to be followed up in future research on sexuality. Moreover, despite the connotation of the term “transformation,” transformation is not always positive, and similarly, “reproduction” is not always negative. As well, often reproduction and transformation occur simultaneously and are often not due to acts of resistance but are the result of unconscious actions and unintended consequences.

One way in which structures are reproduced is through physical coercion. Indeed, violence is both a reflection of unequal power relationships, and it contributes to the reproduction of unequal power relationships (Maynard and Winn, 1997, pp. 175-177).

Men reproduce the dominant structures by encouraging a masculinity that is based on multiple sexual partners, and not only do men respect young males who have “many women,” but men police each other; exclude men who do not have multiple partners and also monitor how many sexual partners their friends have. One way of policing, as described in chapter six is by public competitions; as My-Nigger explained:

... we do have a locker, we do have names we call each other names [nicknames]. There is ten of us there, we do have months and years on our lockers [a calendar]. If today, I do have someone [a girl], when I am going outside, I tick. ... A red one [tick] means. I gave her a fix [had sex]. A black one [tick] means, she refused, she did not want or maybe she had period pains, things like those. [Those with red ticks], they are top of the log ... King of the week.

In this way the structure that facilitate and encourage high risk sexual practices are reproduced by men, putting both men and women at increased risk of contracting HIV.

Both women and men are actively involved in constructing and reproducing gender inequalities through the creation of masculinities and femininities that serve to oppress women and men (Aggleton, 2000a, pp. 6-8).

One way in which women are partly responsible for reproducing the conditions that encourage high risk sexual practices is their preference to date an ingagara rather than an isithipa. Witness, for example, Innocentia who says:

We like ghetto guys [ingagaras], ‘cause they do take [steal] cars and they do all that crime, take cars, and they drive these BM cars...., and we girls, you know, we just fall for it ... ‘ cause we girls here, we just like being in nice cars.

And Vusi explained that:

The unemployment is very high and there are boys who steal and they’ve got money. They [females] know there are those who hi-jack and they’ve got money almost everyday, and then they fall in love with them. ...If you are not stealing they are not, they are not falling in love with you.

As women benefit financially from being with ingagaras, as well as attaining a degree of status, they promote the popularity of the ingagara as “top dog,” and many women prefer to go out with ingagaras rather than an isithipa, even though this may mean engaging in high risk sexual activities. As such women reproduce the very structures that increase

youths' risk of HIV infection. Dineo, who is Eric's cherrie, attests to the fact that women prefer ingagaras:

... the ingagara, we like them... Ja, ingagara, he's very financially able ... When you see his car, you know automatically ... if I'm with him driving the BMW or the M coupet, then everybody wants to see, "who's the girl on his left side?"

The above examples illustrate how social relations emerge through subtle hegemonic processes of consent rather than coercion. In this instance the social relations that women enter into are not imposed on them as the interests of the dominant group. Rather the prospect of dating an ingagara is offered to them as a reflection of their own desires in which they can recognize themselves; for example as "the girl on his left side." Although in the example above, the hegemonic moment of "what women want," is based on "consent," hegemony does not rule out the coercion that women are subjected to or the constraining structures in which women make choices.

Structures can also be reproduced when women seemingly challenge the status quo. For example, in the chicken discourse women linguistically challenge the idea of women as passive subjects and they remake men as chickens that they can extract money from. However, ultimately gender relations are reproduced whereby money is exchanged for sex, and as I have argued, when sex is transactional sex, women have less negotiating power over the conditions of sex, hence high risk sexual practices are reproduced as an unintended consequence.

9. CONCLUSION

I have illustrated how structures both enable and constrain sexual practices. Given that agency is not only the ability to act as one would choose to regardless of structures, but is also the necessary knowledge, I have argued that it is necessary to interrogate notions of knowledge and awareness of HIV / AIDS and I proposed that a Gramscian conception of knowledge and awareness is more appropriate than positivistic and quantitative approaches which are common in bio-medical models. Drawing on the concept of intertextuality, I have illustrated the centrality of locating sexual practices within pre-

existing structures and I have strongly argued for a realist ontology that acknowledges realities that may exist independently of youth's perceptions and understandings.

By focusing on day to day practices, I have demonstrated how women's choices are seriously constrained by external structures and by the physical and economic power that men exert over them, however, I also argue that while women's choices are limited by structures, women's actions are not determined by structures and women do exercise a degree of agency. I also briefly focused on the reproduction and transformation of structures and illustrated how both men and women reproduce the conditions that encourage high risk sexual practices. In the following chapter I focus on the everyday use of language by youth.

CHAPTER TEN

THE SEMANTICS OF SEXUALITY¹⁰⁴

1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I use a CRA to language to explore youth sexuality. As illustrated in chapters three and four, a CRA recognises the usefulness of the linguistic turn; however, while it recognises symbolic and semantic arrangements, it is also acutely aware of the material and physical environment.

In what follows, I undertake an analysis of the concrete day to day functioning of language and how in the discursive realm, oppression, power, reproduction, transformation and resistance occur. I argue that although there are sex drives and although sexual acts are experienced (at least in part) via the physical body, sexuality and desire are made sense of via available narratives and are partly constituted in the realm of language. I focus on identity as a discursive practice and on the use of everyday language that has been incorporated into the township lexicon; namely, specialist discourses, binaries, metonymy, metaphor, the language of tradition and biology, and denotations and connotations. I argue that the habitual and unconscious use of language shapes, but does not determine sexuality.

2. LANGUAGE AND THE BODY

A CRA approach to sexuality posits inherent physical drives and sexual instincts and then explores how these are then constructed and reconstructed by agents who “act” within the pre-existing material and symbolic context. This is in contrast to both radical social constructionism and bio-medical approaches. Poststructuralists focus on the social construction of sexuality primarily through the symbolic and linguistic domain, but reject any notions of biological or inherent sexuality (Weeks and Holland, 1996, p. 8), as such ignoring the physical body. In contrast to the poststructuralist analysis, the bio-medical

¹⁰⁴ Selikow, 2004.

approach is biologically reductionist and hence does not pay adequate attention to how sexuality is mediated by cultural and material factors.

A CRA to sexuality argues that it is important to take cognizance of the existence of the “material body,” with all its desires, aptitudes, potentialities and physical functions (Weeks, 2000, p. 112), but that it is equally important to realize that although sexual acts are experienced (at least in part) via the physical body, they are made sense of through available discourses. For example, while sexual desire may be an inherent drive or biological process, desire is also partly socially constructed. Indeed, drawing on the work of the later Foucault it is evident that sexuality is partly constructed via the physical body, and is also partly the result of a linguistic coding process whereby bodies are classified, managed, disciplined and regulated by others and our selves. In relation to this coding system in Alex, youths’ bodies “become” the *ingagara*, the *isithipa*, the *regte* or the *cherrie*, with different labels being assigned to differently coded bodies and different sexual practices associated with each code. For example, the linguistic code “*ingagara*” symbolises a man who has multiple sexual partners.

The linguistic construct “*cherrie*” symbolises a particular type of woman who is seen as sexually desirable for a relationship based on sex and fun and who is also for status. *Cherries* are seen as sexually desirable but are not seen as fit to be mothers. Conversely, *regtes* are seen as the mothers of children but are not seen as erotic or sexual like *cherries* as epitomized by a male in group 3 who said, “Those ones, *eish cherries*, she is very well packed [has a nice figure], and she is fit [good for sex]. She can’t be the mother of my child. No, but *eish*, she is fit.” As well, a male from group one summed up the group consensus about sexual behaviour by pointing out that, “Fucking is a one-night stand, sex is with a *cherrie*, and lovemaking is with a *regte*.” In other words, through what Foucault terms the power / knowledge processes of surveying, naming, classifying and coding, the bodies of *cherries* and *regtes* take on particular meanings associated with particular sexual behaviours (Pini, 1997, pp. 159-160) and, as discussed, not only do youth code and classify bodies, but they have developed a system of policing to ensure that youth conform to the sexual behaviour attached to their labels. Hence the physical body and

what is an object of desire is not neutral, and depending on how the body is linguistically coded, it is perceived in a particular way with each label ascribing a particular sexual behaviour to a body.

3. IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE

To understand sexuality, it is necessary to locate sexuality within identity (Bidy, 1988; p. 9), something bio-medical models fail to do. A CRA draws on the poststructuralist insights into identity and rejects essentialist and deterministic understandings of the rational unified self. Identity formation is understood as a linguistic and symbolic practice and identity is best understood as fluid and never complete; performative and as operating across difference. Poststructuralists need to be commended for rejecting crude reductionist materialist approaches and for reintroducing subjectivity that structuralists had tried to expunge (Eagleton, 1983, pp. 148-149). A CRA, in addition to the poststructuralist focus on how identity is discursively constructed, locates identity within the material context.

3.1. IDENTITY IS PERFORMATIVE

Poststructuralists argue that identity is performative, i.e. identity is what you do at a given time rather than a universal “who you are.” The concept of performativity is linked to the rejection of biological understandings of identity and is a useful corrective to the myth of the unified self. Identity as performativity acknowledges that identity is constructed across a multiplicity of different, sometimes intersecting and antagonistic, discourses and practices and is fragmented and shifting (Chandler, 2002, p. 218; Hall b, 1996, 7-8).

Although performativity refers to what one “does,” usually youth speak about themselves or others as “being” an ingagara or isithipa or regte or cherrie, etc, using the first person, “I am, you are etc....” To avoid clumsiness, I will also primarily use “the ingagara” rather than constantly saying “in the role of ingagara...,” or “in the role of cherrie...,”etc.

An example of identity as performativity with a focus on what youth “do” rather than who they are, can be witnessed by exploring how the ingagara and isithipa identity is

partly negotiated via how youth dress and behave. Mpho describes the isithipa by his lack of fashionable dress, “[the isithipa] is wearing things like cargo pants, it happens that these cargo pants were wearing [are worn] by families;” the fact that the isithipa is “not involved with criminals,” and the fact that the isithipa “does not like to hang around different girls.” Similarly, Kwena attributes his ingagara status to what he does; wearing good clothes, having many girlfriends and driving a BMW.

The concept of performativity and the focus on what youth “do” at a given time, explains how youth can simultaneously have identities which may conflict with each other, for example as ingagaras, as peer educators, and / or as fathers. Witness, for example, Kwena, who is ingagara, peer educator and father-to-be; the latter two roles competing with and contradicting with the ingagara identity. By contrasting these three “roles,” it is apparent that his identity and actions vary radically depending on what he is doing at a given time, i.e. performativity. Kwena, as ingagara, proudly notes how his arrival at a party is announced as “... here comes the ingagara,” and explains that, “..... I am drunk that day. So, people like myself [ingagaras], I sometimes did it. I mean sleeping [having sex] without a condom.” Indeed, as ingagara his public display of multiple women is central and it is policed by other men, and Kwena makes constant reference to what he does to “deserve” his identity as ingagara; “Now when I am taking these girls, when I am with them, they see, they know, they know I am a real man, ahhh, ‘here comes the ingagara’.”

The above ingagara identity is a stark contrast to Kwena “the father-to-be” and Kwena “the peer educator.” As the latter, he advocates “Abstain, be faithful, condomise,” and he distributes condoms and “promotes” a “culture of condoms.” And, as a “father-to-be,” he says “When the baby is here, I can [will] only use condoms with cherries, with casual girls,” as he fears that the death of his firstborn “was because of what I was doing away from my girlfriend [having sex with cherries without using condoms].”

The notion of performativity helps to explain Kwena’s contrasting behaviours. Although as peer educator, Kwena preaches “faithfulness,” and, as father-to-be Kwena says he

intends to use condoms with cherries, Kwena, as ingagara, will not change his practice of sexual promiscuity.

Identity can be contradictory even “within” a particular sub-identity, and this is captured by the concept intra-performativity. For example Kwena as “the ingagara,” is both protector of women and abuser of women. Kwena as “protector of women” says “If they [tsotsi / criminals] know that, that is Kwena’s girlfriend, if you hurt her, Kwena will come to you and hurt you.” However, although Kwena will protect women from other men, he is equally prepared to beat women who disobey him, including his regte; “We once fought over it [using a condom], and I even klapped [hit] her that “no I can’t use this. This is useless for me’.”

A further example of identity as fluid and performative is in relation to Tebogo. As a self-identified isithipa he sees himself as being very different from the ingagara and he promotes non-promiscuity in his church group, speaking out strongly against both men and women who have casual sex; “Equally, you are both strangers, mind you, you use your body and she used your body. So you are both sluts... .” However, despite his preaching, and although he declares “I’d like to see myself as being loyal,” he acknowledges “I wouldn’t say that I haven’t been having sidekicks” and he says “I wouldn’t say that I’ve been loyal to her [his regte].”

Tebogo draws on psychology and tradition to explain how he has fallen into the “trap” of having affairs, arguing that multiple partners “it’s like traditions, although we are urbanized, but it is still in our streak. In our streak, in our, in our psyche, it is still in our psyche.” The language of tradition and biology is pursued below in section 7. Tebogo’s narrative highlights identity as performative; something that the bio-medical model did not take cognisance of, hence their inability to explain why sexual behaviour is not consistent and is often contradictory. This finding is congruent with much literature that posits that masculinities are fluid and open to contradictory desires and conduct (Christian, 1994; Connell, 1995, Cornwall and Lindsifarne, 1994b, pp. 11-23; Hearn and Morgan, 1990, p. 11). As such, identity is constantly in the process of transformation and

identities are constantly being renegotiated. As such, performativity reads well with the conception of commonsense.

The concept of performativity is also useful as, because identities are not fixed, there is room for change and different sexual behaviours. However, which identity wins in the sexual arena, at a particular time (the question of hegemony) and how to encourage identities that promote safer sex is a question that needs further investigation.

3.2. IDENTITY FORMATION OPERATES ACROSS DIFFERENCE

Identity does not operate in relation to “sameness,” but is based on constructing symbolic differences whereby the “self” is defined in relation to the “other” (Chandler, 2002, p. 105, Hall, 1996, pp. 7-8). As evidenced by Kwena and Tebogos’ testimonies, the isithipa does not adhere strictly to “isithipa norms,” and neither does the ingagara follow all ingagara modes of behaviour. To be sure, as the above vignettes illustrate, sexual identities are fluid, and, like all “classificatory identification labels” are ideal types, however, as identity operates across difference, youth construct identities as being mutually exclusive. In this regard, what dominant masculinities are **not**, is as important as what they are and masculinities are constituted in opposition to both femininity and subordinate masculinities (Aggleton, 2000a; Thompson and Holland, 1988, p. 64). As such, Kwena’s portrayal of the isithipa as someone who does not dress well and who has only one “ugly” girlfriend is amplified by his conclusion “..... so that is **not** an ingagara, we call that person isithipa.” Indeed, while the identity of the ingagara is defined by what he does (performativity), the construct ingagara also operates by defining itself against the isithipa, and vice versa. This sense of identity based on difference is powerfully illustrated by focusing on how the constructs “ingagara” and “isithipa” have been invented as mutually exclusive.

Sibongile, when explaining that her boyfriend is an isithipa, describes his isithipa traits and accentuates his status as isithipa by stating, “**No, he’s not like the ingagara**, he can’t [doesn’t] have too many girls.” In relation to the isithipa, Sibongile’s boyfriend is constructed by her as an isithipa who she says always does “the right thing.” However, as

noted in chapter five, he resists safe sex and has chosen not to marry her after the birth of her child. Moreover, although he has expressed a desire that he plays a role in the child's development, Sibongile fears that he has other girlfriends and that he may abandon her and the baby. This is a good example of how the isithipa is not as different to the ingagara despite the emphasis that youth place on constructing the differences between ingagaras and isithipas.

By contrasting the ingagara to what he is not, i.e. the isithipa, and visa versa, it is as if the existence of the one depends on the existence of the other. Indeed, in this defining and excluding, youth caricature the ingagara and isithipa so as to exaggerate their differences, and make them into extreme opposites, whereas, in reality, the ingagara and the isithipa are ideal types existing on a continuum (Selikow, Zulu, Cedras, 2002). Indeed, the boundaries between ingagara and isithipa identities and behaviour are far more fluid and blurry than youth allow for in their tight discursive constructions.

As identity is defined by differences rather than as being based on some shared quality, ideal, allegiance or the likes, there is no solidarity to produce closure, reinforcing the idea that identity is a continual fluid process (Alvesson, 2002, pp. 56, 58; Hall, 1996, pp. 7-8). Moreover, the construction of identity across difference is an act of power as it defines who is excluded from discourse. As discussed below, binaries are used to further reinforce apparent differences between ingagaras and isithipas.

4. BINARIES

Nkululeko said "We've got our own language we use in the township," and indeed, a central part of Alex youth culture, is the development of unique terminology. Drawing on this terminology, youth construct tight binaries in their discursive creation of identity, for example, ingagara versus isithipa. Binaries are based on digital differences (logical contradictories) which are either / or and mutually exclusive rather than analogue distinctions (logical contraries) which are comparatively graded on the same implicit dimension and allow for intermediate positions (Chandler, 2002, p. 104). Although, identity is more usefully conceptualized as operating along a continuum, rather than

according to a binary logic, the creation by youth of dichotomous signifying structures assist youth in generating order out of the complexity of experience (Chandler, 2002, pp. 46, 101).

As well, binaries are important in relation to the maintenance of the power system, and power is central in sexual behaviour. To be sure, power is not only about the production of dominant meanings but it is also about the maintenance of power by presenting it as normative, and in this regard, binaries play a central role. Drawing on Chandler (2002, pp. 106 – 111), binaries help establish a normative order as

- through binaries, oppositional categories are created and presented as fixed thereby repressing alternative possibilities; and
- oppositional terms are associated with a cluster of normative symbolic attributes and are hierarchical, privileging one set of values.

4.1. THROUGH BINARIES, OPPOSITIONAL CATEGORIES ARE CREATED AND PRESENTED AS FIXED THEREBY REPRESSING ALTERNATIVE POSSIBILITIES

Binaries are presented categorically as fixed oppositions. In this regard, the ingagara is an ingagara in relation to the isithipa and without this mutually exclusive binary opposite category, the ingagara construct could not function and visa versa. In addition to the ingagara and isithipa binary, the cherry / regte binary also creates oppositional codes and fixed binaries so that being a regte is defined in relation to not being a cherrie and visa versa. These identities are seen by youth as “fixed” and “given” so that less extreme possibilities existing along a continuum are denied.

4.2. OPPOSITIONAL TERMS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH A CLUSTER OF NORMATIVE SYMBOLIC ATTRIBUTES AND ARE HIERARCHICAL AND PRIVILEGE ONE SET OF VALUES

The normative order of a community is not inherent but is constructed in language; for example, many societies divide women into “whores or Madonnas” or “good girls and bad girls” (Altman, 1995, p. 103). With regards to the Alex context, while cherries are the “bad girls,” symbols of sex and fun, the regte is perceived as being suitable for long term relationships and as being a mother of a child, but she is not necessarily seen as a sex symbol. The pairing of concepts is not symmetrical, but is hierarchical and the way

oppositions are positioned and position agents privilege one set of values and meanings over the other (Chandler, 2002, pp. 108, 111). Indeed, if one uses binary logic, then by inferring from the literal translation of “regte,” which means right one, cherry takes on the meaning of the “wrong one;” wrong or not suitable for a long term relationship or to be a mother, but appropriate for “sex and fun.” Moreover, in the ingagara / isithipa binary, the ingagara is clearly seen as superior in the hierarchy. To be sure, “....ingagara is the highest compliment one can get in Alex” and the ingagara is referred to as the “top dog.” Linguistically constructed binaries become part of commonsense and seem natural to youth who incorporate them into their daily vocabulary and use them for guiding behaviour (Chandler, 2002, p. 107) and setting up and maintaining a normative structure.

4.2.1. Binaries And Blurs

Although youth speak in binaries, as evidenced in section 3.2. above, in messy day to day reality, youths’ actions are contradictory and do not operate according to binaries. For example, Tebogo, the isithipa who does not conform to the prototype of the “monogamous isithipa,” appropriates tradition to explain why he is unfaithful to his regte. He thus justifies his unfaithfulness, not by referring to his sexual desires, but by drawing on traditional values, emphasising “it’s in the African psyche.” Indeed, there are a myriad of examples whereby although binaries have been constructed by youth, in reality identities do not function as binaries. For example, although a cherrie / regte binary has been constructed, there are cases where cherries do not “act like” cherries and whereby they can “apply” to be regtes, or where they resist “cherrie behaviour.” Witness for example Dineo who is a cherrie but who says “It’s up to him to make me feel best....” Indeed, binary discourses can be challenged and do shift, in some instances challenging the normative system (Chandler, 2002, p. 104), and offering space to work towards alternative sexual discourses. At a theoretical level, as I argued in chapter six, binary constructs such as ingagara / isithipa and cherrie / regte are useful for analytical purposes but they are actually ideal types and do not capture the empirical complexities and nuances of daily township life.

5. METONYMY

The use of metonymy is a further mechanism whereby day to day language creates and recreates sexual practices. A metonymy is a referential device whereby a particular part stands in for the whole. There are many parts that can stand for the whole and which part is picked, indicates which aspect of the whole youth are focusing on (e.g. we need good heads, means intelligent people, we choose heads not legs to indicate this), (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 36). As such how metonymy is used provides valuable insights of what is important to youth. Although it is not conclusive, there is some evidence that the construct “cherrie” seems to have originally been used to refer to a woman’s vagina, and hence the word cherrie functions as a metonymy based on a part-whole relationship, whereby “vagina” represents the female. As such the construct of “cherrie” plays proxy to a woman who is for sex. However, by the same token, it also omits reference to many other characteristics of the individual “cherrie.” The word “cherrie” stands for the characteristics abstracted as common to all “cherries” and their “roles,” so that particular characteristics unique to individual cherries are largely ignored (Chandler, 2002, pp. 67, 130). In the Althusserian sense, through a process of interpellation, the cherrie is hailed from an “individual” into a “subject position” by a process of identification or recognition at the level of both the unconscious and the conscious (Althusser, 1971, pp. 160-161). While an “individual” is an actual person, a “subject” is a set of roles constructed by the dominant group and exists only in relation to interpretative practices (Chandler, 2002, p. 180). By using the metonymy “cherrie,” the cherrie comes to see herself as “just for sex” and “fun” (although she often strives to become a regte). To be sure, women construct and develop a subjectivity by speaking about themselves in ways that are socially (pre)determined by the dominant group and which depersonify and objectify them. In referring to themselves as cherries and regtes, women tacitly accept and reproduce the relationship system. The distinction between cherrie and regte and the associated relationship behaviour patterns are then taken as obvious or self-evident in everyday commonsense thought (Althusser, 1971, pp. 160-161). Thus it is not only men who are implicated in the process of creating harmful gender relations. In the

Foucauldian sense, this creation of definitions and categories is a way that youth regulate and discipline themselves and their sexualities via a classificatory system.

Metonymy does not only function in regard to subservient groups. For example, when men are referred to as “ATMs” is it also a form of metonymy, as one part or entity (how much money a man has) stands in for all of men’s characteristics, and men are primarily conceived in relation to the economic role they play, “the minister of finance,” while individual traits of men are largely ignored.

6. METAPHOR

Metaphors function so that reality is framed within systems of analogy enabling youth to understand one thing in terms of another (similes are a form of metaphors), (Chandler, 2002, p. 125). Similes function to justify particular worldviews as witnessed in the common saying: “Mona ke selepe wa dudisana” which means “If you are a man you have to have many girlfriends because you are just like an axe, you cut each and everything, you just go there and cut.” As such, when youth refer metaphorically to men being like axes, this involves an image of men as violent and powerful, they “cut each and everything.” Moreover, in traditional rural settings, an axe is lent to neighbours to chop wood. Thus, saying that man is like an axe that must be lent to others, reinforces the fact that a woman must understand that her boyfriend/husband will have other girlfriends as, he is like an axe, which can be lent to other people.

This view of men has specific implications for patriarchy, violence and sexual practices, and this understanding of masculinity is justified by drawing on the axe metaphor which is based on tradition, despite the fact that traditional institutions are declining, especially in urban areas. Drawing on tradition is discussed in more detail the following section.

A further metaphor is the idea that using a condom is like eating a sweet with a paper on. Men commonly use this metaphor to justify not using condoms as “You can’t eat a sweet with its paper on.” In a similar vein they argue that, just like you cannot get the full

benefits of a shower if you shower in a raincoat, you cannot fully appreciate sex if you use a condom. Themba expounds on a further metaphor:

Then they say, there is a saying, you can't eat cabbage everyday. It means you need to change women, like you cannot eat the same one everyday and all day. Then they are not really talking about cabbage. Like it is, that, for men, we cannot have the same one everyday. That thing it is in us because we can get bored quick, and that is, because that is how we are.

In this metaphor Themba claims that one would get bored eating cabbage, a cheap and easily available food, and the comparison of woman to cabbage is used to justify multiple relationships and the view of women as objects to be "consumed."

A further interesting idea of how metaphor works in insidious ways is that cherries can "apply" to become regtes, and can get "promoted," if the regte does not "behave right." Moreover, as males in group 4 maintained, cherries are critical as there may be a need for a "back up girlfriend," should the regte misbehave, "It's [the idea of having a cherrie] like a bucket, you cannot depend on one bucket to carry water, any mistake can happen to that bucket." Similarly a cherrie is compared to a spare wheel. The "market language" of "apply" and "promote" and the comparison of women to "buckets" and "tyres" likens women to commodities and further reinforces the idea that women are like objects; feeds into the idea that men should control the conditions of sex as they have "bought" a woman.

A further metaphor that will be elaborated on below in more detail is the metaphor used by women of "men as chickens," and women as iteye.

7. LANGUAGE OF TRADITION AND BIOLOGY

As illustrated above, youth draw on tradition to justify sexual practices. Indeed, this is one of the ways in which discourses come to function as norms, as youth believe that some practices are "meant to be" and are not challengeable precisely because they are based in tradition. In the same way as tradition is used, biology is also drawn on to justify and explain sexual behaviour. To be sure, if youth believe that something is inherent or

biological, it is seen as natural and unchangeable. For example, the myth that men¹⁰⁵ need constant and varied sex from multiple partners and have an inherent strong sex drive is used to not only justify multiple partners but to explain why men sometimes don't use condoms (Collin and Staddler, 2001; Gupta, 2000, p. 5; Moore and Rosenthal, 1993, p. 99; Pattman, 2001, p. 19; Posel, 1992; Strebel, 1997). As observed in chapter seven, males referred to being too "hot," and "losing control" as one reason for not using a condom, as well as the idea that salt accumulates in males' testicles if he does not have regular sex, as Jijobest said:

With men, that is how it is like. ... If we can see different ones [women], then that is how we become aroused. So we take many girlfriends. It cannot only be the regte, we need to have more than the one. ... It is because we are born in that way, [but] women can sometimes just be with one [man].

As such, the internalized notion of an uncontrollable biological male sex drive beyond control is evoked to account for why men "need" multiple partners. The above examples serve to illustrate that often youth attribute sexual behaviour to biological and traditional realities that come to function as truths and are justified and cannot be challenged. Moreover, such examples further reinforce the point that youths' commonsense worldviews lack a consciousness about the partially socially constructed nature of behaviour, and this obscures the socially constructed nature of sexuality by "couching it in the name of the natural" (Diamond and Quinby, 1988, p. xv), yet another way that patriarchy functions.

8. DENOTATIONS AND CONNOTATIONS

As argued throughout this research, power is key in sexual relationships. Power relations involve both the production of meaning as well as the maintenance of the normative order that is established (Davis, 1991, p. 72). This maintenance often takes place via denotations and connotations. The former refers to (literal or obvious meaning), and the latter refers to socio-cultural and ideological meanings. Moreover, connotations are more

¹⁰⁵ When women do have multiple sexual partners, not only are they judged harshly, but their "promiscuity" is explained not by the fact that they have a sexual libido but because one man cannot satisfy all their financial needs.

polysemic, or open to interpretation, than denotations and they are not neutral, but are always evaluative (Chandler, 2002, pp. 140-141). As well, connotations may be clear to communities but may not be obvious to outsiders.

A good example of how the normative order functions via denotations and connotations is the use of derogatory metaphors to demean women (Diamond and Quinby, intro, 1988, p. xv). In Alex the use of the metaphor “iteye” is used to refer to a woman who is seen as engaging in frequent sex. The denotation of iteye is that of a tea. “Tea” could have the connotation of being sweet and tasty, however, in Alex, the connotation is insulting and refers to something that is easily available, relatively cheap, drunken by everybody at any time of the day and is disposable. Hence, this metaphorical comparison of promiscuous women to tea bags offers a normative commentary on “sexually assertive” women. The normative connotation becomes even more apparent when one considers the comparative term used to describe a “promiscuous” man and the connotations attached to the concept *ingagara*. While sexual promiscuity is frowned upon for women, and women who have multiple sexual partners are stigmatised and given derogatory labels like, *isifebe* (bitch) and *iteye*, in direct contrast, discourses created around constructs like *ingagara* reward and respect men for having many partners. Indeed, sexually assertive male behaviour and promiscuity are regarded as prominent factors in being a “real” man, with the symbolic valorisation of male sexuality captured in the term *ingagara*. Hence, language plays a key role in reinforcing the normative double standards of one set of rules for men and another for women regarding sexual conduct. The following extracts from a dialogue with group 4 animates these double standards:

F1: It's ok for a guy to have many girlfriends, but for a girl to have many boyfriends it's not right.

Female voices call out: They call her *isifebe* [bitch], *skebereshe* [bitch], bitch, *spermdish*, *iteye*, *sechaba*.

M1: She is like a people's cherrie.

F2: Like a low life person because she belongs to everyone.

The above interaction illustrates how not only men, but many women, have internalised the double standards regarding the sexual “code of conduct.” Indeed, by abiding by the dominant discourses, values, symbols and beliefs that eventually become part of the

everyday lexicon, the subordinate group expresses consensus with the dominant group, further reinforcing the normative order and the pursuing resulting sexual relations; a process captured by the terms *interpellation* and *hegemony*.

9. LANGUAGE AS POWER AND EXCLUSION

The linguistic construct of *ingagara* is an example of how power is partly constructed discursively and it is indicative of how a dominant masculinity presents a view of how “real” men are meant to behave and it is an attempt to silence other masculinities. Indeed, not only do discourses create norms, but they also exclude those who do not conform to the dominant discourses (Foucault, 1980b; Munch, 1994; Smart, 1985) and, in addition to the issue of power in discourse, there is also the issue of power over discourse or access to discourse (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, pp. 272 – 280). For example, the *isithipa*, or a man who is not seen to be engaging in sex, is labelled as mad or as cursed by the ancestors. Not only is the *isithipa* excluded from conversations about sex, but he is seen as dumb in relation to all issues as Kwena confirmed:

.... I mean if you do not have a girlfriend, the belief is that, you cannot even discuss with me with anything. You cannot discuss even things that you saw in the newspaper this morning, that kind of thing, you cannot even show me a good car because I am going to ask you, how can you know of a good car when you do not even have a girlfriend. People who do not have any girlfriends or have few ugly ones, they do not take you serious.

Thus, the *isithipa* is excluded from a range of topics, not only those relating to sex, and as such, exclusion by creating differences, is a further way of exercising power and policing behaviour. Indeed, as men have a collective interest in the perpetuation of the gender hierarchy, individual male behaviour is closely monitored by other males (Heise, 1995, p. 129). However, as discussed in the previous chapter, the creating of power and monitoring of power is not only via linguistic and symbolic policing, but has a material component. This is not adequately acknowledged by poststructuralists and is a major weakness in their understanding of power.

10. SHARED MEANING

For poststructuralists, meaning is seen as unstable and cannot be fixed (Barker, 2000, p. 72). Indeed, as outlined in chapters three and four, as the referent (“real” objective world

outside of language) has been completely removed and the free play of signifiers and the symbolic is exaggerated, all actors have their own “truths” and understandings which may vary radically. As such poststructuralists undermine how humans create shared meanings and understanding in everyday communication (Gottdiener, 1995, pp. 23-24; Pilgrim and Rogers, 1997, pp. 37-38), an important aspect in a CRA to sexuality.

While it is valid that language and symbolic meanings are not always shared, and that language is open to a degree of interpretation (Rosenan, 1992, p. 122), a CRA approach recognizes that a large part of youth culture depends on the fact that there is a system of shared meanings. Indeed, as demonstrated in the previous sections, the reproduction of sexual patterns of behaviour is facilitated by figurative language, which comes to constitute a shared rhetorical code. This code is part of the reality maintenance system for youth and understanding the code is a component of what it means to be a member of the culture in which the code is used (Chandler, 2002, p. 124), and thus necessitates a common meaning. As such, I argued that the Alex youth sub-culture is built around a set of shared meanings and I illustrated how the “specialist discourse” youth have developed is key in creating and reproducing a particular type of sexuality in the township. I showed how the routine and habitual use of shared language contributes to a normative order that enables and reproduces sexual relations. As a case in point, I illustrated that the shared understanding of the constructs “ingagara,” and its converse, the “isithipa,” set “rules” of how “real” men are meant to behave, and this collective perception informs sexual behaviour.

This being said, while systems of language that produce shared meaning may be understood by Alex youth, it is valid to maintain that language is “slippery” to those who are not part of the given sub-community. Indeed, it is likely that the “outsider” to Alex may not share the interpretations that Alex youth have. As such, while language can be fixed and shared by particular sub-communities, it can also be “slippery” and open to interpretation and misunderstanding. To further reiterate this point, I will draw on the examples of the denotations and connotations of chicken and iteye. The denotations or literal meanings, whereby a “chicken” is a “chicken” as in a “fowl” and “tea” is “tea” as

in a “drink,” are easily connected to a referent and generally stable and fixed amongst many cultures. However, connotations, whereby a chicken is a man who is “plucked” for money, and “iteye” refers to a woman who is seen to be “promiscuous” may not clear to an outsider of the Alex youth sub community, but these shared meanings of “chickens” and “iteye” contribute to the normative sexual order within the Alex youth sub-community. Thus the issue of shared meanings and interpretations may differ for “insiders” and “outsiders” of a community.

The above attests to the fact that while language is socially constructed it is not as slippery as poststructuralists argue. As such, rather than broad blanket statements about the unstableness of language, I argue that (ironically) poststructuralists need to rethink the meta-narrative of language as slippery, and explore language and interpretation in a more nuanced way to discern to what degree language is shared amongst particular sub-communities. Indeed, to recap, the production of shared meaning through language within sub-communities maintains the normative order, and it is this practice that helps form the hegemonic practices of sexuality. However, this being stated, even when meaning is commonly understood or shared, this does not mean it is deterministic, as there are oppositional readings or ways of responding to this shared meaning. Indeed, even when individuals understand the meanings of words, individuals do not always adhere to the allocated meanings given to constructs, as evidenced by the isithipa and by females who do not take on the expected regte or cherrie behaviours.

11. LANGUAGE IS ALWAYS ROOTED WITHIN STRUCTURES

Although language is socially constructed, the idealist stance of poststructuralism excludes the referent and sees language as arbitrary. However, a CRA maintains that the use of language, including metaphors and connotations, varies across cultures but is not random as it is rooted in the material, physical, social and cultural (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 18). Three examples that elucidate this point are the axe metaphor, the chicken metaphor, and the iteye metaphor as discussed above.

The axe metaphor is not an arbitrary construction but can be directly traced to traditional societies where men chopped trees for fires to cook over and to keep warm by. Moreover it was common for an axe to be lent to community members in the same way that men can “be shared” amongst women. Although Alex is an urbanized and industrial area, many migrants come from the rural areas, and, as well, as discussed above, youth draw on the language of tradition with regard to their sexual practices.

In relation to the chicken metaphor, whereby men who give women money are referred to as chickens, this metaphor is also not arbitrarily chosen but is linked to the concrete context in which women live. Indeed, chickens are a staple food in Alex and are often sold alive and are plucked by women as opposed to being bought already plucked from a supermarket, hence the analogy of money being “plucked” from a man’s wallet in the same way as feathers are plucked from a chicken who has been placed in hot water. Finally, the metaphor of promiscuous women as “iteye” derives from the fact that tea is a relatively cheap commodity and the tea bag can be reused many times, an important aspect in an impoverished community. Indeed, it is the availability and cheapness of tea that makes “promiscuous women as iteye” into an effective metaphor.

As such, language is not arbitrary but is always located in material and symbolic environments which constrain and enable what language is chosen, and one cannot ignore the referent as poststructuralists tend to do. While a CRA accepts that meanings are not located at one particular point in the play between signified and signifiers, they maintain that the referent needs to be reintroduced into the play between signified and signifiers and that meanings are not as unstable as postmodernists posit (Sayer, 2000, pp. 36-40, 71), but are derived from concrete contexts and the realities in which actors operate. Moreover, language is not used arbitrarily, but, as Wittgenstein observes, language is always implicated in rules and systems of practice, and in determining the meaning of words, it is necessary to understand the context of activities in which it is embedded (Rubenstein, 2001, p. 84). As such, while language may be used variably, it is not used randomly as it is tied to day to day conduct and practical interests. Language cannot be as

“free floating” as radical poststructuralists argue, as it is imperative that for youth culture to function there needs to be a shared system of meanings tied to practical interests.

12. LANGUAGE AND MESSY REALITY

There is a close and complex relationship between language and sexual practice, but there is not a deterministic or direct relationship between language and day-to-day reality. Indeed, youth discourses often operate in binaries or classificatory systems that do not accommodate or adequately reflect the complexities of “real” life. For example, as observed above, while youth speak about the ingagara versus the isithipa as if they were two extreme opposites, in real life the boundaries between the ingagara and isithipa are more blurred than is suggested by the diametrically opposed construct of men who are “real” and men who are not “real.” Many men who are ingagara have some of the qualities associated with being an isithipa and many isithipa have traits which fit into the ingagara construct, suggesting that binaries do not adequately reflect the nuances of real day-to-day life. Moreover, as argued, identities are far more fluid than a binary language system allows. It is often the spaces and slippages between binaries where the ongoing struggle to (re-)invent sexualities takes place.

A further example of a binary that does not adequately reflect messy reality is the cherrie / regte classificatory system which sets out the relationship norms for women who are classified as either cherries or regtes. Although this discourse refers to relationships and the associated norms, there are a variety of ways in which both cherries and regtes perceive and respond to their situations which do not fit neatly into the cherrie / regte binary classification system. While youth discourses often operate as binaries, there are a number of nuanced and complex actions in messy day-to-day reality for which youth do not have neat linguistic categories. Furthermore, even when youth do not have terminology to talk about practices, it does not mean that a particular practice or behaviour does not exist. As such, while recognizing the intricate relationship between language and practice, we need to dismiss deterministic notions of language and practices and jettison the idea that we can read everyday reality from language as if it were a mirror.

13. LANGUAGE AND RESISTANCE

Language is not only an arena where sexualities can be reproduced, but it is also an arena of struggle which may, or may not, lead to the transformation of sexualities. A possible example of language being used to reinvent sexualities can be found within the chicken metaphor. This metaphor subverts the dominant patriarchal discourse and redefines women's relationship to men from that of being passive objects of men (cherries or regtes who are fucked or made love to and provided for) to agents who do something to men (pluck money from their wallets). The tangible metaphor of a chicken being plucked is rooted in the real, everyday lives of women, and offers a concrete symbol of agency and empowerment where women see themselves as being able to manipulate men. Indeed, women assume a position of power in wringing the chicken's neck, boiling the chicken, plucking it and eating it. Moreover, the chicken is disposable and when the first chicken has been eaten, its bones are disregarded and a new chicken replaces it. As such, in this empowering linguistic manoeuvre, women reinvent men as chickens and demote them from their position of ingagara to a measly chicken, and, in the same move, they reposition themselves as powerful agents.

However, in the final analysis, when men spend money on women they usually get to decide the conditions of sex, hence, although the chicken metaphor may linguistically empower women, it does not actually challenge harmful sexual practices, indeed, it may reinforce high-risk sexual practices. As such, while women have creatively used language to re-invent their symbolic relationship with men it does not necessarily lead to changes in sexual practices and here words may be "mere" words with no material effectivity. Even though the chicken discourse linguistically positions women as powerful agents, ultimately men still determine the conditions of sex, usually condomless. Indeed, the chicken discourse can be seen to be reproducing the harmful social practices of multiple sexual partners, a possible ironic and unintended consequence of exerting agency. Or perhaps, by feeling linguistically empowered, women become more complacent about effecting change. As Collier (1994, pp. 98-99) posits, things may be re-described but may not change, for example, when people accept the word "gay"

instead of “queer,” if bigots “gay bash” instead of “queer-bash” this is an instance of mere words (Collier, 1994, pp. 98-99).

Further questions need to be posed about whether the chicken discourse is just an instance of mere words (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999), or new words to describe old behaviours, or, whether it can offer real challenges to destructive gendered social relations. The boundaries of my research do not allow me to answer this question, but brings into focus the relationship between the material and the symbolic. I would suggest that as discourse can impact practice, linguistic strategies that open up discursive spaces are important, although on their own are not sufficient to effect change. In linguistically redefining gendered social relations, women can imagine new possibilities and conceive of themselves as empowered agents rather than preconstituted subjects (Hall, [1993], 1996, pp. 295, 305) and passive objects of men. However, in the final analysis, given my realist ontology, I must conclude that regardless of how women perceive men and what they call them they still engage in high risk sexual practices which can lead to HIV infection.

14. CONCLUSION

The above discussion on language raises a myriad of interesting philosophical questions, but perhaps the most useful question to ask is “What is the relationship between language and sexual practices?” Although I will not be able to offer a definitive answer to this question, my research data point to a number of trends and issues which could be usefully pursued in future research into language and sexuality.

I have argued that in understanding sexuality, it is important to focus on language, something the bio-medical model fails to do. While poststructuralism explores language, it does not locate language within a material context and hence is guilty of language idealism reducing sexuality to the level of discourse. A CRA acknowledges the centrality of language and locates language within a material context. It moves beyond linguistic idealism and asks how language influences, but never determines, sexuality.

In exploring language and sexuality, I have illustrated how power functions through language. I have demonstrated that youth linguistically code bodies with each label ascribing a particular sexual behaviour to a body. Youth draw on figurative language which has a shared meaning and which works insidiously to reinforce the idea that sexualities are natural and cannot be challenged. While language sets rules about sexual conduct, discourses also open linguistic spaces which can be developed in constructive ways. However, while language may be enabling, it is not a sufficient factor for real change. I suggest that ways need to be developed so that agency expressed in transformative and subversive discourse can be used to mobilize women and men to collectively challenge harmful gendered relations. In the next chapter I wrap up my research by looking at implications for practice and suggesting areas for future study.

CHAPTER ELEVEN WRAPPING IT UP¹⁰⁶

1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I wrap up my research. Rather than providing a linear and chronological summary of my work, I draw on the key findings in my research and reflect on some of the practical implications of my work. As a key tenet of a CRA is transforming the world from what is to what ought, this is an important endeavour and I have provided some **interlinked** suggestions to decrease the risk of HIV infection for youth.

2. SUGGESTIONS

Suggestion One: Recognise that sexuality is a political issue.

Researchers and practitioners need to be aware that sexuality is a political issue and hence research and practice is political and contested.

Politically and epistemologically, positivistic biomedical models are based on the myth of developing an “objective” understanding that will enable detached, neutral, (most often First World, Caucasian, heterosexual males) to predict and control sexual behaviour. Moreover, positivistic methodologies with their search for “truth” have ignored the intrinsic relationship between knowledge and power within the arena of sexual research (Caceres, 2000, pp. 256-257; Parker et al., 2000, p. 3; Yardley, 1997b, p. 4).

Although postmodernists express a concern with social inequality, their relativism makes it impossible to defend a particular political or moral view, as all views are seen as equally valid (Norris, 1997, pp. 1-11; Popkewitz, 1999, p. 141; Seidman, 1998; Smart, 1996, p. 401). As postmodernists argue that norms and values should be expunged from intellectual discourse, they cannot put forward a vision and proposal for a better future (Poster, 1995). This leads to apathy and nihilism so that postmodernists “flight from foundationalism is at the same time often a flight from politics” (Giroux, 1988, p. 61).

¹⁰⁶ The title of this chapter refers to an HIV / AIDS prevention slogan, “Wrap it up, or zip it up.”

While critical realist theory does not aim to control, a key focus of critical realist theory, with its emancipatory and normative component, is how to not only understand sexuality, but how to work with communities to implement changes so that risky sexual practices can be transformed into safer ones and sexuality can be celebrated and enjoyed. It is critical realism's judgemental rationalism that allows a focus on "from what is to what ought" (Calhoun, 1995, p. 9; Gibson, 1986, p. 2; Morrow and Brown, 1994, pp. 11, 52, 148-9; Poster, 1989, p. 3; Sayer, 1992, p. 43; Sayer, 2000, pp. 18, 58).

Although critical realist theorists put forward alternative visions and proposals for practical interventions to obtain a more desirable society, they do not aim to dictate blueprints for the future. They recognise the complexities of putting forward alternatives as what is "wrong," and what is more desirable is not always obvious or agreed upon, specifically in the context of cultural diversity (Morrow and Brown, 1994, p. 257; Sayer, 2000, pp. 161-2). As Caceres (2000, p. 257) concludes, it is only when we position ourselves as political actors, who acknowledge that knowledge is a contested field that is crucially related to power and practice, that we can become "more concretely focused on the development of better possibilities of life and sexual health for all...." (see chapter three).

Suggestion Two: Incorporate sociological issues into analysis of sexuality.

The main criticism of the bio-medical model is its biologically deterministic approach, which neglects the construction of sexuality within its social, historical, material and political context (Adler and Qulo, 2001, p. 303; Cornwall and Lindsifarne, 1994a, p. 3; Hauser, 1997; Nettleton, 1995, p. 5). Indeed, biomedical models do not take heed of important sociological concerns such as culture, language, power, ideology, structures and human agency, central concepts in my research, and more research is required into the contextual factors that enable and constrain sexualities (see chapters three and four).

Suggestion Three: Research into HIV / AIDS requires a range of research methods.

The nature and complexity of HIV / AIDS and sexuality calls for a range of research that draws on a variety of methods. Unlike postmodernism with its disrespect for methods, a CRA recognises the importance of methods, but, as critical realism is not prescriptive about methods (Yeung, 1997), it posits that methods should be selected based on the nature of the research issue and what the most practically adequate method would be. While certain types of information may be gleaned by typical quantitative methods, such as survey type questionnaires, these methods will not be able to portray the types of nuances, contradictions and tensions that exist in youth sexuality. Indeed, the type of “yes/ maybe/ no” answer that is typical of quantitative data gathering, fails to capture that sexuality is a complex and messy reality that cannot be neatly ticked off in a box. This being said, in some cases, for example for collecting baseline data, quantitative data gathering techniques are appropriate (see chapter two).

Suggestion Four: In-depth understandings of sexuality call for an intensive design and a hermeneutic structural approach.

In order to develop an in-depth understanding of sexuality and why youth engage in high risk sexual practices, an intensive research design and a hermeneutic structural approach is the most appropriate. This design allows a focus on the symbolic, meanings, perceptions, semantics and practices within systems and structural relations and overcomes the impasse between nomothetic and idiographic explanation and between subjectivist and objectivist approaches (Calhoun, 1995, p. 9; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999, p. 75; Morrow and Brown, 1994, pp. 24, 55-57; 212-213; Sayer, 1992, p. 4; Sayer, 2000, pp. 13, 143).

Suggestion Five: A realist ontology and relativist epistemology is necessary.

A realist ontology is needed as, for science to even be imaginable, the world, by necessity, must be composed of real things and structures that exist and act independently of humans (Outhwaite, 1987, p. 19), and the extreme idealism and solipsism of

postmodernism means that science is not possible (Outhwaite, 1996, p. 91). Although postmodernists' overemphasis on the discursive dimension was partly a reaction against the reductionism of the bio-medical model, their lack of a realist ontology has led to the neglect of the body and the physical dimension of health and illness, as well as the material dimension of disease.

A realist ontology and a relativist epistemology allows research to combine the strengths of critical realism and poststructuralism and to take account of both internal and external structures. Although critical realism proposes a view of reality outside of discourse, they recognise the complexity of scientific redescription and reject theory neutral observation (Outhwaite, 1996, p. 92) and recognise that reality is mediated by discourses (Sayer, 1992, p. 232; Stones, 1996, pp. 20-21). Although "truth" remains a regulative ideal (Outhwaite, 1987, p. 40), critical realists argue for epistemic gain rather than capital "T" "Truth" (see chapter three and suggestion six).

A realist ontology acknowledges the realities that may exist independently of human perceptions and understandings (Sayer, 2000, p. 12; Scott, 2000, p. 14; Stones, 1996, pp. 29-30), and I argue that such an ontology is key to the study of sexuality. While some bio-medical models have a realist ontology, in the sense that they are aware of biological drives and the physical nature of the HIV, they do not pay sufficient attention to material realities such as poverty and nor do they pay attention to the changing symbolic order. Thus, they under-emphasise perceptions and social constructions of HIV / AIDS and how these may influence sexual practices. At the other extreme, approaches such as poststructuralism focus on meanings and perceptions, but their lack of a realist ontology detracts from the fact that regardless of what youth (or anyone) think or say, there are material and physical realities that exist independently of humans and their knowledge. A CRA is able to overcome the weaknesses of the bio-medical and poststructuralist approaches. Indeed its realist ontology and relativist epistemology means that while it recognizes that material, biological, physical and physiological phenomena are central

components in an analysis of sexuality, it also pays attention to the social meanings and perceptions of humans.

Suggestion Six: Promote judgemental rationalism.

For postmodernists, epistemological claims are merely seen as systems of representation and postmodernism lapses into extreme methodological relativism with no basis for choosing between conflicting interpretations and hence no basis for knowledge claims or critical judgements (Calhoun, 1995, pp. 116-123; Pilgrims and Rogers, 1997, p. 37; Rosenan, 1992, p. 124). Although rejecting foundationalism, and arguing for epistemic relativism (the world can only be known through available discourses), critical realism does not accept postmodernist judgmental relativism (the idea that we cannot decide which discourse is better). To be sure, judgmental relativism is defeatist and anti-realist, making any form of practical evaluation impossible (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999, pp. 34, 136; Rosenan, 1992, p. 122; Sayer, 2000, pp. 47, 68). Rather, critical realists argue that the admission that all knowledge is fallible, does not mean that all knowledge is equally fallible or equally practically adequate as, although the world is known under different discourses, some are better than others and there are limits to interpretation (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999, pp. 34, 67; Collier, 1994, Scott, 2000, p. 24; Sayer, 1992, pp. 2, 43, 68, 69; Sayer, 2000. pp. 2, 40-72; Stones, 1996, pp. 13 - 40) (see chapter three and suggestion six). I argue that judgemental rationalism is imperative if researchers are to be in a position to make practical suggestions and to judge the impact of whether their work is contributing to a better world.

Suggestion Seven: Research into sexuality should recognise that sexuality is partly socially constructed.

It is imperative for researchers to understand that sexuality is partly socially constructed. It is equally important to move away from extreme constructivist approaches which reduce sexuality to a discursive construct, thereby ignoring all the physical elements of sexuality as well as the material environment in which sexuality occurs. A CRA avoids the weaknesses of bio-medical approaches as well as extreme social constructionism;

maintaining that there is a physical body with some inherent drives, but that how sexuality manifests itself is enabled and constrained by material and symbolic structures. Very importantly, if sexuality is partly socially constructed, it is open to change and to the development of healthier sexualities (see chapter three and four).

Once it has been accepted that sexuality is partly socially constructed, as Heise (1995, p. 127) suggests, it is necessary to ask:

What is it about the construction of masculinity in different cultures that promotes aggressive sexual behaviour by men? And, what is it about the construction of femininity and the structure of economic and social power relations in societies that permits this behaviour to continue? (See chapters five to ten).

Insights into such questions can facilitate the transformation of sexualities that encourage high risk behaviours to sexualities that do not put youth at risk for contracting HIV / AIDS.

Suggestion Eight: Focus on the individual within a particular material and symbolic context.

Many researchers who have rejected decontextualised bio-medical approaches argue that it is important for researchers to focus on the socio-economic and cultural context of high risk behaviour rather than the individual. However, methodological individualism needs to be avoided as it focuses on individual acts and choices without paying sufficient attention to social relations and social groups (Fay, 1996, p. 31). Although I have emphasised the centrality of focusing on the embeddedness of young people's sexuality and the structures in which youth operate, it is equally important to focus on the individual. While a sociological approach to sexuality moves away from individual psychologistic approaches, the individual should not be ignored. It is necessary for practitioners to locate the individual within a framework which recognises how forces such as gender, power, and language, enable and constrain sexual practices, but practitioners also need to take cognisance of each individual, with his / her unique experiences, and to also pay attention to the interpersonal and how these interact with the

social context. All these factors need to be understood so that it can be possible to work towards changing the social context as well as facilitating the development of personal empowerment and personal responsibility in each individual.

Suggestion Nine: Encourage youth to understand the partly socially constructed nature of sexuality.

Not only should researchers be encouraged to understand how sexuality is partly socially constructed, but the idea of a partly socially constructed sexuality needs to be promoted to youth as patriarchy is enabled when the socially constructed nature of sexuality is couched in the name of the natural (Diamond and Quinby, 1988, p. xv). As illustrated in this research, sexuality is often perceived by youth as natural and youth draw on biology to justify harmful sexual practices. If sexual practices are seen as biological, “that is the way it is,” this closes off possibilities for alternative practices. Youth need to be encouraged to debunk myths about male and female sexuality. An example of a biological myth is the idea that men “need” sex from a variety of partners, and such beliefs undermine the likeliness that youth will refrain from engaging in sex with multiple partners. Similarly, the notion that certain practices are justifiable as they are based on tradition, needs to be challenged and traditions need to be revisited so that youth can be reminded of the context in which traditional institutions functioned and the codes of conduct they were subject to. For example, many males in Alex draw on tradition to justify multiple sexual practices, however, they neglect the important distinction between isithembu (the traditional practice of polygamy) and the ingagara and his multiple partners, as isithembu is an institution governed by rules and regulations, whereas the ingagara has no code of conduct in his sexual relations with multiple partners (Selikow, Zulu and Cedras, 2002) (see chapters five to eight).

With regard to understanding sexuality as a social construct, Paiva (2000, pp. 216-239) advocates using the Freirean tradition so that youth can de-codify sexuality. In this approach, youth are encouraged to explore contradictions in sexualities and how the material and cultural context regulates their sexual lives. Paiva argues that politicized

popular education approaches in which social and cultural forces are understood and challenged, encourages personal power and a sense of agency. The Freirean tradition of decoding sexual discourses and exploring how they are socially constructed offers a useful starting point for youth to begin (re)inventing new sexualities. By looking at how certain competing truths become self-evident, youth can begin to see that sexuality is partly socially constructed and begin to accept the idea that sexualities can be transformed. This approach is also in line with the socio-cultural theories of Vygotsky that challenge educators to locate the mind in the socio-cultural context of the learner rather than in the head of the individual.

Suggestion Ten: Researchers need to focus on hegemonic and subordinate sexualities.

An important focus in this research has been on the hegemonic masculinity in Alex, and I have demonstrated how this masculinity encourages high risk sexual behaviours that put both men and women in danger of contracting HIV / AIDS. As well as researching dominant masculinities, it is important to focus on subordinate masculinities, and often the hegemonic masculinity is defined in opposition to the subordinate masculinity (see chapter ten). By decoding both hegemonic and subordinate masculinities, and the range of masculinities that exist on the continuum between these two ideal type masculinities, a deeper understanding of masculinities as plural, collective, and actively constructed through social interaction can be achieved. In addition, by understanding that there are multiple masculinities, and by looking at the variety of masculinities and the associated sexual practices, it will become evident which masculinities are most useful in promoting greater gender equality and improved sexual health. Indeed, while dominant masculinities may predispose males towards high risk sexual behaviour, subordinate masculinities may contain within them seeds of change (Aggleton, 2000, pp. 11, 26) which can be developed and nurtured (see suggestion eleven).

Suggestion Eleven: Encourage youth to (re)negotiate unhealthy sexual identities.

Understanding how the dominant masculinity and femininity encourage high risk sexual practices is a prerequisite to the active challenging and reworking of sexual identities and social norms that militate against safer sexual practices (see suggestion ten). The hegemonic masculinity in Alex associates “real men” with risk taking, virility and power over women, epitomised as multiple sexual conquests, and new forms of masculinities need to be developed as alternatives to this destructive masculinity.

The concept performativity challenges biological and fixed perceptions of sexual identities and emphasises that masculinities and femininities are what men and women respectively do at any given time (Hallb, 1996, pp. 7-8), and the notion of performativity highlights the tensions and contradictory desires within sexual identities. Focusing on how identity is discursively constructed across a multiplicity of different, sometimes intersecting and antagonistic practices, and discussing the contradictory desires and conduct in masculinities and femininities (Christian, 1994; Cornwall and Lindsifarne, 1994, pp. 11-23; Connell, 1995; Hearn and Morgan, 1990, p. 11), can be a useful way to find potential spaces for positive changes in the renegotiation of sexualities.

As part of challenging hegemonic masculinities, it is necessary to look at young men’s fears (Thomson and Holland, 1998, p. 75) and to consider to what extent men will be willing to challenge gender relations which seemingly privilege them. This is potentially a daunting task, especially if men are not conscious of how they are oppressed by gender (see suggestion ten and twelve) and it may be useful to get men to explore how the gender system stereotypes men and may negatively impact their health.

Young women in Alex need to renegotiate more assertive femininities, and future research is required to develop a deeper understanding into the hegemonic femininity and alternative femininities in Alex. For example, future research could focus on why certain

women leave abusive relationships while other women remain in these relationships even though it means they are at an increased risk of contracting HIV.

The concept of performativity is useful as because identities are not fixed, there is room for change and for the development of healthier sexual identities. However, which identity wins in the sexual arena at a given moment (the question of hegemony) and how to encourage identities that promote safer sexual behaviours is a question that requires further investigation.

Suggestion Twelve: Researchers, practitioners and young men should recognise that men are also oppressed by gender.

It is important to analyse how gender systems influence the vulnerability of both women and men in relation to contracting HIV / AIDS. Much literature has focused on women's oppression by men and how this negatively impacts women's health and it is only recently that attention has been paid to masculinity (Connell, 1995; Morrell, 2000) and the negative impact of gender on the health of men is increasingly being recognised (Jewkes et al., 2003; Tallis, 2000; Wilton, 1997). For example, men who are not perceived as engaging in sexual relationships are excluded from conversations, and competitions are held to adjudicate masculinity, so that men are pressurised to engage in multiple sexual relationships exposing themselves to a greater risk of HIV. More research is needed into how men are oppressed by their gender and how dominant masculinities put men at an increased risk to HIV / AIDS (Aggleton, 2000, p. 4; Robinson, 1996, p. 114; Selikow, Cedras and Zulu, 2002). To understand how men are oppressed by gender relations, it is necessary to examine relations between not only men and women but men and men (Aggleton, 2000, p. 12). Young men in Alex, need to engage with the idea that they are oppressed by gender and that it is in their interest to develop new sexualities (see suggestion ten). One way of beginning to unpack how gender systems oppress men by constraining and seriously limiting their choices, is to hold workshops where men could be encouraged to explore how dominant masculinities present a view of how "real" men are meant to behave and how the hegemonic masculinity silences alternative masculinities. Men could also be given the opportunity to think about times when they

have been silenced and to examine how men have a collective interest in the perpetuation of the gender hierarchy, and how male behaviour is closely monitored and policed by other males (Heise, 1995, p. 129).

It would also be useful to allow men the space to draw on their personal experiences of how more “feminine” aspects of their sexual identity are suppressed by the hegemonic masculinity. It has been argued that condom usage threatens masculinity and is seen as feminising. If a male agrees to use a condom, he is letting a women define the terms of the sexual engagement and, as the hegemonic construct of masculinity portrays sexual knowledge and control as male, this is seen as a threat to masculinity. Further, unmediated penis/vagina contact is the “culturally” agreed upon norm of ultimate pleasure so a male who uses a condom is seen as deprioritising his own sexual pleasure. This may be deemed feminising because male sexual pleasure is a defining feature of being a man in a heterosexual relationship. Indeed, sex is sometimes not seen as “real sex” unless the male ejaculates inside the vagina. Moreover, risk taking is seen as a masculine activity so men who prefer to use a condom may be seen as effeminate because they do not want to engage in risk taking behaviour (Wilton, 1997, pp. 33-34).

Suggestion Thirteen: Understand and challenge gender inequality at both a macro and micro level.

I have illustrated that high risk sex is common in Alex because the balance of power favours men and it is important to challenge gender inequality to lower the rate of high risk sex. In order to effectively change gender relationships, it is important to understand the complexities of gender, and there is a limited amount of information about gender as a variable in vulnerability to HIV / AIDS (Whelan, 1999, p. 25). Destructive gender relationships function within broader patterns of gender inequality but also at the micro level and I argue that gender inequality needs to be challenged at both the local level and the macro level. Indeed, to overcome gender inequality we need to understand how it plays itself out both at a broader structural level, but also in concrete day to day social practices, with their own complexities and nuances. It is the latter which has been the

primary focus in my study, with the recognition that gender inequality at this level is facilitated by the institutionalisation of patriarchy at a broader level. As such I have used Foucault's micro physics of power read with a Gramscian conception of hegemony (see suggestion twenty nine).

At both the macro and micro level, it is imperative to acknowledge that gender inequality plays itself out on many levels, including the psychological, physical, social and cultural, and challenging gender inequality on all these levels is important. Moreover, while there are universal commonalities in gender relationships, there are also a complexity and variability of gender relations in different material and socio-cultural contexts. As such, while challenging patriarchy at broader political and institutionalised levels, approaches to empowerment of both men and women and sexual negotiation relevant to men and women in particular settings is also necessary. While a society free of violence is an ideal, the current high level of violence against women needs to be recognised and accessible social services need to be made available to women.

Suggestion Fourteen: Interventions need to be aware of structures that constrain women and of women's limited bargaining power and limited choices.

While promoting gender equality, it is necessary to recognize that as yet gender equality does not exist in most relationships. Generally women have little say in whether a condom is used, and, as such, interventions which focus solely on "negotiating" a condom (usually the women's responsibility), with the implicit assumption that there is equality in power, may not achieve success (Heise, 1995, p. 122). Rather it is necessary to understand the nature of the gendered balance of power and to equip women with life skills and to broaden their access to economic resources to lessen their dependencies on men and increase their bargaining power.

Suggestion Fifteen: Acknowledge and encourage women's agency.

My research has focused primarily on the structures that constrain women and limit their ability to choose. However, women are not passive and I gave examples of women who remained within the hegemonic response but negotiated concessions within this approach, as well as women who opposed the hegemonic practices (see chapter ten). A key tenet of a CRA is the recognition of human agency and creativity and further research is required into how women respond creatively to oppressive conditions (Baylies and Bujra, 1995, p. 194; Flax, 1990, p. 181; Heise, 1995, pp. 125-126; MacLeod and Saraga, 1988). My research has demonstrated that women are not powerless and that they use creative means to benefit from men, albeit in ways that may ultimately be destructive (Selikow, Zulu, Cedras, 2002). As well as focusing on women's creative responses, it is important to explore whether these responses reproduce or challenge the status quo, as, even forms of resistance can have the unintended consequence of reproducing harmful gendered relationships. It is important to recognise women's agency and to focus on positive examples of how women exert power so that agency can be channelled in constructive ways.

Suggestion Sixteen: Recognise that women are also sexual beings.

As well as challenging male power, women need to be encouraged to challenge internalized femininities that might put them at risk of contracting HIV / AIDS. In my study most young women (and men) believed that sex is only pleasurable for men and that it is a women's duty to please a man and that sex is something that a man does to a woman. Such views tend to reinforce the idea of woman as passive. Indeed, cultural values have contributed to many women internalizing femininity as preserving relationships and being self-sacrificing passive caregivers who may put themselves at risk to satisfy men, and, often satisfying men equates with condomless sex (Fine, 1992, p. 40; Holland et al., 1996, p. 146; Phillipps, 2000, p. 21; Richardson, 1996, pp. 164 – 167). It is important to challenge internalized femininities that may put women at increased risk of contracting HIV. As part of the process of challenging such femininities, it is necessary to nurture a sense of self worth and self esteem in young women and to align this to an

awareness of their own sexual needs, desires and capacities, including that of sexual pleasure (Thomson and Holland, 1998, pp. 74-75). Indeed, women's empowerment in confronting men's dominance begins with their ability to reclaim their own experiences and claim their bodies as the site of their own desires (Heise, 1995, p. 112; Holland, Ramazanoglu, Sharpe, and Thomson, 1996, p. 253). Thomson and Holland (1998, p. 69), argue that women who found it easier to practice safer sex where those who considered safer sex as going far beyond condom use and as being part of a wider reconsideration of their own sexual practice, agency, pleasure and desire. These young women challenged definitions of sex that is structured by expectations of men's needs and desires and, in so doing, the implicit constraints to safer sex. Encouraging women and men to understand that women are sexual beings involves encouraging a range of sexual activities and challenging penis centred definitions of sex as well as double standards (see suggestion seventeen).

Suggestion Seventeen: Encourage youth to challenge double sexual standards.

As is the case in many cultures (Edwards, 1997; Moore and Rosenthal, 1993, pp. 11-12; Thomson and Holland, 1998; p. 64), in Alex there are double standards as to what is socially acceptable sexual behavior (see chapter six). While multiple sexual partners for men is sanctioned and advocated, with the assumption that men derive sexual pleasure from many women, it is believed that women do not get sexual pleasure from sex and that women are meant to provide sexual pleasures to men, and women who have multiple sexual partners are degraded and demeaned and women's sexuality is regulated. Such double standards reinforce sexual dichotomies whereby women are meant to take control of contraceptives, although ultimately men are in charge of decision making in the sexual arena. Both men and women in Alex have internalized double standards regarding the sexual code of conduct and double standards need to be challenged as part of the process of creating equitable gender relations (See suggestion fifteen and sixteen).

Suggestion Eighteen: Understand hegemony as a process of both coercion and consent.

Often exploitative relationships based on overt coercion are easier to identify, and hence to challenge, than covert exploitative relationships which are apparently consensual. In this regard the Gramscian concept of hegemony is useful, as hegemony focuses on how oppression occurs via both coercion and consent. It is often the latter hegemonic processes that are difficult to identify and they are often more insidious as individuals believe that “this” is what they want.

Hegemony as consent helps us to understand that both women and men are actively involved in constructing harmful gender relationships (Aggleton, 2000, p. 6) and, as I have argued, women also play a role in maintaining the status quo. If interpellation is how hegemony functions at the level of the discursive, then it can be seen how women are implicated in the process of creating harmful gender relations. In this regard, in the Althusserian sense, through a process of interpellation, women are hailed from an “individual” into a “subject position” by a process of identification or recognition at the level of both the unconscious and the conscious (Althusser, 1971, pp. 160-161). While an “individual” is an actual person, a “subject” is a set of roles constructed by the dominant group and exists only in relation to interpretive practices (Chandler, 2002, p. 180). In referring to themselves as cherries and regtes, women construct and develop a subjectivity by speaking about themselves in ways that are socially (pre)determined by the dominant group and which depersonify and objectify them, thus tacitly accepting and reproducing the relationship system. Indeed, by abiding by the dominant discourses, values, symbols and beliefs, which become part of the everyday lexicon, the subordinate group expresses consensus with the dominant group, further reinforcing the normative order and the resultant sexual relations. As such, the concept of hegemony offers insights into how relationships are maintained not only by coercion but by consent as well as insights into the role subservient groups play in their own oppression.

Suggestion Nineteen: Encourage concrete action and a move from awareness to action.

Kelly, Parker and Oyosi (2002, p. 66) stress the importance of moving from awareness to intervention. The idea that sexualities and gender relationships are partly socially constructed offers hope as it maintains the possibility for more equitable and fairer relationships to emerge. However, change does not just occur but needs to be advocated and struggled for in a concrete way. Men and women need to be shown that they have a common interest in participating in concrete action to transform sexualities so that both men and women lessen their chances of contracting HIV / AIDS (Aggleton, 2000, p. 5).

Suggestion Twenty: Youth need to be exposed to positive role models.

In Alex, there are few positive role models (see chapter five) and it is necessary to provide positive and accessible role models of those who have challenged conventional masculinity and femininity (Thomson and Holland, 1998, p. 75), and who offer a tangible picture of success to youth.

Suggestion Twenty One: Avoid appealing to rational action.

Bio-medical models are underpinned by the idea that sexual behaviour is based on rational individual behaviour. Their model is premised on the assumption that individuals are rational beings who, when presented with adequate knowledge about HIV, will avoid high-risk sexual activities to protect their future health (Freund and McGuire, 1999; Gilbert et al., 1996; Hart, 1996; Hausser, 1997, p. 237 and Nettleton, 2001). However, much research has demonstrated that knowledge is necessary, but it is insufficient to effect behaviour change (Gilbert and Walker, 2000, p. 4; Marais, 2000, p. 15; Mitchell, 1998, p. 105; Parker, Dalrymple and Durden, 2000, p. 3) (see chapters seven and nine).

There are three main reasons why appealing to rational action fails. First, rational action theory is partly based on the idea that youth will protect their future health; however, the *tata ma chance* logic is present focused and youth are pessimistic about their future and

youth often “live for today” (see chapter five). Second, appeals to rational action are usually premised on the (sometimes implicit) notion that there is one objective definition of what rational behaviour is, and most often, this rational behaviour is defined by the educator / scientist. With regards to sexuality, the rational behaviour anticipated by those working within the bio-medical model is that once youth know about HIV / AIDS and how to prevent it, they will practice safe sex. Third, the notion of rational behaviour assumes that women have complete choice affording individuals too much agency and underemphasising structures and power (Fay, 1996, p. 31; Collier, 1994, p. 159). A clear example of rational as relative is in relation to women who know that their boyfriends have sex with other women but they do not insist on a condom, abstain from sex or leave the relationship. To the theorist who works within a rational choice theory framework, it would be rational for a woman to insist on a condom, or to abstain from sex or leave the relationship to avoid the risk of contracting HIV. Clearly, such an assumption ignores the power relations between men and women and the constraints that women are subjected to. If one explores the context in which women make choices about staying with unfaithful men and what their alternatives are (see chapters five and nine), it would be evident that what may seem to be rational behaviour to the educator, i.e. insisting on a condom or leaving the relationship, may not necessarily be rational to a woman who is afraid of being beaten if she asks for a condom and who is dependent on her relationship with a man for a number of reasons.

While weak versions of rational choice theory are less inclined towards extreme voluntarism as they recognize that individual’s beliefs may be “distorted” and that individuals may not always have sufficient knowledge to make “rational” choices, the focus is usually on not having enough information, and it is this lack of information that interferes with their capacity to exert agency and make “good choices.” While adequate knowledge is a prerequisite for decision making, which is a central component of agency, by only focusing on access to information, not enough emphasis is placed on ideology, hegemony, structures and power, and how these constrain agency and choices.

Suggestion Twenty Two: Persuade youth to decode implicit assumptions.

Much sexual behaviour is guided by implicit and self-evident norms which need to be decoded. As Boudon (1994) puts forward, even excellent reasoning can lead people to accept false conclusions because such reasoning is contaminated by a priori implicit or self-evident frameworks. It is these self-evident frameworks (that can be referred to by many concepts ranging from ideology, to regime of truth, to habitus), that often become normalized that inform much of my research. A good example of an internalised norm is the idea that if a woman loves her boyfriend and believes that he loves her, sex without a condom is safe. Here the a priori or implicit assumption is that love is connected to trust and women believe that if a man “loves” them, he will be faithful. Thus notions about condomless sex have been “contaminated” by an implicit (but incorrect) assumption about the relationship between “love” and “trust” which then becomes a norm.

Suggestion Twenty Three: One size does not fit all.

It has been argued that the ABC is too blunt an instrument to adequately respond to the lived realities of all youth (Aggleton, 2000, p. 23). Indeed, different communities need to have specific HIV / AIDS packages which are based on their own unique needs (Kelly, Parker and Oyosi, 2002, p. 66; Mitchell, 1998, p. 105). As I have illustrated, sexual practices do not take place in a vacuum, and HIV / AIDS prevention packages need to respond to lived material and cultural realities in which youth operate. Moreover, as Freire observes, all education takes place in the context of people's everyday lives. In this regard, research such as my research, has an important role to play in describing and understanding the context in which sexualities are created so that intervention programmes can be tailored towards the needs of unique communities. As well, drawing on youth's own experiences can provide a rich source of locally appropriate content for educational programmes.

Suggestion Twenty Four: A combination of prevention messages is needed.

While total abstinence is the only certain way to prevent the sexual transmission of HIV, abstinence is not always possible and / or desirable for youth. The two other strategies that are promoted as a way of lessening the chances of HIV infection are the consistent use of latex condoms and monogamous relationships. I illustrated the difficulties youth face in applying the A.B.C. (see chapter eight), for example, many youth assume that they are in a monogamous relationship, although their partner is being unfaithful, and as multiple partners are the norm for men, some practitioners advocate the use of condoms in secondary relationships, although challenging multiple partners remains a more long term aim. As women encounter difficulties in negotiating a condom, men need to be persuaded of the value of condoms. Given the difficulties of A.B.C. youth need to be presented with as wide a range of options as possible to select from.

Suggestion Twenty Five: Make it real.

HIV / AIDS does not seem real to youth. This perception of “unrealness” is partly due to the fact that it is not possible to tell if a person is HIV positive, and partly because of the stigma associated with being HIV positive and the discrimination against HIV positive people, so that many people choose not to disclose their HIV positive status and often AIDS related deaths are covered up by families. As such, although youth have heard about HIV, most youth say they have not seen an HIV positive person, nor attended a funeral of someone who has died from an AIDS related illness. Hence youth find it difficult to accept that AIDS is real and that it can happen to them (see chapter seven). It is important for HIV / AIDS intervention programmes to develop an awareness in youth that HIV / AIDS is not an abstract phenomenon on radio and television but is a concrete disease that can infect them (Parker, Dalrymple, and Durden, 2000, p. 9). To make HIV / AIDS real, it is important to draw on theories of learning that emphasise practical “real-life” knowledge and situations.

Suggestion Twenty Six: Work towards an external environment that facilitates and enables healthy sexualities.

As sexual practices are enabled and constrained by the context in which they occur, for behaviour change to take place, individuals must be located in the kind of environment that facilitates changes to healthier sexualities (Webb, 1997). For example the necessary structural changes need to be made and women need to be given greater access to employment so that sex is not their only resource. Men too need to be given access to jobs and education as this can be one way in which status can be achieved as currently the primary way to achieve status is via hyper masculinity and promiscuity.

Although it should not be assumed that a change in the material environment will automatically translate into changes in sexuality, and deterministic materially reductive readings of sexuality should be avoided, the material environment does constrain and enable sexuality (see chapter nine), and hence emphasis needs to be placed on creating a more positive external environment for youth.

Suggestion Twenty Seven: Recognise that condoms are not neutral objects.

When advocating the use of condoms, it is important to recognize that condoms are not neutral objects and that decision-making about condoms is partly based on the symbolic meanings attached to condom use. Condoms are often associated with sexually transmitted diseases and with sex outside of serious relationship, whereas condomless sex is associated with love, trust and loyalty and long term relationships (Thomson and Holland, 1998, p. 67; Strebel and Lindegger, 1998). Moreover, women often see condomless sex as a symbolic statement about the status of a relationship and as indicative of their status and identity as regte (see chapter six and eight).

Suggestion Twenty Eight: Bring youth on board.

In designing HIV / AIDS prevention programmes, it needs to be acknowledged that youth are creative agents, a key tenet of a CRA, and for HIV / AIDS prevention to be

successful, programmes should not be imposed on youth. While the expertise and skills of specialists is important, youth need to be partners in HIV / AIDS prevention efforts, and it is important to bring both men and women on board (Aggleton, 2000, p. 8).

Suggestion Twenty Nine: Understand how power works through day to day social practices.

I have illustrated that power dynamics shape sexual practices and whether or not youth engage in high risk sex. HIV/AIDS messages that over emphasise individual choice and personal responsibility, fail to address dynamics of power in sexual relations. By ignoring power, health education reproduces discursive practices which can serve to limit women's possibilities for practicing safer sex, thereby potentially increasing the risk of HIV infection (Richardson, 1996, p. 172).

Analysing gendered power relations embedded in sexual relations contributes to an understanding of why it is difficult for a woman to negotiate safer sex. I have illustrated that power operates on many levels, such as the discursive, the physical and the economic (see chapters four, nine and ten). Foucault's microphysics of power confirms the necessity for researchers and practitioners to ask what the connection is between structures of power and the everyday practices of youth (Oldersman and Davis, 1991, p. 1). The practical implication of Foucault's understanding of power relations as operating at the concrete micro level of society is that resistance must be conducted at the local level against the variety of forms of power which are practiced at the everyday level of social relations (Sawicki, 1991, p. 23). Moreover, by focusing on power and everyday practices, the idea of challenging oppressive power relations does not seem so daunting, although while challenging everyday practices, it is also necessary to understand (and ultimately to confront) macro structures of power as inevitably structural power relations need to be challenged (Rao Gupta and Weiss, 1995, p. 269), as it is these structures that facilitate the workings of unequal power relations at the local level; hence Foucault's concept of power needs to be read with a Gramscian conception of hegemony (Morrow, 1991).

Suggestion Thirty: Do not assume that information translates into behaviour changes and refocus educational campaigns away from the jug mug approach.

Research has illustrated that factual knowledge about HIV / AIDS is essential but that it does not translate into changed sexual behaviour (Gilbert and Walker, 2000, p. 4; Marais, 2000, p. 15; Mitchell, 1998, p. 105; Parker, Dalrymple and Durden, 2000, p. 3). While it is important to find out exactly what the gaps are in knowledge about HIV / AIDS and to rectify these, it is important to challenge the notion that information automatically transfers into changes in sexual behaviour and information dissemination should not be seen as a priority at this stage (Kelly, 2000, p. 7). Moreover, educational interventions based on rote learning need to be replaced with problem-solving based pedagogies that are focused on equipping youth with critical thinking skills and problem solving abilities. It is essential to move beyond jug and mug pedagogies that merely provide youth with information. Rather, youth need to be equipped with the skills required to analyse situations and problems and to apply knowledge in real life situations. Educational materials need to move beyond providing information and need to reflect the material and socio-cultural realities of particular groups and to involve learners in actively analysing real HIV / AIDS related situations. Educational material that locates HIV / AIDS within general knowledge about sexuality, reproduction, contraception and that also address gender roles and relationships is useful. Educational interventions designed to help prevent the spread of HIV need to focus on developing critical thinking skills and youth would benefit by learning to formulate opinions and to give reasons for opinions, to distinguish between facts and opinions, to choose between a range of viewpoints and alternatives, to self-evaluate and to reflect. A learning environment of mutual trust where youth can engage in open dialogue needs to be established and youth need to be encouraged to examine what they know, and to challenge this and / or construct new knowledge based on prior understandings (Vygotsky, 1962; Vygotsky, 1978). An example of this type of learning is getting youth to critically analyse their own gendered identities through thinking about the ideals that they are supposed to live up to, compared with the realities (Welbourn, 2002, p. 53). Very importantly, youth need to develop the

ability to transfer what they learn to new events, contexts and situations (Salmon and Perkin, 1989).

Suggestion Thirty One: Reconceptualise notions of awareness.

To begin to understand why “awareness” of HIV / AIDS does not translate into behaviour change, it is necessary to interrogate notions of “awareness” of HIV / AIDS and to extend the notion of “awareness” from “aware or not aware” to a more complex and nuanced conception of youth’s understandings, awareness and knowledge.

The bio-medical notion of awareness is implicitly premised on the idea that there is one central discourse and that once the scientific discourse has been introduced to youth, this scientific “master” discourse of “awareness” will replace youths’ previous understandings. Unlike bio-medical models, both poststructuralists and critical realists recognize that there are many conflicting discourses operating simultaneously at any given time, although some discourses become hegemonic. Moreover, the bio-medical model does not take cognisance of the fact that youth consciousness does not form coherent wholes that can be replaced by another coherent whole discourse (i.e. the scientific discourse). To be sure, youth discourses are often contradictory and fragmented, as captured by the Gramscian concept of commonsense whereby “commonsense” is described as an episodic and disjointed complex of beliefs that guide everyday life but lacks the potential to put forward a coherent view of life (Gramsci, 1971, pp. 323, 324, 420). Moreover the Gramscian notion of commonsense recognizes that knowledge is not read in a vacuum, and that views about HIV / AIDS are constructed and reconstructed based on real day to day life experiences of youth and is comprised of lay conceptions, gaps, myths and misconceptions as well as aspects of the scientific discourses. Hence, youth’s awareness and knowledge of HIV / AIDS will not be based primarily on what they are told by educators and there is no “master discourse,” that erases and replaces other discourses, hence the “knowledge equals agency” equation implicit in bio-medical models, needs to rework its understanding of knowledge if choice and agency are to be meaningful concepts.

Suggestion Thirty Two: Youth need to be engaged in healthy talk about sexuality.

One of the largest HIV prevention programmes in South Africa, loveLife, has as one of its slogans “Talk about it,” and talking and encouraging open and healthy communication about sexuality is crucial¹⁰⁷. It needs to be recognised that conventional notions of masculinity and femininity are only able to dominate in silence (Thomson and Holland, 1998, p. 74), but dominant masculinities and femininities are often also partly reproduced in day to day discourse (see chapter ten). Interventions need to include spaces for youth to discuss sexuality and to challenge harmful norms and destructive sexualities and to disrupt stereotypical discussions that men are involved in that promote the valorisation of male sexuality. If discussion groups are organised, the presence of an outside facilitator can assist in neutralising the atmosphere of competition and exhibitionism which often characterises male interaction when discussing sexuality (Gogna and Silvina, 2000, p. 135).

Discussion forums can benefit young females by offering them a non-threatening environment where women can share experiences and explore strategies around risk reduction. Such forums could also be useful in the development of communication and assertiveness skills to resist the pressures of unwanted sex. Moreover, encouraging women to talk about sex is a crucial step in overcoming the social norms that define a “good” woman as one who does not initiate discussions about sex. These norms need to be challenged as, amongst other things, they make the negotiation of condoms difficult (Rao Gupta and Weis, 1995, p. 264; Wheis, Whelan, Rao Gupta, 1996, pp. 11, 20).

Suggestion Thirty Three: Conduct further research into the micro-politics of language and find constructive ways to work with the power of language.

Language influences but does not determine sexuality. While approaches such as the bio-medical approach underplay language, language is an important focus in poststructuralism; however, poststructuralism is guilty of linguistic idealism, collapsing

¹⁰⁷ The successes in Uganda’s HIV / AIDS prevention efforts have partly been attributed to the fact that communication about HIV / AIDS issues were not reduced to the provision of messages from the health sector but were rooted in discussions in social networks (Low-Beer and Stoneburner, 2003, p. 13).

reality into discourse. A CRA recognises that reality is partly constituted and mediated by languages but it has a realist ontology and hence does not lapse into language imperialism (see chapter three and four). Using a CRA I explored the micro-politics of language and by focusing on day to day linguistic practices of youth I exposed how binaries play an important role in the maintenance of power by presenting the oppositional categories as fixed, thereby repressing alternative possibilities. As well, oppositional terms are associated with a cluster of symbolic attributes and oppositional concepts are hierarchical and privilege one set of values (Chandler, 2002, pp. 106-111). These discursively constructed binaries are incorporated into youth's daily vocabulary and become part of common-sense and seem natural to youth who use them for guiding behaviour and shaping identities, for example the *ingagara* versus the *isithipa* (see chapter ten).

The repeated unquestioning exposure to various figures of speech is a subtle way of sustaining tacit agreement with the dominant modes of thought (Chandler, 2002, p. 124) and, as such, language plays a role in reproducing the status quo. One way to challenge binary thinking, and the associated normative order, is to draw on the day to day experiences of youth, so that they can see that behaviour does not fit neatly into categories, and to use this as a starting point for challenging conventional either / or masculinities and femininities. To get youth to confront the harmful imagery associated with some figures of speech, youth can be presented with unconventional tropes and examples to decode from other cultures so that they can begin to understand how language works to reproduce power.

Although recognising the power of words, deterministic approaches need to be avoided and questions need to be asked about when words are "mere" words and when words influence practice. Further, while it is important to explore how language perpetuates structures, it is equally important to explore how language opens space for resistance. Indeed, as language is a site of struggle, youth and youth workers can use language as a space to discourage high risk sexual practices. The language used, not only by youth, but by educators, journalists and health workers is of central importance, not only to decrease

high risk sexual behaviour, but also to reduce the stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination that is linked to HIV / AIDS. Perhaps we cannot change the whole world with the word, but language is certainly one of the many areas that health practitioners can work with to decrease risky sexual behaviour (Selikow, 2004).

Future research into how youth use language and how language impacts sexual practices would be useful, as much research on discourse and language investigates how language used in advertisements and the media influences youth sexuality (Connelly, 2003), rather than on how youth themselves use language and the impact this has on sexual behaviour.

Suggestion Thirty Four: Involve a range of educators in HIV / AIDS prevention strategies.

A range of different people should be involved in educating youth about HIV / AIDS and sexuality (Mitchell, 1998, p. 108). As discussed below this should include parents, persons living with HIV / AIDS and peers. As well, it is important to consider the role that teachers could play in HIV / AIDS education; given the complexity of the education system, the historic lack of training of many teachers and the sexual exploitation of pupils by some teachers, the role of teachers in HIV / AIDS education is a complex issue that requires further investigation.

Suggestion Thirty Five: Getting parents involved.

Despite mass campaigns in South Africa encouraging adults to speak to their children about sex, most parents do not speak to their children about HIV / AIDS and sex (see chapter seven). Both South African research (Sibanda, 2002, p. 26; Skinner, 2001, p. 5; The Star, March 6, 2002, p. 12), as well as international research (Mitchell, 1998, p. 109), has illustrated that many young people see their parents as reliable sources of information and support and would like to speak to them more freely and openly about sex. A challenge is how to overcome the many cultural and social barriers that exist in relation to parents discussing sexuality with their children (Weiss, Whelan, Gupta, 1996, p. 17),

particularly given the breakdown of the family (Mkhuma, 2002, p. 13; Musi, 2002, p. 8; Ramphele, 1992) and the demise of parental authority in townships that began in the 1960s and 1970s (Delius and Glaser, 2001, p. 13; Mokwena, 1992, p. 35; Seekings, 1993, p. 25). Moreover, despite the fact that sex education does not promote or increase sexual activity, but in fact leads to safer sex (Filgueiras, 1995, p. 90), many parents feel that discussing sex is akin to promoting promiscuity (Obbo, 1995, p. 90). As well as overcoming these difficulties, it is important that adults are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to play an effective role in the promotion of healthy sexualities.

Suggestion Thirty Six: Involve People Living with AIDS (PLWAs) in Educational Campaigns.

Youth living with HIV / AIDS need to be engaged in designing and carrying out educational activities to promote a better understanding of the disease (Weiss, Whelan, Gupta, 1996, p. 21), and to help youth realise that HIV / AIDS is real (see chapter seven) and involving HIV positive people in educational campaigns can help overcome the stigma that these young people face. Further, empathy with those directly affected by HIV/ AIDS is a powerful catalyst in bringing about change (Kelly, 2000, p. 22).

Suggestion Thirty Seven: Explore the potential of peer education

The potential for peer education programmes lie in the fact that peers are very influential in the area of sexual behaviour and youth from Alex frequently turn to each other for information and advice about HIV and sexuality (see chapter five and seven). To be sure, while sex technically takes place in private, sexual relationships are located within complicated social networks of peers where information is exchanged and where reputations are constructed and the degree to which youth conform or transgress conventional masculinities and femininities in their sexual relationships is shaped by the climate of the peer culture in which they are located (Thomson and Holland, 1998, p. 65). Youth are in the best position to understand the challenges that their peers are involved in with regard to the A.B.C. and peers can more readily establish a connection with youth based on shared experiences and common background and language and peers from the

same cultural context and of the same age will more likely be able to provide culturally appropriate responses (Bernard, 1991; Kar, Talbot and Coan, 1986). Peer educators offer the opportunity for youth to participate in meaningful roles in the community and to learn important social skills and ultimately serve as role models. For females, being a peer educator may give young women social legitimacy to talk about sex without the risk of being stigmatized (Weiss, Whelan, Gupta, 1996, p. 11).

Given the limited resources in Alex, and the high level of youth unemployment, peer education can be a cost effective option, relative to other interventions (Sciacca, 1987), although effective peer education approach requires well trained and committed staff, and may be labour and time intensive. It also needs to be recognised that peer education, needs to be carefully considered as, although peers can encourage healthier sexualities, they can also encourage the reproduction of destructive gendered relationships (Gregson et al., 2004; p. 2122) as witnessed throughout this research. As well, even within the peer group there are power imbalances and issues of trust. Very importantly, although peers may be accessible (Mitchell, 1998, p. 110), their factual knowledge base needs to be built up. Research into the impact of peer education has been inconclusive and if peer programmes are implemented they need to be accompanied by systematic evaluation (Ovenden and Loxley, 1993).

3. CONCLUDING THOUGHT

In conclusion, while external (material) and internal (cultural and symbolic) transformation is imperative, this will not happen overnight and as the HIV / AIDS epidemic grows there is an urgency for more immediate change. While working towards a more equalitarian society, the structures that enable and constrain sexuality need to be understood and the agency and creativity of youth needs to be harnessed so that healthier sexualities are (re)invented so that youths' sexualities will not put them at increased risk of HIV infection. A long term goal is to promote a culture of sexual rights, where healthy sexualities are celebrated and enjoyed, and where sexual relations are free of coercion and violence, and are characterised by mutual respect, consent and shared

responsibility for sexual behaviour and its consequences (Selikow, Zulu, Cedras, 2002) (adapted from the fourth world conference on women, Beijing, United nations, 1995).

When I first began the writing of this PhD, I did not realise that HIV / AIDS was at the nexus of so many issues that concerned me as an academic, activist and practitioner and that impacted me on a very personal level. Both my research and my own experiences have demonstrated how HIV / AIDS converges with power and powerlessness, with gender; with poverty; with education; with stigma and shame and secrecy; with love; with abuse; with health and with disease; and with structure and agency. Indeed, this virus refuses to be left out of any debates; it is tenacious and conscientious; it did its homework well and it has made sure that it intersects with nearly all facets of life; demanding full attention by researchers and practitioners alike.

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APPENDIX A IMAGES OF ALEX

Image 1: One of the entrances to Alex.

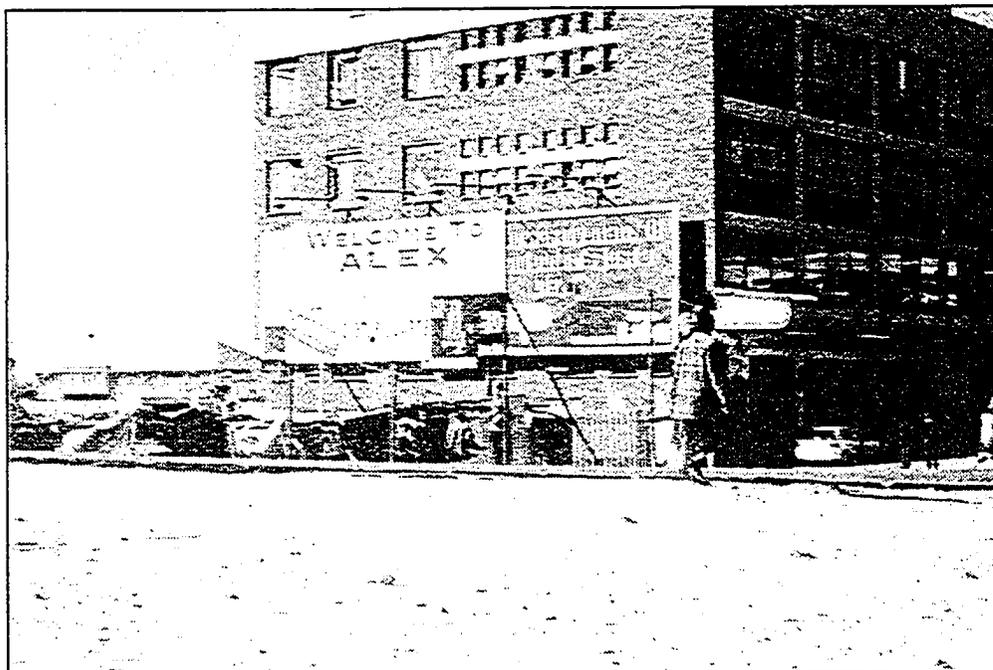


Image 2: Graffiti on abandoned truck in Alex.



Image 3: Some of the houses in Alex



Image 4: HIV prevention messages, Johannesburg downtown



Image 5: A double story. Cars are associated with masculinity.



Image 6: A women's hairstyle is one of the things men will pay for in exchange for sex.

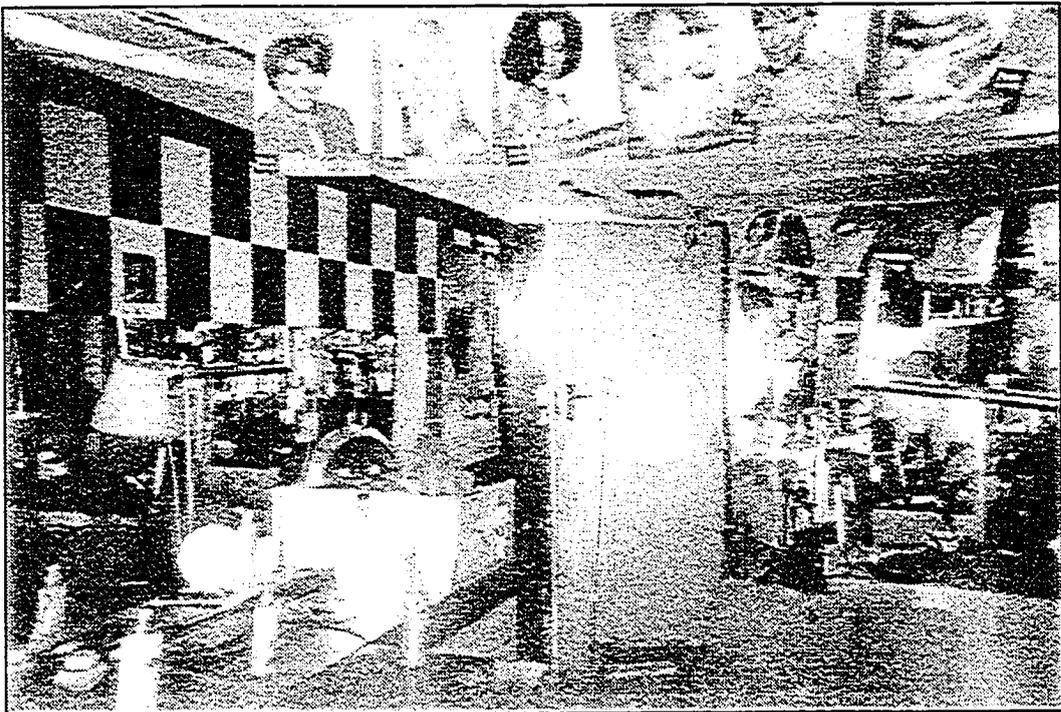


Image 7: Funeral hire equipment has become a popular business in townships



Image 8: A sign outside Alex: loveLife is one of the biggest HIV / AIDS prevention campaign in South Africa.



Image 9: Condoms are widely advertised in Alex and in South Africa

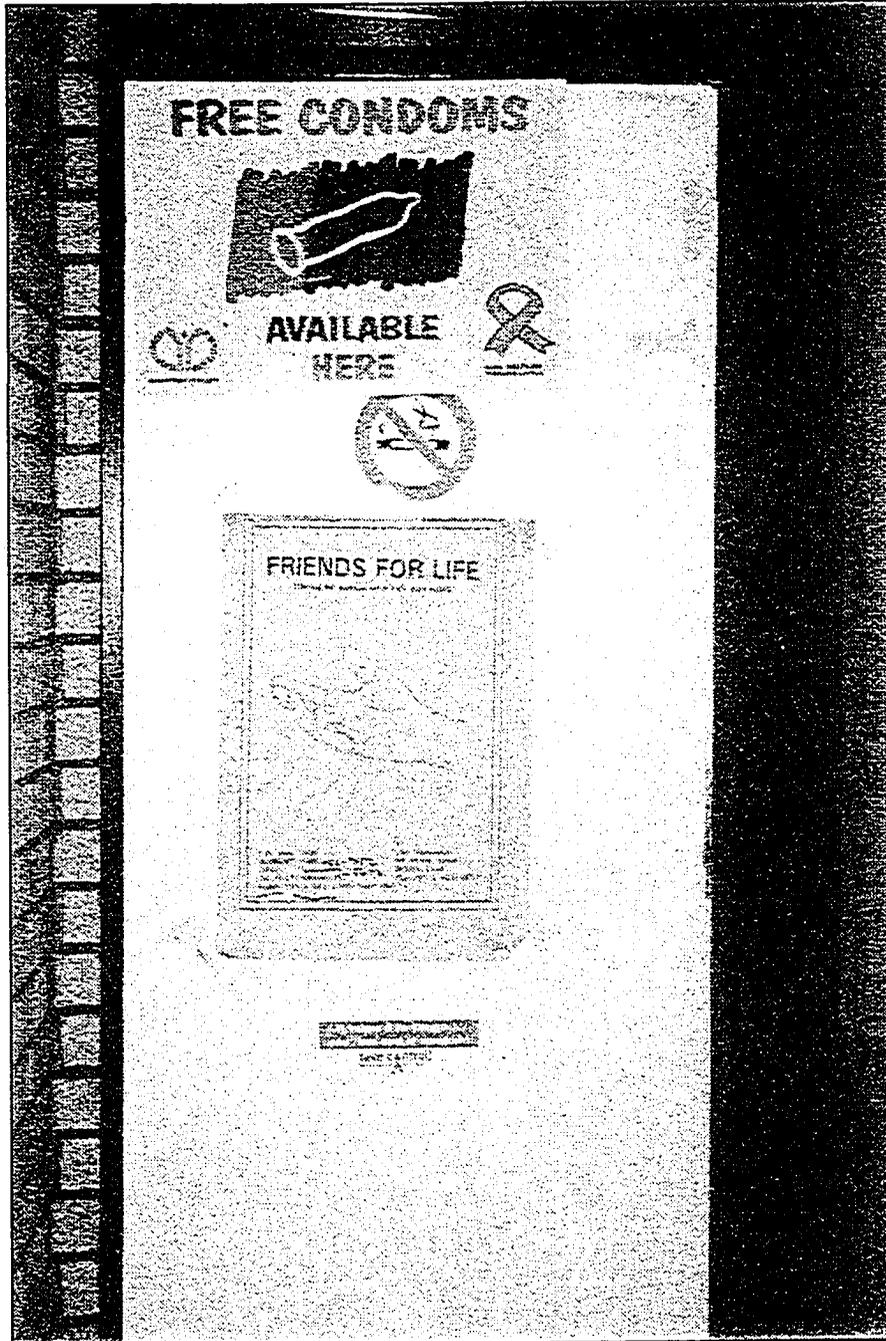
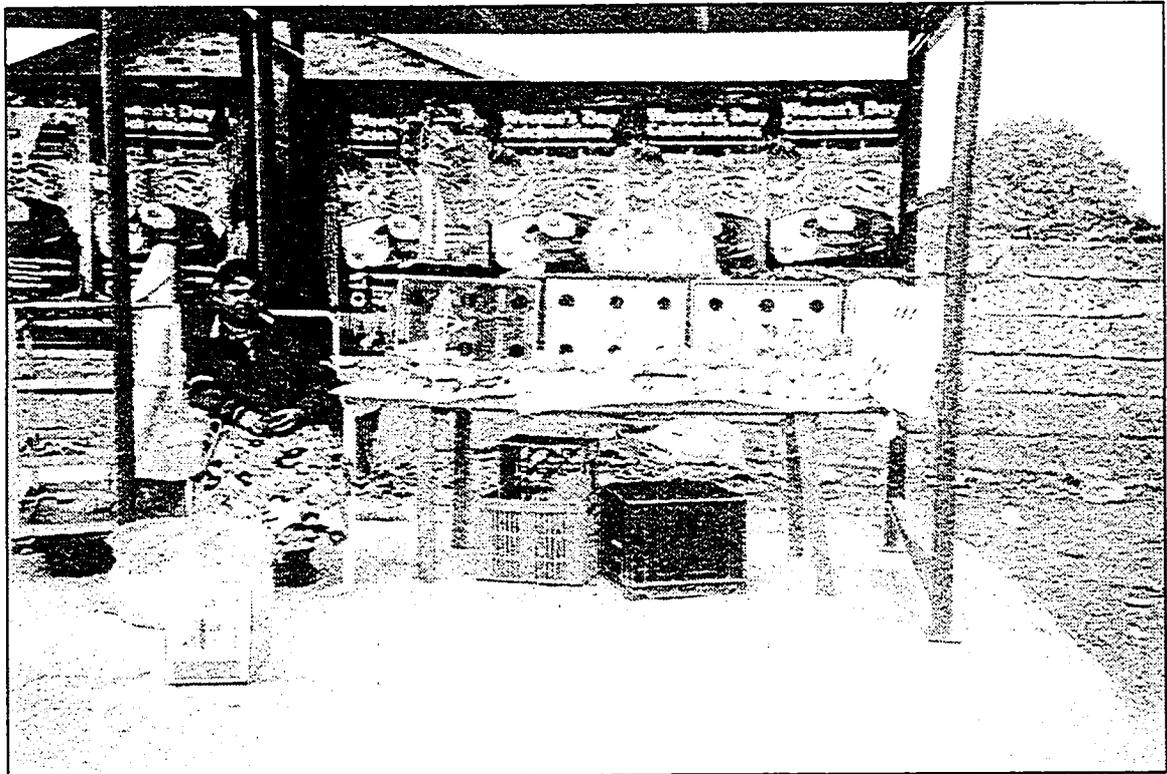


Image 10: A Woman selling oranges



APPENDIX B

SAMPLE OF QUESTIONS

Is HIV / AIDS talked about in Alex?

- Where?
- What is discussed?
- When is it discussed?
- Who do you talk to about HIV/ AIDS / about sex?

Do you think there is an HIV / AIDS epidemic?

- If it is exaggerated who is exaggerating it and why?

Have you ever received / been involved in any type of HIV / AIDS education?

- Please describe.

What leads to / causes HIV / AIDS?

- How do you know this? Where did you get this information?

Who is most badly affected by AIDS?

- Are there any groups that are not affected? Why?

Have you heard anything about HIV / AIDS that is not true, i.e. a myth?

How can the risk of contracting HIV be lessened?

What are some of the barriers or difficulties in practising safer sex?

What types of solutions would you propose to prevent the spread of HIV / AIDS?

- For each suggestion ask what might work and / or why?

How has your community been affected by HIV / AIDS?

Do you personally know anyone who has been affected by HIV / AIDS?

- Has this changed your perceptions?
- Has this changed your sexual behaviour? How, why, why not?

When is the transition from boy to man / from girl to woman?

What status or connotations does virginity carry in Alex?

For a casual sexual encounter:

- What qualities does a female look for in a male?
- What qualities does a male look for in a female?

For a serious relationship:

- What qualities does a female look for in a male?
- What qualities does a male look for in a female?

What does it mean to be manly, (macho) / feminine?

- What language do you use to talk about being manly / feminine?

Can you give an example of someone you know who is manly (macho), describe what he does that makes him manly?

Can you give an example of someone who is unmanly (sissy)?

Why do people engage in sexual relationships?

Are there sex workers in Alex?

- Explain how sex is sold?

Does the number of sexual partners indicate the level of prestige a person has in Alex?

- for men?
- for women?

What traditional views influence sexual behaviour in Alex?

What modern views influence sexual behaviour in Alex?

When is a relationship considered as a serious relationship?

- How is it discussed and decided upon that a relationship is serious and not just casual?

What changes when a relationship is said to be steady and not casual?

Do most youth engage in causal sex?

- Why?
- Why not?
- From what age?

What pressures are there to engage in sex?

What type of language or slang is used in Alex to talk about sex?

- Does it differ if you are talking about sex with a steady partner vs sex with a casual partner?

Are there any cases where a male is entitled to sex even if the girl does not want to have sex?

- When?

If a male has a regular / steady girlfriend (Cherrie), should he wear a condom?

- Why?
- Why not?
- If he tells his girlfriend he will wear one what will she think?
- Do guys wear condoms with casual girls?

Has a partner got the right to ask his sexual partner to wear a condom? Under what circumstances:

- can they ask?
- should they not ask?
- under what circumstances can the partner refuse?
- what happens if they refuse?
- would you feel comfortable to ask your partner to wear a condom?
- Can you give an example of when you asked your partner to use a condom?
- What happened?

Do you think polygamy should be practised?

- Why or why not?

Is Alex unique or different in relation to sexual practices, for example compared to SOWETO?

- If so, please describe how it is and why?

What events have changed the way youth perceive sex and relationships?

How did you feel about the interview?

- How was it to talk about HIV / AIDS and sex?
- What did we not talk about that we should have?

APPENDIX C CONSENT LETTER

To whom it may concern

My name is Terry-Ann Selikow. I am a South African student studying at the University of Alberta in Canada. I am currently conducting research with Eugene Cedras into HIV/ AIDS and sexual behaviour in Alexandra Township, and I would like to ask you to take part in my study by letting me interview you.

The research is being conducted as part of the requirements for my doctoral degree (PhD) and I will not benefit financially in any way from the research. I also hope that the study can contribute to understanding HIV/ AIDS so that the spread of HIV / AIDS can be prevented

If you agree to participate in the study I will interview you for about two hours, once twice or three times. The interview will consist of a series of questions and will take place in a mutually convenient venue at an agreed upon time. You may choose not to answer certain questions. With your permission I will record the interviews so that I have an accurate description of the conversation. The tapes will then be transcribed, and if you request a copy of the transcription, I can give you one.

All information gathered will be treated with strict confidentiality and under no circumstances will your name be revealed. You will remain anonymous in the study and I will not ask for your real name, but will ask you to make up a name for the interview so that nobody will know your identity. Moreover, if at any time of the research, you choose to withdraw from the process you may do so and will not be required to give an explanation. If you decide not to participate in the study, any interviews already conducted will be destroyed.

The information gathered will not be used for any other research studies, and if used for conferences or publications, it will be treated confidentially.

If you have any queries about the research please contact me at _____ or at _____
You can also contact the professor who will be supervising my research, Professor J. Kachur at jerrv.kachur@ualberta.ca if you want further clarification pertaining to any issues.

As a token of my appreciation, I will be giving R 20.00 to each person who I interview per interview.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign the form below.

Thank you in advance

Sincerely

Terry-Ann Selikow and Eugene Cedras

I declare that I have read and understood the above and agree to participate in the study.

Name:

Signature: