

HOW CHILDREN MAKE MEANING OF SEXUAL TRAUMA: TOWARDS
DECOLONISED AFRICAN-CENTERED CHILD-CENTRIC
PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS

by

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DECLARATION

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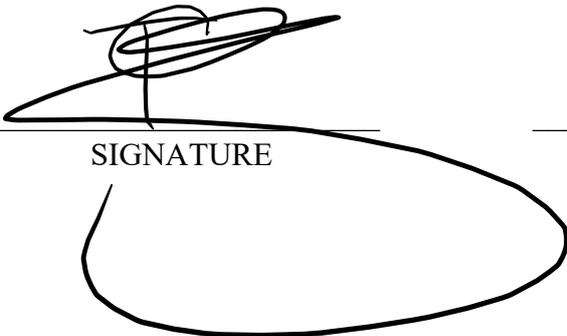
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How children make meaning of sexual trauma: Towards decolonised African-centered child-centric psychological interventions

I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



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FOREWORD

One day in 2006, in the senior year of my junior degree as a student in Psychology, I sat for a progress examination. The exam question asked us to interpret a case study drawn from a research article cited in the prescribed textbook. The study was about teenage pregnancy in the Eastern Cape and effectively presented Xhosa girls as promiscuous and mainly preoccupied with making babies. I responded to the case study within the confines of our class instruction, using only the facts presented about the participants from this article. After providing the textbook answer, I drew a neat line and then wrote “*this is not true*”. I proceeded to give my perspective of Xhosa girls from the Eastern Cape – after all, I am also a Xhosa girl and I know many other Xhosa girls who do not fit the stereotype presented in that exam case study. Since that day, I vowed to myself that I would contribute to knowledge that correctly presents the experiences of what my young mind then perceived to be about “Xhosa girls”. Later, I realised and appreciated that such stereotypes extend beyond Xhosa identities and include Africans broadly, thus the extension of my orientation to focus broadly on representations of Africa(ness).

I keenly understood the power of narratives in shaping discourses about certain groups and how these in turn inform the social treatment of those social groups. I then resolved to make the voices of African children heard and looked for African scholars to ground and give language and weight to what I intuitively knew from my experiences, and that of others, as Africanness. I was also aware of the dangers that stereotypical representations devoid of context-specific knowledge endanger African children in the face of a multiplicity of violence at a discursive as well as at a practical level.

Since my exam in 2006, I have acquired training spanning over a decade where I gained exposure to research and experience that qualified my neat line on that exam sheet. I further noticed and identified that with all its progress in human behavioural studies, Psychology as a field still lacked profoundly in its sharp understanding and articulation of the African people’s ontology. This spurred my interest in conducting research that is not only African-situated but also African-centered in its orientation to bolster African epistemologies for solutions that would serve Africa and her people.

I located my specific interest in African children to change the agenda and ideologically laden archive that shapes the understanding and practice in Psychology about African people in general and African children. I resolved to do work that takes into account the context that produces the culture of African people in modernity particularly around ideas of sexuality and human development. My commitment to making the African voices heard is geared by my appreciation of the agency that African people, which includes children, have. I wanted to amplify our voices, particularly those of children, in order to reshape the dominant discourse and practices in Psychology particularly as fitting to African praxis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Hi, I am Neziswa. Vuyasande.

Titi. Fides, Vivian is also me.

Abathembu naMamthsawe gave me these names.

I am Joy Divine.

This Doctorate is a product of my thoughts, theorisations, and ideas.

Many people helped me pull this work together.

They gave me courage.

Fast-forward to a decade after my third year of university education.

It is with gratitude that I reflect on 2016, the day when I encountered Mbulelo Bukani, then Chief of Human Resources at the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC). He introduced me to Glenda Gray (Prof) who is the President and CEO of the South African Medical Research Council. Through that experience, an agreement was reached, and I was well on my way to start my doctoral research journey in paediatrics at the SAMRC. The Violence, Injury and Peace Research Unit (VIPRU) which is co-directed by the University of South Africa's Institute of Social and Health Sciences (ISHS) under the directorship of Professor Ashley van Niekerk at the time agreed to host me; it is the same Unit which hosted my MA research project which focused on pediatric burns.

Mbulelo Bukani and Glenda Gray believed in my capabilities as an emergent scholar, just like Professor Rashid Ahmed did when I found myself at a crossroads with the discipline of psychology and its representatives. Coloniality, prejudice, and discrimination lost their battle, yet again. What was meant to harm me and the completion of this work, God turned around for my good.

Yanga Yanga Zembe Zondi (Prof) held space for me to trust the process (our relationship is very old), my spiritual leaders kept me strong, my mother and siblings kept me grounded, and my friends kept me accountable to my goal. Bishop Joshua Simeon (PhD), Pastor Chuks, Pastor Oscar Care, and Mogale Sebopetsa (PhD) – also a pastor - were especially instrumental in me maintaining my identity. It is my faith that kept me going.

This work is therefore a product of my experiences in the discipline of psychology. This thesis was brought to manifestation through professional encounters with scholars from different disciplines, the love, and support of my church community, as well as the cheering on of my

social networks and community engagements on the subject matters. These spaces kept me searching deeper into the topic. I, therefore, remain grateful for the gift of learning how to ask for help; and the humility to accept help – to be seen by my peers and elders in the fields my work speaks to. During the conceptualisation phase of the project, Ashraf Kagee (Prof) offered me generous critiques which persuaded me to strengthen the rationale and problem statement of this thesis. I am extremely grateful for my encounter with him.

Doctoral research host institution

The SAMRC Research and Capacity Development Division Scholarship and Internship Programme made this research possible by providing me with an office where I could do my work. I am grateful to Kopano Ratele (Prof) who believed in the heart of my work and agreed to supervise this project and be my designated mentor. As my initial supervisor, I remain grateful to him for opening the door and helping me start on this journey. I treasure his teachings of courage and for teaching me how to ask for help. I thank colleagues at VIPRU and the ISHS for the space to think and to test my ideas with fellow doctoral candidates, particularly Siphon Dlamini (PhD), Refiloe Makama (PhD), and Rebecca Helman. I received great administrative support from Annelise Krige, Tumi Mashaba, Anthony Phaahlamohlake, Zoliswa Ntsoko, and Mildred Dreyer towards conference attendance and project work which strengthened my work. I am grateful for the opportunity to have played a central role in the Transdisciplinary African Psychologies Colloquia Series.

Ndindeleni Joshua Nyamande's dedication to the administrative coordination of the UNISA psychology department is commendable. I am thankful to him for all his help.

Research participants and study sites

“We worry about what a child will become tomorrow, yet we forget that he is someone today”
(Stacia Tauscher)

This quote resonated with me throughout the entire research process. I am grateful for the privilege of having been trusted by the 20 children and their families who created this project. Without them, this thesis would have remained an idea in my head had they not trusted me with their life stories. Based on my interactions with the research sites I am excited to see more of child-centred work in the future. I am well aware that this study would have remained a proposal had Childline Western Cape, eThafeni Day Care, Project Playground, Ilitha Labantu and Jelly Beanz not given their permission for me to collect data at their NGOs.

Objective and critical readers

Cooks will tell you that their best dishes are those for which they tried different spices.
A lot of spices cooked this pot.
Can you *hear* the aroma?

Pioneering work requires the testing of ideas. This is why academics go through peer reviews, present at conferences, stakeholder engagements, and seminars. I benefited greatly from academic platforms as much as I did from public engagements on radio, national debates on social media, and televised interviews. These engagements prompted me to think deeper, stretching me far and beyond my discipline. I had objective readers for different chapters who gifted me with new writers and thinkers to build my theories. Their feedback shaped and illuminated the core of my work in ways that I had not thought of. I am thankful to them for the gift of being understood, affirmed, and validated, and for helping me put African children put at the centre of academic thinking. In the order of their arrival to this work, I hereby acknowledge Yanga Zembe Zondi (Prof), Wanga Zembe Mkhabile (DPhil), Lieketseng Ned (PhD), William Mpofu (PhD), Chelsie Yount-André (PhD), Esona-sethu Ndwandwa, and Nyameka Mzamo for their contributions to my critical thinking. I am amazed by their kindness, integrity, and humility with which they reviewed and critiqued sections of this dissertation so generously.

Consultants

Indlela ibuzwa kwabaphambili, sithso thina kwaXhosa.

In November 2018, two months after I started with data collection, Sinegugu Duma (Prof) dropped me a message stating that she was in Cape Town and was available to meet if I was interested. Of course, I jumped at the opportunity. She prepared me for fieldwork in phenomenological sexual violence research and I got the chance of a lifetime to interview her on her PhD work and her book, *The pain of being a woman*. In February 2019 I met Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (Prof) at a psychology conference he was a guest speaker at, also in Cape Town. I consulted with him about how to best approach the overarching research question this study addresses. He was always available for follow-up questions. In August 2019 I had the opportunity of a lifetime to spend the day with Saths Cooper (Prof) of the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) and Arthur Evans (Prof) of the American Psychological Association (APA). I discussed with them, respectively, the history of South Africa concerning generational

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Fieldwork and Data handling

It was as if
you were in the room with me.

Yandiswa Tinus, Akhona Ncinita, and Zinzile Zenzile Molo provided me sterling research support showing strength and resilience as they opened themselves up to the content of this work.

Debriefing

No, it's about those kids,
But you are doing the work.
Sit. Feel. Now you can go.

Shanaaz Suffla (Prof), Naiema Taliep (PhD), Samed Bulbulia (PhD), and Nancy Hornsby saved me a lot of therapy costs during my fieldwork. Whether it was planned or not, one of them was always still in the office when I returned from listening to the children's stories. Thank you for letting me feel the stories.

Collegial support

From the bottom of my heart. Thank you.

I felt supported by the team at the Children's Institute of UCT in the final stages of the write-up particularly Lucy Jamieson and Zerina Matthews for their accountability calls.

Editorial work

Editors are ghosts, they say
Not mine.
They journeyed with me.
Nakupenda.
Ndiyabulela.

In October 2019, I met Wangui wa Goro (Prof) at the Bi-Annual African Studies Association of Africa Conference in Nairobi, Kenya. She provided far more than content editorial support

toward the first draft of this thesis, giving to me her archival knowledge on Feminist scholarship, herself, and her experience. Thanks to her I can confidently add my name to the long list of African Feminists. I am glad and indebted to her to have learned the humility of allowing nurturing. Of Sabelo Mcinziba's contributions to the final content edit of this thesis what I can say is, *verily verily, good has come out of Bethlehem - eZwelethemba, eMnyameni - and every other township where black academics hail from*. I have found new meaning in Kholeka's *Alibuyi lilambatha*. *Enkosi* Friend.

Because I take nothing for granted, I also wish to acknowledge On Track Editing for editing, proof-reading, and citation and references cross-check work on the final version of this dissertation.

Financial support

The financial assistance of the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences, in collaboration with the South African Humanities Deans Association towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at are mine and are not necessarily to be attributed to the NIHSS and SAHUDA. My gratitude to Jessica Murray (Prof) and Kgomotso Masemola (Prof) who were my NIHSS mentors for their affirmations, consistent support, and professionalism throughout this process overflows.

My community – my people!

My friends tell me the journey was difficult
I beg to differ. It was a fun adventure.
They made it so.

The curves around my lips are making a cocky curve stretching to the sides of my eyes as I type the words asking you, Reader, to believe me when I tell you that to me it will remain knowledge at the intellectual level that the doctoral research journey is lonely.

I now look forward I now look forward to the beach and virtual dinner dates with Ntomboxolo Mayile, Sebenzile Nkosi (PhD), Sibusiso Maseko, and Lynn Hendricks in substitute for the intensive virtual doctoral thesis writing retreats and process phone calls we did together. I pray that our work brings light and life to Africa and the world as intended. The NIHSS fellows consider PhD non-completion as academic drop-out so we laughed, cried, and teased each other through the process. I will be sure to announce to Rembu Magoba (PhD) that Saturdays are

now no longer for PhD. Prayers do get answered and as such, I am extremely excited to be able to tell Themba Ginindza (Prof) that he can now stop laughing at me for having to stay awake to read and write. (Lord, did he annoy me!) I laughed then, as I do now when I recall his words *sesiyalala tsine bantfu lesesicedze kufundza, sicedzile sikolwa*.

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For listening to my early thoughts and lending me their words to help me articulate *inkaba yalomsebenzi*, gifts from Yanga and Wanga, I am now happy to respond to Yanga's words which I pasted both in my work and home offices that stated "you are too talented, smart and intelligent to not go for it full-steam" with, "Your prayers, declarations, and guidance have reached completion. I am still amazed by how you remained part of my process from start to finish. *Kugqityiwe*. Let us do the same for other Black, brilliant, and driven women scholars". Signed - NV Titi (DPsyc).

I must be careful though to not just sign off as "Dr Titi" unless without a specifier lest I am confused with *uMama*, Dr EV Titi, who is a medical doctor. My mom has been so patient with this journey, very encouraging and telling me all will be well at every turn. I feel extremely blessed to have her. After doing all in my power to have this work submitted earlier than now it is only divine that I write this acknowledgement section on her bed. Her daughter is finally *home*. Hlumelo Titi, my brother, who has been my cheerleader and prayer partner for grace is

just as chuffed by this accomplishment. It is tranquil here at my mother's house at this moment. I know that my father, Andile Titi, who has passed on to glory, would have been proud, and maybe – *just maybe* – he may have let me discuss psychological theories at home. With this dissertation, I validate his, and other Africans, whose healing processes were previously invalidated by psychology as a discipline. I dedicate this dissertation to him – utatam – who prophesied this moment.

In conclusion- Friends and Associates, may we multiply, continue being the salt of academic spaces, promote decolonial African scholarship and help all African scholars enjoy the process that you saw me through that we may replicate the support and guidance to one another as you have extended to me. Moreover, may we all experience the kind of allyship I did in Zethu Cakata (Prof), my supervisor and colleague, who stepped in and enabled me to bring this journey to completion. Decoloniality and Feminism are mindsets that are beyond theorising.

(Thank you so much, Prof Martin Terre Blanche.)

What's in a name
My knowledge of God kept me
peace throughout.
Joy Divine
As my names prophecy
Neziswa. I am fulfilled,
Share in the joy. The decolonial circle is expanding.
Vuyasande.

ABSTRACT

This thesis presents the narratives of 16 children between the ages of 9 and 11 years who experienced sexual violence and trauma, within poly-victimisation, and live in South African townships. The study aimed to determine and provide an in-depth understanding of how children make sense of experienced sexual violence and trauma through African-centred and child-centric theorising. The intersectional oppressions of race, class, gender, *and age* undergirded the framework with feminism as a salient theme. The framework offered a perspective for the reshaping of contextual and developmentally appropriate psychological trauma interventions. The study positioned children as knowledge producers who can offer insights and a deeper understanding of lived experiences. The study addressed the alienating nature of psychology praxis due to psychology's colonial, inherently biased, unresponsive, and adult-centric orientation. It provided a contextual analysis of locale in understanding sexual trauma and as enrooted in Apartheid history. Methodologically, the study was situated within the qualitative interpretivism paradigm using participatory child-centric art-based life story research. Recruitment was through child welfare organisations and minimized re-victimisation. Ongoing child assent was sought while African and institutional protocol alongside child rights required negotiation and self-reflexivity. Main themes include the abnormality of life in townships and collective witnessing and -healing. The study offers a conceptual framework for decolonising African-centred and child-centric interventions for Black children and highlights the centrality of language in psychology praxis. Recommendations include macro-level strategies for policymakers about GBV interventions for improved child safety and strategies for decolonising understandings of the impact of sexual violence.

Key Terms: African-centeredness; Child-centricity; Decolonisation; Language; Poly-victimisation; Sexual violence; Psychological interventions; Townships; Trauma; Voice

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

This study seeks to understand African children's meaning-making of sexual violence trauma within the context of South Africa and argues for African-centered and child-centric interventions. It is cognisant and considerate of multiple traumas and the poly-victimisation of children living in Black townships on the registers of race, class, gender and age. The work values the agency of children and posits them as important contributors in the production of knowledge while making a case for listening to their voices to enable a deeper understanding of the meaning-making of sexual violence trauma which will better guide a deeper and better-informed praxis in psychology.

South Africa is infamous for being a violent country, and that violence extends to sexual violence which greatly affects children (see SAPS Annual Report, 2017/2018). This is despite the country having relatively stable political and economic institutions as well as children's rights enshrined in the Constitution (South African Constitution Section 28 of 1996). These policies are in addition to the numerous government programmes, private sector initiatives and civil society. The Annual South African Child Gauge by the Children's Institute of the University of Cape Town is an example of how academia has also contributed towards the protection and prosperity of children (see Jamieson & Lake, 2013; Bhardwaj et al., 2017). In the field of psychology, there are several considerable problems in the study of children, especially within the South Africa context given its complex historical legacy and the epistemological and cultural grounds within which the discipline and practice of psychology are rooted (Mkhize, 2018; Nwoye, 2015b; Palmary & Mahati, 2015; Ratele, 2019).

It is important, to begin with, the broader picture of South African history and then concentrate on the specific contexts in which sexual violence occurs historically and develops to modern times, and the meanings thereof generated. It serves the study better to trace and locate the coordinates within which this study occurs. Throughout the dissertation, I provide a thorough description of concepts used to foreground their use in this work for ease of reference and purposes of contextualisation.

According to Oakes (1989), in his expanded third edition of the *Illustrated History of South Africa Real Story*, a generic narrative of South African history begins with the settlement of the Dutch East India Company led by Jan Van Riebeeck in 1652 as an extension of the Dutch empire (Oakes, 1989). The expansion of the empire saw the dispossession of land and cattle of local people who were increasingly pushed to work for settlers in the building of the economy of the metropole to benefit the empire. This outcome was preceded by a series of protracted violent wars, battles, skirmishes, rebellions, massacres, and uprisings that over the centuries bred a culture of violence.

The Dutch empire, as well as the English empire, practised slavery in the Cape colony and, as with slavery practices elsewhere, sexual brutalisation and domination were part of these practices, with the experiences of Black people in South Africa being no different (Oakes, 1989). The scourge of sexual violence in Black communities is part of the colonial legacy that can be attributed to the historic psychosexual damage of Black women and children (Abrahams, 1997; Aulette-Root et al., 2014; Du Toit, 2014; Gqola, 2010). Despite this history, and perplexingly so, some scholars have ascribed “culture” as the society’s tolerance toward violence and as an “accepted norm” (De Vries, 2018; Sigworth, 2009) as they minimise the role of South Africa’s past on the scourge of sexual violence (Jewkes et al., 2009).

As illustrated in Oakes (1989), South Africa's economic history is rooted in the slave trade, slavery, segregation, and Apartheid which all had an impact on migration, settlements, and generally the peopling of South Africa. With the already existent brutalisation due to the settler wars and sexual violence as an instrument in war historically, there are contestations on how to properly account for sexual violence in South Africa today. Slavery in the Cape Colony was ended on 1 December 1834 after the Slavery Abolition Bill of 1833 was passed by the British House of Commons and by the House of Lords (Potgieter, 1970) and this history of brutality has been documented prominently by Gqola (2010) in her seminal work *What Is Slavery To Me?* However, Sigworth's (2009) study pointed out possible reasons for the increasing incidence of sexual violence in the country and they are as follows: i) with the advent of democracy, Black women had greater access and possibly faith in the police force, hence the increased reporting of sexual abuse, ii) more awareness of the criminality of sexual violence, iii) the impact of the public campaigns on sexual violence that encouraged women to speak out about sexual abuse, and iv) victim-oriented rape centres that support women and children through the reporting process. What this means is that the rates of sexual violence may have always been disproportionately high, but in the past were systematically unreported due to racial and gender oppression. This does not negate or suggest that there was no rape or sexual abuse before colonialism but it would be a mistake to address sexual violence in South Africa without locating it in its history still in effect with a present colonial legacy.

When it comes to peopling in migration and settlements, townships as areas of settlement were built as labour reserves for the exploitation to support the metropolitan economy (Fenwick & Rosenhain, 1991). The living conditions in townships were bad and because they were primarily single-sex hostels (Mamdani, 1996), it broke up Black families by separating them for long periods every year (Biko, 1996). The impact of colonisation on Black families created severe gaps between men as fathers and husbands with their children and wives and this

changed roles and responsibilities within (Lephakga, 2017). Part of this legacy was the internalisation of colonial abuse by men towards their own in Black communities and this manifested on the bodies of Black women in townships as the epicentre (Lephakga, 2017; Ramphela, 2002). A detailed discussion of townships will be provided in Chapter Two to make a clear illustration of this point, which in turn is useful for locating this study.

Against this background, through this study, I, therefore, make a concerted effort to locate the history of sexual violence in South Africa within its colonial history of the violence and oppression of Black people by European White settlers.

1.2 Objectives/Aims of the Study

Much of the work on children across specialist fields seem to be overtly *about* children and not sufficiently *with* children (Bhana, 2018; Gregorowski & Seedat, 2013; Kaminer & Eagle, 2012; Ward et al., 2018). This complicates the picture as it often means that while seen, children remain largely unheard, and thus misunderstood. This study is committed to informing the changes in the way in which work is done on children so that it is work with children. This study is also committed to work that recognises children's agency to generate knowledge about their realities. The objective of this approach is so that corrective actions are done with African children and informed by their experiences of their context and culture.

The study seeks to contribute to the reshaping of the academic discipline of psychology as well as the practice of psychological therapy. Strides have been made in South Africa towards transformation in psychology as an academic field, for instance, though still lacking, there is some representation of Black and women psychologists. However, there is still room for further improvement that moves slightly from transformation towards decolonisation. This move directs us beyond the replacement of White practitioners with Black practitioners to a shift on epistemic grounds, which will be discussed in detail later.

Overall, this study aims to contribute to and extend the decolonial praxis of Afrocentric, intersectional, and child-centric psychology in content as well as in methodology. This contribution will address the understanding of sexual violence trauma on Black children as knowledge in this regard remains largely elusive. The implications of this are many but one of the profound ones characterise the quagmire that Africa is currently in. This is that with all the available psychological services, sexual trauma in African children remains misunderstood to a great extent. On that account, extensive and contextually informed studies and therapy practices are desperately needed. This study, therefore, holds the potential to help identify the contextual factors that shape children's meaning-making of sexual violence-related trauma in townships. This will assist in the design of psychosocial interventions that would better help children deal with the trauma of sexual violence. So-doing will in turn avert some of the challenges that undermine healthy psychosocial development of adolescents and adults who faced sexual violence as children (Pollio et al., 2013).

1.3 Research Questions

The aim of this study is ultimate to determine and provide an in-depth understanding of African children's sense-making of their experiences with sexual violence trauma. Therefore, the set of questions that guide this research are determined by this objective with the underlying concerns raised above:

- a) How do African children make meaning of sexual trauma?
- b) What are the cultural and social reserves that children draw from to make sense of their experiences?
- c) Is the historical context of colonialism in Africa of any relevance in the praxis of psychology in Africa, and if yes, in what ways? Differently put, can psychology be studied and practised in the global South as it is in the global North?

- d) What are some of the insights that can be drawn from an African-centered child-centric approach to positively influence effective ways to improve the experience of therapy for Black children who are exposed to poly-victimisation and live in townships?

1.4 Problem Statement and Motivation

The motivation for this study is multi-fold. First, the study is connected to the praxis of psychology from an African perspective which makes it African-centric. Secondly, the study is concerned with children's agency as the central theme which makes it child-centric. Thirdly, the study advances the understanding of the impact of the intersectionality of race, class, gender (and age) on poly-victimisation specifically focussing on sexual violence trauma.

With considerable institutional recognition given to children in South Africa, their erasure continues at a discursive level as their agency is denied in practice as Western and adult-centric approaches remain the dominant standard. The President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, in the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence & Femicide (Republic of South Africa, 2020), recognised "the scourge of gender-based violence" crisis like a pandemic and includes the violence against children alongside women. The past year, 2018/2019, Government Crime Stats (South African Police Service, 2019a) show that almost half of the total number of sexual offences against children were rapes, further reporting that the broader specifications of sexual assault are on the rise by almost 10%. This is cause for concern for many as therapy administered by psychologists is a crucial part of this work. Given that these numbers overwhelmingly affect Black children in townships, as consistently reflected in the South African Police Crime Stats Report 2017/18 (South African Police Service, 2018) and 2018/2019 (South African Police Service, 2019b) psychologists must be better informed about children in these contexts from their perspective. This study, therefore, makes a case for the

voices of children to be heard and in the context of their environments against the standard adult-centric and Western-centric frameworks and approaches.

Previous research indicates that African children, particularly Black children, have a history with detrimental consequences from the nation's historic memory (see Gasa, 2007; Gqola, 2010). The gender norms, social order, and patriarchal ideologies which intersect with gender, race, and class present challenges which have been hard to redress in post-colonial South Africa (Gasa, 2007; Gqola, 2010). Gender as a social institution organises social life in hierarchical, mutually exclusive categories, which maintains subordinate positions, whether material or ideological, among people within families, households, or communities (see Abrahams et al., 2006; Crenshaw, 1991; Du Toit, 2014; Mugo, 2011). These gender roles are reflected in the stories children tell of themselves as will be seen in Chapter Five. It is on these grounds that the principal motivation for this study is an advocacy for the inclusion of children's voices in matters that concern them.

Critical for psychology in South Africa is the tendency towards studying Africans out of context or imposing knowledge generated elsewhere upon African people. Such a lens denies opportunities for African people to develop solutions to African problems and reinvents the wheel of African subjugation, even in apparent aid. This study, therefore, offers an opportunity to challenge knowledge produced from such frames, not only in terms of content but also in terms of its methodology as a contribution to African scholarship that is committed to decolonisation.

The study is therefore concerned with psychology praxis, that is psychology as a practice and psychology as a discipline. Both have not been sufficiently decolonised despite their adaptation and transformation. The praxis of psychology is still rooted in its Eurocentric milieu in cultural presuppositions and implicit premises, thereby still needing further dismantling or decolonising for African purposes. For example, the lack of counselling and therapeutic support for survivors

in their home languages is cause for concern as language and culture are intertwined. The study is further motivated to challenge the dominant discourses and practices in interventions aimed at corrective behaviour for Black people through a process of White enculturation. Lastly, the study advocates for psychological therapeutic interventions that are cognisant of the role of culture and language.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The literature this study is built on prioritises the context of African children and gives recognition of the multiple oppressions in Africa including the silencing of children's voices. Afrocentricity is a paradigm for studying African phenomena and therefore it is, in other words, "African centeredness" (Reed et al., 1997). An Afrocentric approach defines African children as those who share in the common experience and destiny of Africa and its people and is not based on factors like gender, race or colour (see Asante, 1992, 1988, 2003). African psychology, given its pluriversality, understands that children in Africa are not homogenous even if they live in the same city or village, are born from the same parents or family and of the same ethnicity (Demuth, 2017; Nsamenang & Lamb, 1995; Ratele et al., 2018). Given its pluriversality, Afrocentricity is therefore opposed to the universalising by "Euro-American-centric, colonial, and Apartheid psychology in Africa that supported, actively and passively, the dehumanization and oppression of Africans, disregarding their different voices, complexity, and humanity" (Ratele et al., 2018, p. 5).

The framework is informed by a thorough review of the literature and a detailed review of diverse theoretical approaches with feminism and the triple oppression of race, gender and class as salient themes throughout the study. Shefer (2018) has argued that much feminist research has reproduced passive and vulnerable constructions of femininity and childhood. The paradigm positions women and children as lacking agency in relation to men, particularly in

relation to sex and sexual violence. For this reason, the study applies feminist justification for the inclusion of children's self-representations. Jansen and Titi (2019) have also addressed the powerless constructions of women in Africa and how women are, can be, and have been drivers of patriarchy. In this light, the study views children as having agency. Given the sample and population of this study which is mainly Black girls, the study advances Makama et al. (2019) who have called for a decolonial African-centered Feminism that resists singular narratives of gender constructions when seeking understanding of and writing on gender-based issues in African scholarship.

In summary, the literature that informed the study's framework is on the history of sexual violence in SA, colonialism, slavery, Apartheid, the migrant labour system, the construction of townships, poly-victimisation, the silencing of children's voices and developmental theories. The framework emphasises the need to centre cultural context with language as the carrier (Oyewumi, 1997) and highlight the voices of children in the experiences of child sexual trauma. This makes the study African-centred and child-centred. Through this lens, the study highlights how intersectionality provides a more nuanced understanding of poly-victimisation.

An important note is the study's emphasis on the centrality of locale in understanding experiences as clearly articulated in Fanon's (2004) work on life in the township and Asante (1992) in his thesis on Afrocentricity. The framework brings to the fore experiences of Africans and Black children as marginalized groups by advocating for a de-centring of models and treatments which were developed in a Eurocentric framework. While the framework is informed by literature, it is connected to the methodology and together will guide the interpretation and analysis of the data.

1.6 Research Methodology

The social sciences have various research methodologies, each designed to fit following specific goals of research projects. Qualitative research methods are more appropriate for this study as the goal is to generate knowledge around meaning-making which is not only subjective but also substantive. The specific qualitative research method used for this study is the Qualitative Interpretivist Paradigm. As indicated, the type of data to be collected is highly subjective and perfectly so because it is about the experiences and meaning-making of children to generate socially constructed knowledge from their experiences (Chilisa, 2012a; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) which makes this paradigm most suitable to provide the tools for an inductive and subjective inquiry (Jeong-Hee, 2015).

In qualitative inquiry, participatory research is highly favoured with studies on children (Bendo, 2020; Oulton et al., 2016; Stoecklin, 2013; Titi et al., 2018; Wyness, 2013). This being a child-centric study, the maturity and competency of children were carefully considered when choosing the method and techniques of the research process as prescribed by the Committee on the Rights of the Child (Children's Act 38 of 2005). Through narrative inquiry, it is possible to study children's narratives which offer insight into their lives and meaning-making. The collection of stories is organic, and importantly, in recognition of the "democracy of languages" and, emphasised by Ngugi wa Thiong'o in his recent interview with BBC News' Audrey Brown on 16 October 2020, that "all languages are important but African languages must be prioritized" (BBC Sounds, 2020, Audio). It is befitting that stories were told in children's home and first languages in respect of their identity and culture. This strategy places the methodology and approach on a horizontal cultural plain. The strength of the narrative approach in children's studies is that it gives a verbal perspective of children's understanding (Sandelowski, 1991). Given Africa's long-held practices of orality, it is also better suited as the oral tradition in Africa is still the main and dominant mode of knowing and knowledge transmission. Therefore,

a narrative method is best suited for this study as it presents a space for participants to recount the events of their lives through stories (Banks, 1982). Furthermore, the use of a narrative qualitative design is best suited as it provides an understanding of certain underlying motivations of children's behaviours, reasons, and/or opinions about their experiences (Jeong-Hee, 2015). The intention in goal and approach is to be child-centric and acknowledging their agency in knowledge creation through sense and meaning-making of their experience(s) with sexual trauma.

1.7 Research Design and Data Collection Tools

In the choice of research design and data collection tools, the process needed to mirror the outcome in its commitment to being child-centric and respecting children's agency. Bhana (2018) states "research with children must not start with passivity and victimhood, although these remain important dimensions for concern" (p. 83) and this work through its design seeks to put this into practice.

In the study, I employ participatory child-centric art-based life story research. It is informed by and builds from the work of Linda Tuhiwa Smith (1999) in her book, *Decolonizing Methodologies*. As with Smith's work on indigenous people, participatory child-centric art-based life story shifts the power to participants by giving voice to marginalised groups, in this case, children living in townships. This method empowers children in that it gives them room to find ways of expression that work for them, embraces agency, and gives them control to direct their stories (Simmons, 2019). Giving children control over the direction, pace and modalities of telling their stories are important as it positions them as knowledgeable respondents who understand themselves and their needs as opposed to the traditional approaches (Morrison & Flegel, 2017).

To collect data, I used stimulating material and prompts that are required in innovative research done with children (van der Vaardt et al., 2018). Jones and Leavy (2014, pp. 1–2) offer a good motivation for arts-based techniques and argue that “any social research or human inquiry that adapts the tenets of the creative arts as a part of the methodology...the arts may be used during data collection, analysis, interpretation and/or dissemination”. Arts-based research is at the heart of qualitative research processes and is participatory which already engages the agency of children. The dimensions to arts-based research range from performance, writing, painting, photography, collage and installation art and these genres are used in a variety of ways, for example, as a method or as technical, communication or aesthetic elements (Franz, 2010).

In tangent with life story research, I use purposive sampling through child welfare agencies for the sample of children engaged in the research. Later I will detail the selection criteria for inclusion and exclusion, suffice to state here that it is also underpinned by the principles that guide the overall research in the commitment of prioritising the agency of children. The sample comprises 16 children, 15 girls and 1 boy. The ages are between 9–11 years old and they must have disclosed, reported, sought professional help and receiving help from the welfare agencies’ intervention services. Importantly, participants must have been confirmed by the social worker to demonstrate readiness to speak about their trauma. The interviews were mostly done in isiXhosa, and for reasons stated previously on the importance of language and culture and given the commitment to the context that this work espouses, this is of fundamental importance.

The service of this design and collection tools will assist in what is a recognised problem regarding the scant knowledge about the lives of South African children as few studies have investigated sexual abuse on children in this country and abroad (see Abrahams, 2014; Bhana, 2018; Brown et al., 2016; Ward, 2018) and even fewer from an Afrocentric, intersectional and child-centric perspective. Therefore, the findings from such a methodology, design and

collection tools will most likely assist in producing contextual institutional and professional support that will aid professionals in the school, community and therapeutic services in understanding children's responses to sexual trauma and the associated behaviours like lack of understanding by adults allows for and permits violent and trauma-induced cultures (Bhana, 2018) to persist.

1.8 Ethics

The study met the requirements and was approved by the University of South Africa. It was further endorsed by the South African Medical Research Council Ethics Committees. This study, in its entirety, works through a theoretical and methodological position that upholds voice and the right to be heard. The study is therefore obliged to uphold the concerns that are the core of government, academia and health professions' concerns on sexual violence trauma work on children.

Research practices come with their set of challenges and problems when it comes to ethics and this is particularly the case when it comes to a sensitive subject such as sexual violence on children. This is evidenced by legislative concerns around research with children that cautions against the participation of children out of concern of children's vulnerability and some in social sciences the credibility of children's views (Porter & Abane, 2008). This and related concerns have meant that research ethics committees in academia and gate-keepers in research with children are overly cautious about studies involving children as participants in respect to sexual violence and trauma work (Collings et al., 2016; Titi & Jamieson, 2020).

While these concerns can be granted their validity, the risk that they bring is the further silencing of children' voices and effectively undermine the same constitutional rights that the legislation espouses (South African Constitution Section 28 of 1996). It also means that government as well as academia's attitude and approach, though well-intentioned, also limit

potentially generative work and suppresses the voices of children and robs them of their agency in name of protecting them. This attitude creates cognitive dissonance about the pervasiveness of this crisis beyond statistical references.

I share the commitment to ensuring that children as participants are protected and that as a researcher, I uphold principles of integrity, respect and transparency. I am cognisant of the power dynamics between researcher and participants and open to accountability. This is demonstrated in the voluntary manner of participation and participants' right to refuse participation in the study with respect of this right and their refusal respected throughout the study. The establishment and maintenance of trust are vital to this work for its credibility, reliability and dependability. Consent and assent were prerequisites on the part of the parents/caregivers, children as participants and welfare agencies as hosts and referral points which are often seen as gatekeepers in research.

This study moves from the premise that children have agency (Nsamenang, 2008). The study further considers children as experts in their lives and therefore can contribute valuable knowledge and unique insights about their experiences (Beazley et al., 2009; Hammersley, 2015). The socio-cultural context of children, as is their agency, is an ethical responsibility that must be upheld to respect and recognise children's right to participate, and also their cultures, a value of Afrocentricity.

I acknowledge that having children's voices included in strategies aimed at better health outcomes has been both difficult and disappointing in South Africa given the complexities in determining the nature and extent of involving children in research given their vulnerabilities, also attributed to their historical contexts and living environments (see Bray, 2002; Bray et al., 2011; Moses, 2008; Titi & Jamieson, 2020; Walton, 2011). I also acknowledge that researchers in South Africa are exploring and negotiating spaces for children to participate in matters that

affect their lives (see Adams et al., 2017; Bray et al., 2011; Savahl et al., 2019). It is for this reason that this study recognises the importance of research methods, design and collection tools that are consistent with children's maturity, capabilities and interests.

1.9 Organisation of Chapters

Chapter 1 provides an overall background, the rationale for the emergence and need for the research governing this study, detailing the research aims of the study, explaining key concepts as well as explicating the choices behind the research methodology, research design, tools and ethics of this research in the inquiry on children's meaning-making of sexual violence trauma from an Afrocentric and child-centric perspective.

Chapter 2 scopes and discusses the history, length and breadth of the available literature on the subject, covering key constitutive concepts, ideologies, logic, etc., that are relevant to the work. It also presents a genealogy of the dominant perspectives while extending it to include critiques that develop and chart new paradigms that locate the study within the context of its intended purpose.

Chapter 3 selects the theoretical framework based on the literature that best serves the aims of this work alongside its ethical principles and intellectual commitments. To be discussed in finer detail later, this work settles on integrated approaches of Afrocentricity, intersectionality and child-centeredness. These approaches locate and prioritise respectively, the socio-cultural historicity of African children, poly-victimisation and continuous trauma. Lastly, and certainly not least, the agentic power of children in meaning-making through their narratives and knowledge generation mechanisms. All of this is done in service of contributing to better tools in psychology as praxis.

Chapter 4 discusses research methodology and design which are, for this study, part of the praxis that it advances as a critique and also an alternative for children's studies. The research

process is as important as the outcome therefore participatory approaches that value the narratives of children is critical for generating knowledge that is objective, relevant, contextual and applicable.

Chapter 5 presents the findings of the research and further organises the findings according to the themes that cut across the narratives of the data collection sample. This organisation will help with identifying and clarifying the key areas to focus on in terms of further research as well as intervention strategies by practitioners.

Chapter 6 provides an in-depth and extensive analysis of the data that children give as their sense-making mechanisms. These will be presented in detail according to themes and the analysis of each will explain and explicate the internal logic in the sense-making of children of their experiences of sexual violence and trauma. This chapter will integrate all the preceding chapters and apply, and also inform, theory in the consistencies and deviations thereof. This chapter will further develop and present a conceptual tool for applied psychology as well as theory in academia on work with children for children.

Chapter 7 presents limitations, recommendations and conclusions based on the study in the areas of public education, policy and governance, academic study and therapy interventions. This chapter also considers the shortcomings of the dissertation and further highlights the implications and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter sets about to review relevant literature on a historical overview of the general subject matter of this dissertation. I will begin at a global scale about children's relationship to violence in general and sexual violence in particular. After that, a general applied reading to Africa will be given and then localised to the South African context. In the South African context, it will be traced genealogically from settler colonialism through the migrant labour system and its creation of townships to modern-day township life and the implications of such a life for the victimisation of children up to the modern era. However, this study will go on further to present literature that discusses children beyond the framework of victimhood in recognition of their agency in sense-making, meaning-making and knowledge generation based on their experiences.

2.1 Children and Violence on a global scale: A glance from the North

2.1.1 Questions on universalising children

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (United Nations [UN], 2007), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Organisation of African Unity [OAU], 1990) and the Bill of Rights Handbook (Currie & De Waal, 2013) define a child as any person under the age of 18. A child is seen as a continuous person who is influenced by their culture, social context and family economic status (Alaimo, 2002). The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2007) states that even the youngest children's rights and agency must be respected as a participant in family, community, and society; given that children's behaviour is based on experiences which are interdependent in the field of their

environment¹. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (OAU, 1990) was instated after the UN CRC acknowledge the difference in the nature of abuses experienced on the children of the continent appreciating the particularity of context. They have consequently set out an instrument that focuses on children's rights in Africa, in terms of social, cultural, economic and spiritual phenomena. As such, children's subjective and contextual experiences should not be overlooked, or rejected, as they frequently are. Oswell (2013) posits that we must resist the overemphasis on categorical thinking, in other words, the fixation on developmental milestones in work with children. Therefore, it is important to conceptualise a child as a developing human being and not as a human in development, who is aware of and influenced by their environment and histories.

One billion children aged 2–17, in the world experience violence every year, of whom 230 million live in Africa (Hillis et al., 2016). Globally, one-third of adolescent girls report that their first sexual experience was forced (Yahaya et al., 2012). Childhood injury and violence are responsible for approximately 1 million child deaths in the world (Langeveld & Van As, 2012). It is found that similar proportions of child rape victims exist in all the age groups (Matthews et al., 2013) and the age at which children are at most risk is 10 years (Baccino & Martrille, 2016), yet most studies, for reasons to be stipulated later, focus on older children. This age group was the focus given the evidence of being a highly understudied group with the age of 10 being the median in the 9–11 years sample.

Leading from Alaimo (2002), it is important to layout in fuller detail the culture and context as well as economic status of a child and children coming from a community of adults, so it is

¹ Jacob Robert Kantor (1959) represented interbehaviorism with the formula $PE = C(k, sf, rf, hi, st, md)$ where PE is the psychological event, consisting of the *interdependence* (C) of the factors in the field, k stands for the specificity of every behavior segment, sf is the stimulus function, rf is the response function, hi stands for the history of interactions, st corresponds to the interactional setting, and md is the medium of contact.

important to trace some of that history as well as to connect it with that of children. For purposes of specificity and against the refusal to universalise or generalise about children (which will be later explicated), I specifically focus on the experiences of Black children.

2.1.2 The history behind hypersexualising Black girls

The history of modernity saw to the subjugation of Black people the world over and specific regimes of suppression that lasted centuries were in place in the reproduction of subhuman personhood of African people (Thomas & Casper, 2019). The institutionalisation of the widespread mistreatment of Black people in slavery at home and abroad was underpinned by all types of violation including sexual violation, most expressed in the rape of Black men as well as Black women with little to no legal protection as slaves were property with no legal standing (Gqola 2010; Richeson, 2009; West & Johnson, 2013).

A vivid illustration of this mistreatment is best captured in the first-hand experience of former slave and abolitionist Harriet Jacobs (2001) in her famous autobiographical slave narrative book titled *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*:

No matter whether the slave girl be as Black as ebony or as fair as her mistress. In either case, there is no shadow of law to protect her from insult, from violence, or even from death; all these are inflicted by friends who bear the shape of men. The mistress, who ought to protect the helpless victim, has no other feelings towards her but those of jealousy and rage. [The slave girl] will become prematurely knowing in evil things. Soon she will learn to tremble when she hears her master's footfall. She will be compelled to realise that she is no longer a child. If God has bestowed beauty upon her, it will prove her greatest curse. That which commands admiration in the white woman only hastens the degradation of the female slave. I longed for someone to confide in. But Dr. Flint swore he would kill me, if I was not as silent as the grave. (p. 34)

From the above quote are select themes that are fundamental to contextualise and understand this study. The themes range from the inadequacy of legal protection from violence or death of a slave girl, the exposure to evil, the instillation of fear, the premature ending of innocent childhood and the inculcation of silence for fear of repercussions for speaking out. As said, these themes are vital and lead to a deeper and broader understanding of violence on Black children within a society of violence against Black people.

Sexual violence was used as an instrument to punish the enslaved Africans in the new world as part of a systemic brutalisation and deprivation of their humanity, inducing feelings of humiliation, shame and scarring not only of a physical nature but also a detriment to the soul (West & Johnson, 2013). White slave masters could rape Black men and women regardless of gender (Foster, 2011b). This buttresses the centrality of sexual violence to underpin the capitalist White supremacist patriarchal system (hooks, 1952/2000) established under slavery which has afterlives (Hartman, 1997) that even “after slavery ended, the Klu Klux Klan and other White vigilante groups whipped African-Americans, destroyed their property, and gang-raped Black women (Sommerville, 2004 cited in West & Johnson 2013, p. 2) as a system of terror that undermines even formal liberties (Hartman 1997).

As hinted above, the sexual brutalisation of enslaved Black men and women took place widely as a process to “break” enslaved people which was essentially a process to appropriate them by the will of the master (Clarey, 2015). On the part of men, this brutalisation could often and indeed was often hidden as it affronted a lot of sensitivities around the rapes of men given the histories of masculinities (Foster, 2011a). Further, for men, no procreation would take place after sexual brutalisation unlike with women where a lot of the slave-holders impregnated the women they raped and sold them and or their children if it aroused the jealousy of the plantation White woman, as Harriet Jacobs (2001) says. Since slavery was a trade in human flesh, the reproduction of Black children for further enslavement began to rise as slave masters and

overseers took to impregnating Black women as a form of investment into their chattel. Slavery was the colonial economy and built the United States of America into the first world country it is today (Conrad & Meyer, 1964). Children could be sold off as slaves. At auctions, the fertility of the slave mother played a role in her pricing. The profitability of the sexual brutalisation of Black women gave way to a whole set of ideas in slaveholding societies about the nature, character and value of a Black woman and these have relevance in today's society even though the expressions may not be as clear and as emphatic.

One of the most prominent out of this set of ideas to emerge from this era is the “unrapeability” of Black women (Gqola, 2015) that is to say, whatever may be done to her, even death, the role of the law was precarious because slaves were things and not people and therefore could not stand in court as plaintiff or witness, as illustrated in the Supreme Court ruling in the Dred Scott case of 1857 (Finkelman, 1998). Neither slaves nor free Blacks were regarded as US citizens. The logic went that because slaves were things and not people, the owner of a thing can do with it as they please and since it was not a person, the laws that protect persons against violation, including sexual violation, do not apply to slaves. Therefore, it was impossible to “rape” a slave because that would be attributing human values and feelings to the chattel. This meant that legally, it was impossible to rape a slave and thus one could sexually violate even to the extent of rape with no consequence, as Harriet Jacobs gives in her account. Slaves, particularly Black women, could therefore not be “rapeable” and no one would face repercussions for the egregious violation of their body (which in effect was property) provided it did not offend the master's sensitivities.

In addition to the unrapeability of Black women (Gqola, 2015) was another idea by Tillet and Quinn (2007) that in effect portrayed Black women as naturally promiscuous and with innate hypersexuality, and this paved the way for a disregard of Black women as undeserving of protection or sympathy (Tillet & Quinn, 2007). The vocabulary of the time is replete with a

repertoire that speaks to the “unworthiness” of these women called, in now-archaic terms, wrenches or a wench which all connote to prostitution or other lowly considered forms of sexual impropriety (Davis, 2002). The raping of such women would not be seen as rape, but further, might be seen as a corrective reinforcement to reinstate her to her imagined place of restriction and constriction (Davis, 2002).

So pervasive, entrenched and institutionalised was the (mis)treatment of Black women that these ideas of unrapeability and innate hypersexuality culminated in treatment of enslaved women in now-archaic terms, “broodmare” or as modern literature states, incubators (Murray, 2010). The motive drive in the profitability of this during slavery has been hinted above and the expectations extended beyond slave masters and overseers to include fellow captives. Many Black women from as early as 13 years, or menstruation, were expected to start having babies and there was in some instances a quota set for Black boys/men to make five babies by the age of 20 (Cullerton-Sen et al., 2008). The early acculturation of objectifying Black girls’ bodies, and the induced entitlement of boys and men of all races over Black girls and women’s bodies, is a legacy rooted in the degrading stereotypes of Black girls as sexually promiscuous and pale in comparison with their White counterparts who were the epitome of innocence and purity (see Epstein et al., 2017).

Black women’s lack of safety and protection in society is a historic problem and this devastating reality drove Abbey Lincoln (1966) to ask a piercing question, as did Sojourner Truth, the African-American abolitionist and women’s rights activist. The question is worth setting out at length:

Who will revere the Black woman? Who will keep our neighborhoods safe for Black innocent womanhood? Black womanhood is outraged and humiliated. Black womanhood cries for dignity and restitution and salvation. Black womanhood wants

and needs protection, and keeping, and holding. Who will assuage her indignation? Who will keep her precious and pure? Who will glorify and proclaim her beautiful image? To whom will she cry rape? (pp. 20)

In a way, the questions that Abbey Lincoln asks are statements that are the total weight of Black womanhood that has lasted centuries, as traced in this work. Black women have developed survival cultures where silence is reappropriated (Motsemme, 2004) whilst engaged in anti-rape efforts to deal with their social position (West & Johnson, 2013). As stated above, the mistreatment of Black girls and children (because a lot of the abuse started before they turned 18) came from all quarters of society, and not only from White men, against intersectional economic, social and political identities, also influenced by their position in society (Ebila, 2015; Imam, 2016; Kessi & Boonzaier, 2018; Mama, 1995; Mugo, 2011; Wangari, 2007). The neighbourhoods that Abbey Lincoln enquires about are Black neighbourhoods where there is no reverence nor safety for Black women where Black men mitigate their humiliation from White supremacist capitalist patriarchy via the Black woman as a common denominator and in turn retrieve their masculinity as a power to exert and reassert on Black women (hooks, 1952/2000). I will revisit this dynamic. Suffice to say that Black people in general, Black women in particular, Black girls specifically, are historically the most brutalised group in modernity and the full effects of this brutalisation are ongoing with ramifications that plague us to this day, hence the necessity for such a study that continues in this tradition of investigation at an applied level.

The most recognised effect of this brutal history where sexual violence is at the centre is trauma. It is accepted that sexual violence results in trauma which affects the mental health and overall wellbeing of those who experienced sexual violence. On children, trauma places excessive demands on coping strategies and create severe disruptions on many aspects of

children's psychological functioning. Trauma has been marked as the most frequent cause of significant functional impairment and mortality and can lead to deterioration in health and delayed functional and psychosocial recovery (Joseph, 2015). It is known that child sexual trauma is a widespread public health problem that has been reported to severely undermine the healthy psychosocial development of children and adolescents (Pollio et al., 2013). Compared with other forms of child abuse, sexual abuse has far worse consequences than other forms of child abuse and maltreatment, for example, emotional abuse, physical abuse, or neglect (Denov, 2004; Olafson, 2011; Townsend & Rheingold, 2013). Negative outcomes for sexual violence child victims and potential for continued challenges in adulthood have been reported (Olafson, 2011; Wolf et al., 2012). Compounded with a long history of trauma over centuries of slavery and racist regimes, the weight of transgenerational trauma is accepted today as less controversial since children of Holocaust survivors and their grandchildren presented traumas they never experienced in their personal lives (Linklater, 2014). These complexities will be revisited later.

2.1.3 The effects of sexual violence

“The effects of child abuse go beyond physical injuries and visible scars and impact on a child's cognitive, social, psychological, and emotional development” (Jamieson et al., 2017, p. 8). Others have noted that these consequences affect academic and spiritual faculties (Goldfinch, 2009; Tomlinson, 2008). Sexual trauma often hinders children's growth and development (Cicchetti & Toth, 2005; Goodman et al., 2010) and has been reported to have negative outcomes for child victims and the potential for continued challenges in adulthood (Briere et al., 2020; Wolf et al., 2012) and cause “wounds [that] penetrate deeply to the core of their spirit” (Crenshaw & Hardy, 2007, p. 162). This point is reiterated by many other studies that in effect prove that child sexual trauma affects children socially, cognitively, academically, physically, spiritually, and/or emotionally (Duma et al., 2007; Foster, 2011b; Foster &

Hagedorn, 2014; Oniyangi et al., 2018). The experience of sexual trauma in childhood can further result in adult psychosis and poor functioning in various domains such as psychological, social, and occupational dysfunction (Cohen et al., 2000; Lataster et al., 2006). This is because unresolved child sexual trauma in adults frequently leads to intrapersonal and interpersonal difficulties that negatively impact general health and wellbeing (Parker et al., 2007). Survivors may have sexual aversion or experience low sexual interest and relationship difficulties and/or engage in high-risk sexual behaviours and extreme coping strategies (Yuan et al., 2006).

In one study, it was found that sexual abuse occurring before the age of 16 years is the only predictor of later sexual assault (Maker et al., 2001). Victims may have difficulty regulating emotions leading to the exhibiting of aggressive behaviour (Briere & Lanktree, 2011). In another study, three out of four incarcerated women with a child sexual abuse history experienced physical and/or sexual victimisation in adulthood (Bradley & Davino, 2002).

Sexual trauma increases the risk for mental health disorders (Briere & Lanktree, 2011). Research supported by adult accounts of child victimisation estimates that half of the children who experience sexual trauma develop severe psychiatric symptoms and disorders such as Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, suicide, anxiety, personality disorders, dissociation, substance abuse, sexual disorders, self-mutilation, and eating disorders in later years (Adler-Nevo & Manassis, 2005; Briere & Lanktree, 2011; Chapman et al., 2013; Yuan et al., 2006).

Sexual victimisation is a reliable predictor of more sexual (re)victimisation. The available research on the consequences of sexual violence has indicated that unresolved child sexual trauma can increase the likelihood of engaging in prostitution (Parillo et al., 2003; Vaddiparti et al., 2006). Prostitution in turn increases the risk of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV (Greenberg et al., 2001). Both prostitution and STIs have experienced with substance abuse

have been found to often result in legal consequences for sexual violence victims (Benjamin & Crawford-Browne, 2010). It is noteworthy that more than half (59%) of incarcerated women have a history of child sexual trauma (Bradley & Davino, 2002) leading to an increased likelihood of being further victimised later in life (Parker et al., 2007).

However, child sexual violence is a pervasive societal problem (Nkongho, 2006) that has been declared an epidemic in South Africa (Joyner, 2016). It is higher in Black communities and highest among children (SAPS 2018/2019). This is a widespread public health concern that has been reported to severely undermine the healthy psychosocial development of children and adolescents (Pollio et al., 2013). As with the global contexts, South African findings on the consequences of child sexual violence also include concern for prostitution and drug addiction, alongside child trafficking, (Sigworth, 2009). However, the socio-economic climate of South Africa has been reported to force children into prostitution (Sigworth, 2009) as opposed to prostitution being a psychological effect as discussed by authors such as Parillo et al. (2003) and Vaddiparti et al. (2006).

2.1.4 De-colonise sexual trauma

The scarcity of literature on decolonial and African-centred understandings of the effects of child sexual trauma, and from an Afrocentric approach facilitated conversations with Nyameka Mzamo (N. Mzamo, personal communication, May 15, 2021). Mzamo is a social worker working at a South African NPO that services vulnerable children and youth in Cape Town townships. Mzamo's experience has been that girl child victims' responses to sexual victimisation include a surrendering of sexual favours to perpetrators as a form of control over their inevitable adversity. In *Rape: A South African Nightmare*, Pumla Gqola (2015) unpacks the seeming inevitability of sexual assault in South Africa. The surrendering to sexual assault, as opposed to fighting it off, gives insight into why victims of sexual abuse may be portrayed as promiscuous if their environment is not contextually studied. Situations of children already

in a cycle of recurrent sexual abuse require different coping mechanisms to that of children who do not live in *damned zones* (see Fanon, 2004). To such girls, if they offer sex to perpetrators, they hold some form of control over their adverse situation. This explanation is contrary to the discourse of prostitution and promiscuity in girls with a history of recurrent sexual victimisation by the same perpetrator. This explanation carries truth especially in circumstances where the perpetrator has access to the victim such as a neighbour or family member they co-reside with. Victims as promiscuous is an archaic discourse of coloniality whose purpose was to control perceptions about slaves – Black women and children – to make the sexual violence of White masters justifiable as discussed earlier. The legacy of this narrative prevails and must be decolonised. Psychological effects should be studied contextually as opposed to using psychopathological frameworks.

In addition to the physical and emotional cost to child victims of sexual violence and their families, sexual trauma also has social and economic implications. These implications have a significant impact on consequences related to lost economic opportunity as well as social and economic implications relating to the cost of healthcare and negative socio-developmental outcomes of traumatised children (Fazel & Stein, 2009; Khan et al., 2011). It is therefore imperative that sexual trauma experienced in childhood be addressed in the childhood stage to avert or minimise the life-long consequences of sexual trauma. Failure to address sexual trauma has been found to have the potential to result in increased child morbidity and mortality rates (Fazel & Stein, 2002). Early trauma intervention is necessary and often successful in preventing and, or, lessening the severity of the long-term devastating effects of child sexual victimisation (Decker & Naugle, 2009; Foster & Hagedorn, 2014; McIntosh et al., 2013). However, if interventions are not fitted for the specific social setting and carried out with a full understanding of the socio-cultural context in which children exist, then it can thwart the opportunity to rehabilitate affected individuals.

2.2 Violence in the Global South

The denigration of Black people as a project of colonial modernity occurred in the new world, as well as in the old world. In both worlds, African people are the common factor. Focusing on the colonial project and African childhood, Diptee and Klein (2010) unfold this observation:

children were actors in major themes of African history - children were often targeted by slavery in Africa; made victims of the domestic, trans-Saharan and trans-Atlantic slave trade in significant numbers; crucial to the familial, communal, and social fabrics of African societies; a highly valued labor source; and, during the colonial era in particular, real efforts were made to control, remake, and/or manipulate African childhoods. (p. 3)

In the Global South in Africa, as was the case with childhood under slavery in the global North, there was very little room for actual childhood consisting of innocent play as that was restricted and supervised to control the outcomes thereof (see Alanamu et al., 2018; Shanguhya & Falola, 2018). On the African continent, colonialism affected African children's sense of leisure and play patterns to fill the structure of children's daily routines of work (Alanamu et al., 2018). In the classical book, *Decolonising the Mind*, Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986) mentions the adverse effects of colonialism on children's construction of their lives and to this, I shall return later in the discussion.

It is important to situate children within the context within which they emerge. To this end, the focus of this section will be colonialism and afterlives in the politico-economic and socio-cultural Balkanisation of the Manichean society (Fanon, 1963/2004) that settler colonialism put in place. It is also important at this point to zone in on South Africa, specifically from the onset of the colonial project in the 17th century right to the 19th century as one episode and I

shall discuss the 20th and 21st century as another. The reason for this is because the period of the 17th to 19th century is marked by the naked violence of establishing the colony through warfare compared to the 20th and 21st century through systemic violence. The latter was through the migrant labour system. As shown in the discussion of the Global North context of the Black diaspora, where there is colonial consolidation and post-consolidation in the sense of post-coloniality afterlives are engendered (Mbembe, 2003).

The general and global overview focussed on the Global North to enable a cascade to a more localised context toward the development of localised and contextually relevant interventions for the Global South. Borumandnia et al. (2020) conducted a study exploring Sexual Violence (SV) prevalence rates during the period 1990–2017 across 195 countries and territories. The study found a decline in the patterns of SV prevalence in Europe and the United States. Followed by Asia and Australia with declines reported in both sexes but with the largest decreases in the prevalence of sexual violence against women in all four countries. The study however noted an unconvincing decrease in sexual violence prevalence in African countries with an increase in reports of violence against men. In consideration of the history of sexual violence, it is unsurprising that the Global North has less reported prevalence. Furthermore, the spike in reports of violence against men in the Global is a significant finding as it may be indicating that the social norms that make it difficult for men (and boys) to report sexual violence are gradually getting addressed in Africa.

2.3 Colonial Violence in South Africa

A serious interrogation of the trauma of slavery and sexual subjection is important for an understanding of South Africa's current sexual violence crisis because this is what the crisis facing this country is founded upon (Ali & Ailincal, 2015; Baderoon, 2015; Gqola, 2010, 2015). An exploration of the various contextual and social factors that ought to be considered

within African communities and in contemporary South Africa to understand child sexual violence is crucial (Bray et al., 2010; Ramphele, 2002), and history is the background upon which all of these factors occur.

It is vital to note that the first slaves in the Cape of Good Hope as a colony of the Dutch in the mid-17th century were children (Shell, 1994). This is consistent with the argument advanced by Diptee and Klein (2010) above regarding the appropriation of African childhoods for purposes of the slave trade even within the continent, as was the case with the Cape Colony first, and later included slaves increasingly from the East (Asia). Scholars of slavery in South Africa state that the rape of slaves was an integral part of the architecture of slave-ordered Cape society and that the rape of slave women and girls was routine, customary within the practices of slavery (Gqola, 2010, 2015).

The grand stories of despicable abuse such as those of Saartjie Baartman (see Abrahams, 1998; Collins, 2000; Nash, 2008) highlight routinised practices and provide a crucial window to understand the intersection of oppression of gender and race in the colony. As in the global North, enslaved Black women were incubators for the (re)production of more slave babies which would grow to be labour for slaveholding classes (Davis, 2019). The fathering of rapists' children, even fellow slaves, was customary in slavocratic colonial South Africa (Davis, 2019). Black women and girls had no control over their sexuality, and this engraved shame and dishonour in them for histories of violence that are not of their making (Gqola, 2015). Stereotypes of African hypersexuality were perpetuated to justify and authorise the institutionalised raping of slaves (Craven, 2009). This is indeed the context in which Gqola (2015) develops the idea of the unrapeability of Black women and girls. Tlhabi (2017) reflects on the notion of Black females' unrapeability as produced by colonialism with afterlives in contemporary criminal justice in a different iteration. To break the mind of the Black to appropriate them perpetually for the White master, there needed to be a breaking of the flesh

which ranged from sodomy in the case of men and boys to the rapes of all women and girls with physical results in the form of pregnancies. Sodomy was practised right up to the Mau-Mau rebellion in Kenya (Nderitu, 2017).

In South Africa, so pervasive were these practices, that the entire population, similarly to South America (Creole community), came out of these brutal relations underwritten by a climate of violence. However, one must hasten to correct a simplistic impression in South Africa that all so-called mixed or “Coloured” people are as a result of the rape of Black women by White men. The picture is far more complicated and much has been written to this effect (Erasmus, 2001; Gqola, 2010).

The violence of the 17th to 19th century extended into the 20th century, and in South Africa, it was literature built onto the landscape in the form of maintaining an urban-rural divide in the form of townships and villages with different rules and leadership patterns (Mamdani, 1996). The colonial legacy left two broad legacies of African children, namely, (i) the denial of African identity, and (ii) the enactment of epistemic violence on Africans by imposing Western thought about, and on, Black people (Chukwuokolo, 2013; Gqola, 2007; Lugones, 2016; Oyewumi, 2016). These constructions, both epistemic and physical, need to be closely examined and perhaps no other place better accentuates this grim reality than the site of the highest concentration of all violence, including sexual violence – South African townships. Given that townships are the locale for this study’s respondents it is vital to engage extensively with literature on life in townships.

2.4 Townships

Most Black families in South Africa, across the provinces, live in townships, which are a legacy of colonial spatial planning (Christopher, 1987; Mills, 1989; Weakley, 2014; Wood, 2019). Townships were constructed on the outskirts of the city or urban centres primarily and

exclusively as labour concentration zones for migrant employed men in single-sex hostels, usually by ethnic rearrangement (see Christopher, 1987; Mills, 1989; Wood, 2019). Labour was sourced, usually through labour recruitment agencies in rural areas, to support the metropolitan economy, while the rural economy was destroyed. Colonial onslaught continuously took the fittest members of Black society to support the exploitative urban economy including their taking their land (Ramphele, 2002).

Cut from their families, these men were usually depressed and missing their families. Many sent money home while in the cities or would take it in the brief annual break their labour or as conscription contracts allowed (Lephakga, 2016). Later on, there were women in townships who were mostly in the urban areas to do domestic work in the suburban homes of White women who were maids to madams (Lephakga, 2016). These women would have relations with men who were in the urban areas for mining and other public works, and sometimes domestic work too, who all lived in the townships due to segregation and Apartheid laws (Terreblache, 2002). While the old families were being disintegrated, new familial relations were being formed and this often meant that a man would have two and sometimes more homes between the village of origin and the urban place(s) of dwelling. Men were detached from their homes and alienated from their labour and selves as they worked for someone else's wealth, and alcoholism and other forms of escapism were often the refuges for many men in townships (Linklater, 2014). Others would not return to the villages even when they could no longer find jobs in the city. Wives and children increasingly wanted to join their husbands and fathers so townships were increasingly becoming places of dwelling for more than the single-sex men and overflowing shanty towns sprawled alongside the formal houses built by city councils (Davies & Goldschmidt, 1994; Lanegran, 2005). With overcrowding and the inability of the state and economy to provide for jobs for all in the townships, the state introduced systems of regulating Blacks in the urban settings. Most notably, this was through the infamous pass laws

which were enforced to manage what was called “influx control” (Hindson, 1985). These pass laws further undermined efforts by Black families to reconstruct normal lives and reinforced divisions between urban and rural, especially with the experiments of bantustans as administrations for Blacks (Biko, 1996). Needless to say, the effects of this on children, even into adulthood, are severe.

Though very general, this history is crucial to set out what became the most definitive places for Black urban identity in South Africa. The creation of townships was due to the forced removals of Black people, and that violence begets more violence, Biko called it a “miracle” for one to make it to adulthood in a township (Biko, 1996; Fanon, 1963/2004). The labour recruitment policies of the colony were also ethnocentric. Not only did it demarcate hostels by single-sex but also by ethnic group. This was an instrument to divide natives and heighten the Balkanisation and politicisation of ethnicity by forming rivalries and discord amongst Africans (Mamdani, 1996). When suitable to the imperial agenda, Africans were uprooted from whole communities and relocated according to the whims of the imperial dictates. This involved sending them back to the Bantustans after exploiting their labour in the urban centres for decades (Fenwich & Rosenhain, 1991). The removals caused the instigation of rivalry among Africans and affected the family systems in African communities as the prioritisation of group rewards over individual needs ceased (Lephakga, 2016). The impact of this still reverberates, as will be seen later in the literature.

The African family was underpinned by values of *ubuntu* that bound individuals beyond the confines of narrowly defined blood relations (Makiwane et al., 2016). These values rapidly eroded in the townships because the conditions were inhumane. As previously demonstrated in the global North and the Global South, the violence meted out on the colonised results in violence that the colonised perpetrate against each other (Biko, 1996). Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela (2015) provides a useful analogy to help understand the concept of *ubuntu*, stating:

The concept of *ubuntu* is an ethic based on the understanding that one's subjectivity is inextricably intertwined with that on others in one's community. From the perspective of *ubuntu*, all people are valued as part of a community and worthy of being so recognized. This entails on not blind acceptance of others, no matter what they do, but rather an orientation of openness to others and a reciprocal caring that fosters a sense of solidarity. *Ubuntu* is often a sense of self 'I am because we are,'² which stands in contrast to the Cartesian "I think, therefore I am." While recognizing the role of the individual, *ubuntu* values a sense of solidarity with others – the individual ways in relation – rather than individual autonomy. (p. 1089)

The destruction of family life due to forced removals because of Apartheid, therefore "had a terrible impact upon the communal structure of families as families were broken due do this job-seeking movement" (Lephakga, 2016, p. 7). The Bantustans, or "homelands" as they were called, disadvantaged those living there because these areas are systematically kept economically poor and dependent on the metropolitan economy set up in the urban centres. This in turn systematically disadvantaged the township by State refusal to put in place proper infrastructure (Biko, 1996; Terreblanche, 2002). As a result, the conditions of desperation in the rural areas compelled many adults (parents) to leave the "homelands" to find work in the then White South Africa by becoming migrant workers living in Black townships while away from home (Biko, 1996). This creation of desperation gives the nature of poverty in South

² "This expression, 'I am because we are,' has become parlance for ubuntu. Yet it is impossible to translate the expression in any African language, certainly not in any of the ten of the eleven official languages in South Africa" (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2015, p. 1087).

Africa the form of structural violence which has a major effect on Black people in the immediate and present post-Apartheid South Africa (Ramphela, 2002).

Inscribed on the landscape, the structural violence included Black people being placed on the outskirts of the city where they travelled long distances to and from work. Their living spaces were often deemed uninhabitable physically as well as socially due to the conditions. Townships are by design meant to be divided from the inner city by highways, railway lines, and rivers, as so to strategically isolate Blacks from the wealthy White suburbs (Wainwright, 2014). As such, townships are far from the wealthy inner city and are often neglected by the government, as evidenced in the limited delivery of basic services, such as sanitation, water, electricity, and safety (Sithole & Mathonsi, 2015; Weakley, 2014). The maintenance of “order” in such places of such turmoil could only be sustained by heavy police repression and surveillance which the Apartheid police executed with exact perfection (Biko, 1996). Progressively from then till now, townships were increasingly marked by permanent features namely, (i) the highest rates of unemployment (Lephakga, 2016), (ii) the highest levels of crime and violence (Terreblanche, 2002), (iii) abject poverty among the Black people (Lephakga, 2016), and (4) the sharp inequalities in the distribution of income, property and opportunities (Lephakga, 2016, p. 7). Terreblanche (2002) argues that “we cannot avoid the conclusion that unemployment, poverty, inequality, violence, and criminality are not only serious problems that mainly affect Black South Africans but also that they have an indisputable structural or systematic character” (pp. 25–26). This structural and systemic character of the violence in townships has had very gendered expressions. The lack of economic independence on the part of many Black women has been strongly associated with gender-based violence that included sexual violence. Due to proximity and social design, it is no surprise that the higher prevalence of violence in South Africa on women and girls is perpetrated by Black men who live with them (Morrell, 2007).

Poverty and sexual violence are considered more prevalent in Black communities (Norwood, 2018). Structural violence results in children in South African townships being disproportionately affected by the triple burden of gender, race and class (Fagan et al., 1996). In addition to the inherited legacies of racist regimes that have placed them in townships, South African children suffer from poverty, which in itself can be attributed as a key factor for child trauma (Kaminer & Eagle, 2012).

Due to economic hardships in townships, with the historic legacies of absent fathers and indigent mothers, children are often left to the community. Collective parenting was acceptable according to the customary traditions of *ubuntu* espoused in that famous quote, “it takes a village to raise a child” especially in the case of fathering (see Mkhize, 2006). However, precisely because townships are not villages by structural design and *ubuntu* has been systematically eroded over time, children left alone are often at risk of being sexually violated. Lack of parental supervision due to poverty increases children’s vulnerabilities to sexual exploitations and other forms of victimisation (Kaminer & Eagle, 2010; Sigworth 2009). Parents’ domestic demands take parents away from home which puts children in danger of other kinds of trauma (Titi et al., 2018). A differentiation between lack of parental supervision and neglect should however be made as neglect constitutes a situation where “the caregiver has not fulfilled his or her basic parental responsibilities. According to the Children’s Act, these responsibilities are ‘to provide for the basic physical, intellectual, emotional or social needs of the child’” (Jamieson & Lake, 2013, p. 8). Poor supervision is a result of competing demands leading to parental absence, whereas neglect is a result of carelessness. Parental absence has, however, been found to be highly associated with men who rape, and such men have been exposed to a degree of trauma in childhood (Sigworth, 2009). This vortex of “nervous conditions” that hold the tensions in townships leave the chance for hostility and lack of protection at a high, therefore (Dangarembga, 1989).

Rashid Ahmed et al. (2004) suggest that communities do not necessarily succumb to oppressive conditions but instead tend to develop resources to cope with adversity. While it is true that children faced with sexual trauma evidence what can be interpreted as resilience, by living in townships, the lives of children faced with poly-victimisation are in a perpetual fight for survival. As Rutter (1987, p. 317) holds, “the essence of the concept is that the vulnerability or protective effect is evident only in combination with the risk factor”. I, therefore, argue that in the context of young children living in poly-victimisation in locales that have been characterised as damned with little hope for survival, resilience is not a strength. Children in Black townships live in a perpetual state of fear of violence and of being violated and this is all they know.

2.5 Mechanics of Modern-day Sexual Violence

The historically situated and accounted silencing of Black girls and women regarding sexual violence continues so that even in contemporary contexts, the silencing of sexual violence victims gives mileage to the sexual violence (Gqola, 2015; Tlhabi, 2017). The overall patriarchal systems producing toxic masculinities has bred notions of men’s dominance over women (see Alaggia, 2001; Boonzaier, 2008; Gqola, 2017; Mathews et al., 2013; Ratele, 2013, 2015; Sikweyiya et al., 2016). Even if one should decide to break the silence and seek justice, historically Black people have been placed far out of reach of social services and the distance has travel and time/cost implications. The safety risk and travel time caregivers living in townships spend away from home (typically a woman) place the child at considerable risk for (recurring) sexual violence in their absence (Peberdy et al., 2013).

As historically contextualised, it is the reality that many children in South Africa grow up without fathers. Approximately a quarter of South African children grow up without their biological fathers, for reasons other than death (see Eddy, Thomson-de Boor & Mphaka, 2013;

Van den Berg & Makusha, 2018), with Black children being the most affected (Hollborn & Eddy, 2011). In a patriarchal system that respects the authority of a man, there is a direct link between absent fatherhood and gender-based violence (Sikweyiya et al., 2016).

The 2018 Statistician General Report indicated that in 2017, South Africa had a problem of births without father's details – one of the highest rates of absent fathers in sub-Saharan Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2018). Authors like Mzikazi Nduna (2020) and Yandisa Sikweyiya et al. (2016) have also stressed the magnitude, risks and causal factors that many Black children face because they live only with their mothers. Considerable literature shows the link between low parental involvement amongst Black fathers and colonial and Apartheid legacy. Even more, research offers implications of this absence on children's lives, for instance, in children's risk for sexual violence (Sikweyiya et al., 2016). With a history of violence on both sides of the racial divide, toxic masculinities in South Africa has been reported to emanate from the country's militarised history and colonial heritage (Mkhize, 2006; Ratele, 2013, 2020). The challenge with this argument, however, is that it seeks to attribute violent behaviour against women and children to Black male emasculation (Du Toit, 2014). These debates distract focus on children as the central concern.

As reported in the colonial history of slavery above, the tradition of victim-blaming, shaming and thereby silencing Black women was most publicly demonstrated in South Africa through the case of Jacob Zuma vs Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo, famously known as Khwezi (Thabli, 2017). Khwezi's coming forward was a rallying point for the courage of women raped by powerful men. Such men are part of familial relations and pose as father figures as was the case with Jacob Zuma and Khwezi. The illustrate the reoccurrence of rape on victims and survivors Khwezi had been previously (aged 5, 12 and 13). This case is important as its coordinates are corroborated by literature that demonstrates that there is often a combination of factors that play a role in the maintenance of sexual violence. Abusive childhoods, intertwined with social

and cultural factors are common factors (Sigworth, 2009). There is also evidence that suggests that sexual violence has consequences on the psychological and sexual health of victims which drives the absent fatherhood cycle and, in turn, gender-based violence (Sikweyiya et al, 2016). South Africa is reported to have one of the highest incidents of child sexual victimisation and assault worldwide (Brodie, 2020). The highest incidents of child sexual violence are reportedly in Black townships where there is historical trauma (South African Police Services, 2018). Though most affected, children's voices remain largely excluded and, as a result, the theory and practice around children who are survivors of sexual trauma remain wanting. Work by Deevia Bhana (2018) has clarified how culture influences children's gender roles which influence how children understand the experience of sexual violence. This suggests that a review of the risks and causal factors of sexual violence are best understood when reported within a social model given that culture is informed by social environments (see Oetzel et al., 2006). The ecological model refers to all the factors in an individuals' environment, such as individual, relational, social and physical environments, as well as governmental policies (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Understanding of social-ecological factors, for example, economic factors, family interaction and child-rearing, religious, community and spiritual factors, that shape a child's view of the world, and the culture that informs how they live, can be derived from studying Black children in their context (Neal & Neal, 2013).

According to the Optimus Study South Africa, an overall, 35.4%, which is one in every three children and adolescents, reported having experienced some form of sexual abuse in the course of their lives (Ward et al., 2018). In addition to poverty, disease and HIV, sexual violence is part of a myriad of challenges and stresses that children in African countries like South Africa face (Chereni & Mahati, 2014). For example, 41% of all reported rapes – a type of sexual violence – in the country are perpetrated on children, as stated by Police Minister Bheki Cele in his presentation of 2017/2018 Crime Statistics in September 2018 which reported that

between 2017 and 2018 rape increased by 0.5% and sexual assault increased by 8.2% (South African Police Services, 2018).

2.6 Barriers to Children's Self-Representations

Understanding the intimacies of these harsh realities is vital for theoretical as well as intervention work, as this dissertation posits. The trauma field in South Africa is increasingly recognising that exposure to both childhood physical and sexual violence is common in this country (Kaminer & Eagle, 2012). There is however a tendency of trauma research to only include adolescents rather than children (see Abrahams, 2014; Bhana, 2018; Brown et al., 2009; Ward, 2018). Bhardwaj et al. (2017) have also raised the concern about the scarcity of data on child sexual violence in South Africa. They hold that available national estimates mainly focus on older children (15–17). This is concerning because it implies that younger children are overlooked even though some studies have particularly indicated their elevated risk (Jamieson et al., 2017) given that the most vulnerable children are younger, African children (African Union, 1990; Eze, 2013; Unicef, 2012).

There are many ethical considerations and gatekeepers to research involving children, particularly when the focus is on sexual violence due to the topic's sensitive nature given their vulnerability. As reflected, for instance, in the Department of Health Republic of South Africa's *Ethics in health research: Principles, processes and structures* guideline (Republic of South Africa, 2015), it is common cause that extra caution and sensitivity are necessary for dealing with sexually traumatised children. These factors may be part of the reasons why researchers shy away from child trauma research, especially trauma related to sexual violence.

Black children in poor, high-risk communities are even more vulnerable than children from middle- and upper-class communities and therefore need extensive and nuanced help to cope, given that they face multiple traumas (Bryant & Beard, 2016; Ramphela, 2002). They need

different kinds of interventions to those offered to children who are exposed to a single trauma in a single, low-risk setting (Brown et al., 2009; Finkelhor et al., 2007; Kaminer & Eagle, 2012; Ramphele, 2002; Turner et al., 2019).

Gender-based violence scholarship research has indicated that rape is the dominant form of sexual violence in South Africa (Baccino & Martrille, 2016; Gqola, 2017; Sigworth, 2009). In turn, sexual violence has been found to constitute homicides of young children (Viner et al., 2011). In South Africa, according to Save the Children South Africa: Strategy (2015–2019), 50,000 children are victims of violence and 11,000 are either murdered or gravely sexually assaulted each year, with 26,000 reported cases of sexual offences against children (Save the Children South Africa, 2020). Based on 2018/2019 Crime Stats (South African Police Service, 2019a), 24 387 sexual offences against children were reported to the South African Police Services, with rape being the highest offence, constituting 18 586 cases. Minister of Police Services, Bheki Cele, reported that 41% of all reported rapes in the country are violations against children (Republic of South Africa, 2018, 2019). What is more alarming is the 400% increase of calls to Childline Gauteng for the period 27 March to 30 April 2020 with a 62% increase in child abuse since the coronavirus pandemic (Childline Gauteng, 2020), which led to a national lockdown in South Africa. This meant that families were prohibited from leaving their houses, except for purposes of essential movement such as accessing healthcare. The increase during lockdown confirms that children are at more risk of sexual and other forms of violence when they are at home. However, because children are not being included in research in ways that recognise and respect their agency, perpetrators and the conditions of children's violations remain unknown (Titi & Jamieson, 2020).

In South Africa, children witness and experience all kinds of violence regularly during their lives (Mathews et al., 2013). In townships, child sexual violence is reportedly the highest (Kaminer & Eagle, 2012; Ramphele, 2002). The gendered nature of these occurrences is

evidenced in the reality that girls are more likely to be killed and victimised at home in comparison to boys (Mathews et al., 2013). In addition, sexual violence is the cause of 10% of child deaths, with approximately half the number of affected children being cared for by single mothers (Mathews et al., 2013). Furthermore, a devastating known reality is that perpetrators of child sexual violence are often trusted role players in young children's lives. These cases often go unreported, not only to the state or private institutions but often even to the victim's family and friends (Feng et al., 2010; Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002; Mathews et al., 2013; Sikweyiya et al., 2016).

In South Africa, there is a known under-reporting of sexual violence which leaves the exact prevalence of sexual violence in the country unknown, but what is evident is that the levels are exceptionally high (see Sigworth, 2009). The multiple and transgenerational traumas also affect the ability to see a transgression as something worth reporting due to failure by the societal structure at all levels. Additional complexity in the South African context is that the rapes of children by their fathers and mothers or other relatives are often under-represented in official publications (Sigworth, 2009). This is often due to fear of causing family feuds when a family member or close family friend is the perpetrator (Weber & Bowers-Du Toit, 2018).

Child sexual violence in South Africa, as in other parts of the world, is known to be perpetrated on children mostly by those who are closest to them (Baccino & Martrille, 2016; Du Toit, 2014; Duma et al., 2007; Matthews et al., 2013; Wandera et al., 2017). Between 60% and 90% of perpetrators are known, loved, and trusted adults (Keenan, 2014). Girls and boys are experiencing contact sexual abuse, rape, and other non-consensual acts mainly from adult perpetrators, followed by lower incidents of perpetration by other children (Jackson et al., 2015). Young boys are also victims of sexual violence and are raped by mothers, women and sisters in addition to men and boys (see Papakyriakou, 2017). This is outside of the substantial proportion of girls who are also experiencing sexual violence from adults (Devries & Meinck,

2018). Men, women and other children (peers) have thus been identified as perpetrators (Sigworth, 2009).

Hallman's (2005) findings from interviews with girls and women between the ages of 14 and 24 showed that 45% of them were coerced, tricked, persuaded, forced or raped at their first sexual encounter. Another study that interviewed 269 women living in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town found that 71% of women reported having experienced sexual abuse in the form of someone trying to kiss them, followed by touching and then forced intercourse. The study found that survivors often knew their perpetrators (Bollen et al., 1999). On the other hand, data on the patterns of sexual violence of men and boys are lacking due to a possible underreporting because males, as with children, are less likely to disclose sexual abuse experiences (Alaggia, 2001; Alaggia et al., 2019; Edinburgh et al., 2006). It is further arguable that that men's socialisation means they are far less likely to report sexual abuse.

There is a contrasting perspective to the thesis that implies absent fatherhood leads to sexual abuse. The challenge of the romanticisation of the nuclear family is said to be based on Western ideals of what constitutes a "normal" or "healthy" family and thereby inferring that different family structures denote a problem or brokenness (Mkhize, 2006). While there are debates about what a normal family is, media reports in South Africa have told many stories where boys are killed while trying to protect their sisters or mothers from violence (Evans, 2019). A similar incident happened in the United States where an 8-year-old boy died protecting his 7-year-old sister from being sexually assaulted by their mother's ex-boyfriend (Fox News, 2017). The most brutal story of this nature is one of a two-month-old baby's sexual assault. According to the media report, it is believed that the mother knew the perpetrator, who is allegedly the father and is believed to have been financing the accommodation where the mother and infant live but is not living with them (Ramothwala, 2017). Most young boys who are victims of homicide are killed by an acquaintance during shows of manliness where the young boy is

trying to protect either their mother or sister from being violated by a man (Mathews et al., 2013). For children above the age of five, more than 80% of the homicides were linked to child abuse and neglect where rape incidents are from homes of absent fathers (Mathews et al., 2013).

Young girls who witness this violence perpetrated on older women may derive from this that it is normal for a man to sexually violate women and girls (Sikweyiya et al., 2016). This phenomenon is cyclical because, in turn, boys could be learning how to use violence to get their way from modelling the behaviours of older men. This cycle on both sides of the gender divide perpetuates across generations (Bhana & Pillay, 2018; Sigworth, 2009; Sikweyiya et al., 2016).

The home is not the only place that would have been an imagined haven for children that proves to be otherwise; schools are part of the marred places too as child sexual violence is common (Bhana, 2018), even peer-to-peer sexual violence (Evans, 2019). It is acknowledged that the school is a site where both physical and sexual violence is prominent, making poly-victimisation a major problem (Maphalala, 2014). There is a further acknowledgement that South African schools are sites where gender inequalities are (re)produced (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Female learners experience numerous experiences of sexual harassment by male teachers and male learners. A study (Maphalala, 2014) reported an incident where a girl learner was forced to kiss a boy learner. The more she refused, the more violent it became. The girl was prepared to concede to put the problem behind her and her violation led to humiliation from other learners which eventually led to her dropping out of school. This experience diminishes the school experiences of girls, adding to reports that teachers conspire to support each other, and this indicates the pervasiveness of child sexual trauma at school (Abrahams et al., 2006; Bhana 2018) for little girls.

In January 2019, the gang rape of three grade 4 and one grade 5 learners made headlines. The learners are estimated to have been between the ages of 9 and 11 at the time of the rape, while the perpetrators who were awaiting a court hearing at the time of the report were 13 to 14 years old (Evans, 2019). In another incident at a school in the Northern Cape Province in February 2015, a grade 8 pupil was gang-raped by schoolmates during an initiation ceremony at a boarding school using a broom (eNCA, 2015). This exemplifies that the matter of peer-sexual violence is dominant though not always reported as such, and on this Evans (2019) comments, “When it comes to rape it’s about power. Zoom into the lives of 13-year-olds, 14-year-olds and ask – why would children want to have power like that?”. This suggests that children model behaviour which makes it imperative to understand how they internalise the violence enacted against them and how they make meaning of the trauma. This is informed by their environment and the role played by passive role modelling behaviour learnt from brutal engagements between adults, as stated above. Gqola (2015) asserts that sexual violence is a crime of power, and in patriarchal societies, all men, regardless of class and race, can access this power to rape as a form of (re)assertion.

Female-perpetrated child sexual abuse is considered the ultimate betrayal (Bexson, 2011), an act to break the “last taboo” (Peter, 2009). This is the reason the concept that women sexually abuse children continues to create considerable cognitive dissonance, although female perpetration of child sexual abuse is an old phenomenon (Papakyriakou, 2017). In African contexts, women as offenders of sexual violence is a taboo thought. This is because women are the primary caregivers and nurturers of children and those to whom responsibility, care and trust of children is afforded, not only in the home but also in social spaces like creches and at schools (Papakyriakou, 2017).

Although it may have been unimaginable to find or write publications in the 1980s and early 1990s that entailed female perpetrators of child sexual abuse, this has become a common

phenomenon (Koonin, 1995). Mother-daughter sexual abuse is considered the most painful (Munro, 2000). However, both international and national media have reported the sexual predation and assaults of young boys by female family members (see Forsyth, 2019; Papakyriakou, 2017; Singh, 2019; WHO, 2012). Increasing knowledge of women who play nurturing and protective roles to children as sexual abusers of their children, and the children of other women using religion to explain and justify the violence and abuse have been reported (Bexson, 2011; Kramer, 2010; Papakyriakou, 2017).

There are contesting views about whether violation from men or women is most traumatic to children. Some studies suggest that children suffering sexual trauma sometimes perceive female-perpetrated sexual abuse as being nurturing or mothering as it is void of the use of force or threats (Gilgun, 2010; Kramer, 2010; Wijkman et al., 2010). Others consider female perpetrated sexual violence on children as serious, and more traumatic than male-perpetrated sexual assault (see Rudin et al., 1995). Others found no difference in the severity because dehumanisation through sexual violence is dehumanisation regardless of the gender of the perpetrator of sexual violence on children. While the diversity of the literature provides productive tensions theoretically, it is imperative to have theoretical developments informed by research with children and not only about children. The next and last segment of the literature review will examine the literature about children's agency in sense-making and knowledge generation.

2.7 Developmental Theories: An Africa(n)-Centered Perspective

Psychology's standard for human development, which is Western middle-class families, ignores children from low-income settings and who come from African families (see Van Ijzendoorn et al., 2006). Basing what is in the best interest of the child in Africa on the prescription of what Western-centric child development is problematic (Oswell, 2013). Many

theorists have long found the universalisation of child development to be unscientific (see Araujo, 2016; Nsamenang & Lamb, 1995; Oswell, 2013). A homogenous approach to children and childhood in psychology excludes children from other cultural settings (Woodhead, 1999). A thorough reflection on the role of research in the social constructions of identity formation is crucial in advancing work in developmental studies due to its focus on the realities of Western middle-class children (see Biddle, 2017). It is therefore critical that children's development be studied in context and not compared to other places. In this section, I bring into conversation centring on African perspectives to mainstream developmental theories, parenting practices, communication and understanding of communication by children and moral development.

2.7.1 Developmental Theories

Developmental psychology was developed and mostly written in the United Kingdom, and as such is produced based on children's experiences from that context (Claiborne, 2010). European culture focuses on the individual child; a focus that disregards extended family and community in shaping children's experiences of the world. Africa hardly consists of the nuclear family as Europe does, which is why the Bill of Rights recognises the extended family when thinking of parents to children (Currie & De Waal, 2016). The Western humanist concept of an independent individual self is therefore not universal and is not entirely valid for all places and times but is a historical and cultural product for its context. For example, Saulo de Freitas Araujo's tri-continental (Africa, Australia, North America) study (1928–1931) (Araujo, 2016) of the universality of Freud's Oedipus Complex drew results so varied that they undermined generalisability and therefore led to further discrediting of a waning theory (Connell, 2014; LeVine, 1982/2007; Malinowski, 1927; Pinker, 1994).

Understanding cultural priorities for development is critical as children's sense of accomplishment is crucial for healthy development. This assertion confirmed Louw and

Edwards (1998) theory that children who receive applause or encouragement from their parents, caregivers or teachers develop a sense of competence at the success of a task, and those who receive little or no applause because they failed to retain feelings of inferiority. This is a critical component of children's development because, in the early stages of child development, much learning is experiential and centred on competence and productivity versus feelings of inferiority and incompetence (Eccles, 1999).

According to Dawes and Donald (2000), there is a set of developmental periods which are marked by children's physical and psychological maturation. This system has four basic proximal interacting dimensions that have to be considered in understanding child development, namely, person- (e.g., the temperament of the child or parent), process- (e.g., the forms of interaction process that occur in a family); context- (e.g., families, neighbourhoods, or the wider society); and time-factors such as the developmental changes over time in the child or the environment (see Dawes & Donald, 2000; Nsamenang & Lamb, 1995). Western developmental psychology has however made itself the universal standard for healthy development. It carries the potential for harming the development of African or Black children whose contexts and cultures do not share the same priorities as Western communities.

For instance, according to Corey (2005), the latency stage period in Freud's psychosocial stages and the school-age stage in Erikson's (1963) psychosocial stage theory, children in the age range of 6–12 years are developing a range of new activities and a sense of industry. When children fail to achieve a sense of industry, they develop a sense of inadequacy which becomes problematic in later developmental stages. However, before children can achieve a sense of adequacy as required by the school-age stage, they need to develop autonomy, which is a sense of self-reliance that promotes independence, which usually happens in the age range of 1–3. Freud's psycho-sexual stages of development echo similar expectations charting the main achievement to include learning to express negative feelings such as rage and aggression. These

feelings are expected to arise when children are sexually violated, therefore silencing them is a problem.

Furthermore, all (Western-centric) psychological human development theories speak to the fact that middle childhood (7–11 years), the age group this research focuses on, is marked by significant transition. Children understand their world through language and mental images which they develop between the ages of 2 and 7 years. Thereafter, children develop their understanding of their worlds and abilities of meaning-making through logical thinking and categorisation.

2.7.2 Speaking and Thinking in Meaning Development

The commitment towards a contextual reading of child development leads to literature that has similar commitments as does Afrocentricism. Given that Afrocentricity advocates for discourses about Africans to be based on the centrality of Africans' narratives, Vygotsky's theory of children's meaning-making may be extremely generative and helpful in an Afrocentric worldview (Yancy & Asante, 2015) as they both share the re-centring of the human, and this connection will be clearer a little later.

Vygotsky helps us to understand that meaning is the outcome of the words that children give to an experience; and words are the language used to describe incidents, occurrences, and events. Meaning is therefore the spoken words children use to communicate their meanings and is communicated through the language used. Those words are birthed from what people think of a phenomenon and then describe it to be (Vygotsky, 1987). Speech, the language used by children, helps to communicate the meanings children make of events and interactions with others (Ochs, 1988; Vygotsky, 1987). Vygotsky (1987) contends that speech reveals reality as informed by generalisation. Generalisation within meaning-making theory is the use of one occurrence as a standard for how that one occurrence should be viewed from the time it first

happened (what the occurrence calls to mind) and would aid in understanding children's disclosure patterns.

In his analysis of children's meaning-making processes, Vygotsky examines the origins of the development of the human's abilities to make and communicate meaning (Vygotsky, 1987). His theory for speech thinking can be applied within a decolonial Afrocentric framework as well as following Foucault's (1977) framework on discourse formation where realities are created by the conversations that inform people's knowledge, using language, dialects and accepted forms of speech in their communities. Children's processes of meaning-making are influenced by the socio-cultural worlds into which children are born and foregrounds the use of language, as foregrounded by wa Thiong'o (1986). The points of convergence between Asante's, wa Thiong'o and Vygotsky's theories help reify the position of children in (re) centring their human ability to not only transmit but also create knowledge in their cultural milieu (Asante, 1992; Vygotsky, 1987).

Vygotsky's (1987) as well as Ochs' (1988) examination of the processes each child develops to create meaning through the acquisition of and use of the language addresses the central question on the nature of children's meaning-making processes being rooted in culture. Children's expression of experiences (language) requires a study into their culture to determine what informs children's thinking and the outcomes of their spoken words, what Vygotsky termed "speech thinking" or "verbal thinking" (Vygotsky, 1987). Verbal thinking is also applicable in this study as participants often explained experiences in accordance with their age as well as their social realities, for instance, in line with their spiritual beliefs, social order and family setups. Both speech thinking and verbal thinking further acknowledge that children's meaning-making is based on internalised social rules which inform how children think of sexual violence (see Nsamenang & Lamb, 1995).

2.7.3 Moral Development

In African children, the extent to which children internalise and apply social rules is based on developmental epochs and rites of passages as opposed to age-categorisation as advanced by Western developmental psychology (Ochs, 1998). The formation of a child's opinion of experiences in their world is based on their social background, gender and class, cultural contexts and groups of children that they are exposed to (Woodhead, 1999). Social rules are therefore culturally situated, appropriate for a given context, and are transmitted by the people in the child's environment, particularly parents (see Nsamenang & Lamb, 1995; Ochs, 1998). Children's opinions on social rules are further influenced by a child's developmental stage.

The question may then be asked whether children know social rules and can judge moral behaviour, and how they come to know what qualifies as a bad experience, and how they make meaning of it (see Piaget, 1932; Vygotsky, 1987; Weston & Turiel, 1980). Piaget's theory of moral development holds that obedience to parental rules is limited to childhood below 8 years of age. However, this view on obedience has been found to not be true for African children, as childhood is based on children's compulsion to obey adults, especially their parents (Moses, 2008). However, although children have in Piaget's work thought to readily accept social rules (Piaget, 1932), later work on morality found that children's belief in the purity of justice begins to disappear as they begin to understand motive and morals which is a result of social interactions (Weston & Turiel, 1980). Social interaction, therefore, presupposes generalisation and the development of (verbal) meaning whereas generalisation becomes possible only with the development of social interaction" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 48).

As shown in their works, African theorists such as Asante (1987/1998), Nobles (1990), Karenga (1993), Myers (1993), Goggins (1996) and Nwoye (2015b, 2017) assert that the central argument for the African-centric paradigm to be the holistic as opposed to the individualist view embedded in Euro-centricity. Renee Linklater (2014) refers to "wholistic",

derived from whole, in reference to holistic to honour the spiritual element of humans, who may not necessarily hold “holy” views. Her workplaces great consideration in cultural definitions of mental health and wellness, pointing to the fact that the discipline of psychology’s approach to mental health focuses on the mind and the body which is a Western approach. This is Western approach is contrasted by indigenous African-centred approaches to mental health as they “consider equally the spiritual, emotional, mental and physical aspects of the person” (p. 21).

Bewaji (2004) highlights the centrality of social responsibility moreover individuality in ethical issues in the Yoruba culture. The high regard for the collective spoken for in Yoruba culture in Nigeria bears similar philosophical assumptions of *Ubuntu* in *Isintu* culture of South(ern) Africa as spoken for in the earlier discussion about townships above. Furthermore, while scholars of African humanities hold that human behaviours are influenced by factors such as socio-economic circumstances, religious practice and spirituality (see Gerhart, 1978; Long, 2017; Nwoye, 2015a) while others regard African morality to be heavily rooted in religiosity (Bewaji, 2004). In consideration of the literature on the *mechanics of modern-day sexual violence* above, it can be said that Africans value religion in terms of how victims and perpetrators rationalise violence and abuse but as Linklater has argued, spirituality is the source from which Africans derive meaning.

2.7.4 Parenting Practices

An African-focused approach to development examines parenting relations between adults and children and how this affects child outcomes (see Demuth, 2017; Nsamenang & Lamb, 1995; Taliep et al., 2018). No comparisons should be made between communities. “Within a South African context, one cannot generalise from one community to the next, much less from other contexts to a South African context” (p. 1). There are however similarities pertaining to how parenting styles affect children and their developmental outcomes. A study in a South African

low-income community investigated parenting practices impact on child-rearing and established that the level of support in parenting affects children's agency and child behaviour (Taliep et al., 2018). All the same, irrespective of how communities are organized and how families are structured (Taliep et al., 2018) parental or adult's attitudes towards children's agency and independence, such as voicing their feelings, views and beliefs, "have significant consequences for child's later personality development" and might affect their achievement of gender-role identity (Corey, 2005, p. 62). However, in light of pluriversality, different parent-child interactions must not only be considered but appreciated and affirmed, when evaluating milestones and encouraging skills in child development (see Nsamenang & Lamb, 1995).

When working with African communities, culture-specific rites of passage for human development must be considered (Nsamenang & Lamb, 1995). How children learn, what they learn and how they learn affects their physical, social, and mental development and influences how they see and make sense of their environment (see Nsamenang, 2006; Nsamenang & Lamb, 1995).

Children from poorer communities such as townships, for instance, learn through chores. Parents and adults engage children through domesticating them which is a way of caring for children until the point that they can perform house chores independently. This accounts for the industriousness of their cultures which teaches children to take responsibility for their wellbeing from an early age. A decolonial approach to thinking on Black, African or South African children appreciates that the world is pluriverse and that there is, therefore, no superior way of being in the world, and that cultures are diverse but, in many ways, interconnected (Mignolo, 2018).

2.8 Culture as a Determinant of Meaning-Making

Culture is therefore a resource for identity (see Keesing, 1974; Mkhize, 2018; Nobles, 1987; wa Thiong'o, 1986) and plays an essential role in how children make sense of the world (Cole et al., 2010). This is despite other scholars' contentions that culture is an insignificant aspect in human studies (see Long, 2017).

Human experiences cannot be separated from culture and therefore children's experiences and meanings of trauma may be the "collective product constituted by the values, beliefs and perceptions, symbols, and other humanly created artefacts which are transmitted across generations through language and other mediums" (Misra & Gergen, 1993, p. 226). Children's experiences of sexual trauma are culturally situated and are based on systems of socially transmitted behaviour patterns that relate to people in shared systems of interrelated settings (Keesing, 1974). Human actions are based on values, beliefs, customs and the supernatural. Situating culture in African psychology enables the study of "how people are driven, make, contest and change values" placing them in their cultural context and understanding their practices from their cultural perspectives (Ratele, 2019, p. 88).

As a scholar of psychology, I am aware that culture remains a controversial topic that has been discursively appropriated to perform ideological functions for some psychologists in Africa (Sher & Long, 2015). However, it is important to not neglect its role because culture is a system of socially transmitted behaviours patterns that relate to people in shared systems of interrelated settings (Keesing, 1974; Nobles, 1987). These behaviours are ways of life in communities that include technology, modes of organisation patterns, settlement patterns, modes of social groupings and political organisations, religious beliefs, spiritual practices, and how they are organised in families and communities (see Mkhize, 2018; Keesing, 1974; Nobles, 1987; Bhana, 2015a, 2017). It is a good basis to understand how children negotiate life and make meaning of their experiences.

Paying attention to, and acknowledging, these cultures might be a tool for understanding children's trauma when doing intervention work with children who have experienced sexual violence. Children's experiences are culturally patterned and influence their personality (LeVine, 1982/2007). As LeVine (1982/2007) puts it:

Personality was, in other words, an aspect of culture, the aspect in which the emotional responses and cognitive capacities of the individual were programmed in accordance with the overall design or configuration of his culture (the 'cultural patterning of personality'); social relations, religion, politics, art, and recreation were programmed in accordance with the same design. (p. 53)

Based on the literature, there are grounds to appreciate and integrate once again the points made by Wa Thiong'o (1986), Asante (1982) and Vygotsky (1987) on culture and language in cognitive competence for thought, rationale and logic. While committed to centring African people and African experiences in praxis, it is essential to be cognisant that culture cannot be generalised (Wundt, 1897) to the point of fixed assumptions about people and that African children are not static and equally cannot be generalised (Ratele et al., 2018). This is useful to recognise as there is a tendency to generalise in debates on African-centered psychology where some theorists are thought to homogenise Africans (Nwoye, 2015a). This is not to say there may be no discussion at all about culture in extreme relativist reductionism because culture is also one's view of what it means to be a person or to be human (Nhlapho 2000) which is a vital point of view given the earlier elaborate discussion on colonialism and its assault on the worldview and, subsequently, the humanity of African people. As an ongoing (re)production of culture, behaviour is culturally patterned including dealing with trauma in relation to societal values and practices (LeVine 1982/2007; Mkhize, 2018; Nhlapho 2000; Nwoye, 2017). Culture offers a lens that scrutinises what informs children's understanding of sexual violence. It

informs how children internalise sexual trauma societal norms, patriarchal ideologies, gender norms and relationships that enforce the relegation of women and children, especially girls (see Ratele, 2019).

Unlike the outdated but still subtly pervasive notions in Eurocentric theorisation about Africans, culture is not based on genes and neither is it based on race; therefore, it is not generalisable on those grounds. It is an interaction between a person and their environment, and it is constantly changing (Richerson & Boyd, 2008). Culture is made up of or includes language, myth, acculturation and custom. These elements cannot be considered in isolation (see Mkhize, 2008; Mkhize & Ndimande-Hlongwa, 2014, 2018; Ratele, 2019; Wa Thiong'o, 1986; Wundt, 1896). To understand children, one is required to understand their language, both spoken and expressive, as their language reflects their thoughts and thought processes (see Vygotsky, 1987; wa Thiong'o, 1986). That language and understanding – what is acceptable or not – is informed by who and what children have been exposed to and reflects the details of the child's experience and all the factors that have contributed to that experience (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 133). In addition, worldviews and value systems vary across cultural groups. Given that language is a carrier of culture, to understand children's sense-making sexual violence there is a need to study the culture from which the affected child comes from in context, as determined over the changes in space and time (see Asante, 1988; Nobles, 1986).

2.9 Contestation of Theorising Children

The field of mental health and its practitioners are concerned about the impact of trauma on children and their families and how they can best receive help (American Psychological Task Force, 2008). The field of child and adolescent PTSD and trauma is relatively young, although the knowledge base has increased substantially over the past two decades. Although South African research on the psychosocial impact of trauma has grown in recent years, it still lacks

local data on developmental aspects of trauma, risk and protective factors. Effective intervention strategies for children exposed to multiple and continuous trauma are also lacking. This concern is based on the fact that DSM-5 diagnostic criteria have come under researchers' and mental health practitioners' scrutiny given that the tool was based on evidence gathered from children aged 15 years and older (see Blom & Oberink, 2012; De Young et al., 2011; Gregorowski & Seedat, 2013; Kaminer & Eagle, 2012; Pynoos et al., 2009; Scheeringa et al., 2011, 2012; van der Kolk, 2005; van der Kolk et al. 2009). The concern for developmentally appropriate interventions comes as a different though related concern for African-centred interventions given the difference in cultural developmental milestones.

Cross-cultural consideration of the nature of sexual trauma effects and what interventions may be most effective in reducing negative outcomes and enhancing adaptive functioning require to be unveiled (American Psychological Task Force, 2008). The American Psychology Task Force (2008) reported that many of the interventions that have been offered to children experiencing trauma have not been empirically studied and the effectiveness of such treatments is therefore questionable. Cultural invalidity of intervention is also a challenge, as was highlighted by Van Ijzendoorn et al. (2006). They found attachment theory missing cross-cultural validity based on study findings from approximately 1200 different cultures which showed 186 different cultural areas. I argue that the effectiveness and validity of interventions are important to address because the survival of a childhood trauma victim is related to the extent to which an intervention is contextually and culturally relevant. Such an approach is believed to facilitate positive development in the context of significant adversity (Ungar, 2018). This points to the question of overarching similarities in especially the *abantu* (*abantu* is the Nguni word for people) cultures of Africa. Though there are particularities that are culture-specific, the principle is the same. *Isintu* (the ways of African people) as a culture borne out of

ubuntu, is evidence of this where the philosophy is shared across similar communities and languages (*Isintu/Setho*).

Like all clinical work, the quality of the therapeutic relationship between the therapist, child, and primary caregivers is the foundation for the treatment of trauma. Safe, secure and trusting therapeutic relationships support the recovery process of trauma victims. Such relationships further encourage children and parents to address the impact of traumatic exposure and experience (Foster & Hagedorn, 2014). In the case of children and parents from African ethnic groups, developing trusting therapeutic relationships is a particularly challenging but critical factor (American Psychology Task Force, 2008). It is considered that this distrust stems from racial differences and poverty, as well as the attitudes of therapists who may not fully understand the child's and their family's cultural context (Choudhary et al., 2019). For instance, culturally responsive efforts to engage families in treatment can be effective in meeting culture-specific challenges. As derived from literature, culture is motivational as it affects people's choice of goals and their level of commitment to them (Jiang & Pretorius, 2010; Rowan et al., 2014). People's values, shared history and experience, and language all affect how individuals see and experience events and situations, how they feel, and what matters to them. Therefore, effective psychological interventions, what this study argues for, begin with the recognition that culture is highly relevant to people's everyday behaviour (Jiang & Pretorius, 2010; Tawanda, 2006).

Interventions provided to children, for example, attachment-based therapies, intensive family supports, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), as well as other psychosocial treatments are reported to have been paid little attention to. The concern pertains to their differential impact on children from different profiles of risk exposure such as those who experience continuous trauma (Ungar, 2018). CBT techniques have however been shown to be effective in most evidence-based, trauma-focused treatments. They have also been demonstrated to reduce

serious trauma reactions, such as PTSD and additional anxiety and depressive symptoms, such as behavioural problems (Bandura, 1997; Cloitre et al, 2010). Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) is a popular technique used by children's trauma centres, such as Jelly Beanz with cognitive theory. AAT includes interventions such as Emotional-Support Animals, Service/Assistance Animals in a therapeutic context with the belief that animals and nature provide healing (Fine, 2006). However, in African culture there are meanings associated with animals and animals carry different interpretations which may affect healing from trauma (Linklater, 2014). Psychological services offered to Black children must therefore pay more attention to contextual relevance rather than relying on Western conceptualisations of trauma and behaviour (Bottrell, 2009). Attachment theory has also been criticised for bias to Western culture and non-relevance for African cultures as the theory contains more cross-cultural differences than it does similarities (Van Ijzendoorn et al., 2006; Van Ijzendoorn & Sagi, 1999). Critique has been mainly for its socio-cultural irrelevance and non-universality regarding the child-mother bond. This is because in African contexts children are raised by a network of caregivers as opposed to the nuclear family found in Western cultures (Bowlby, 1969; Van Ijzendoorn et al., 2006). While there is a growing number of families who adopt Western structures, particularly the middle socio-economic classes, there may be enmeshment of cultures, as culture is not static. This view comes with considerations that are important to note for therapy and psychological interventions. While it is difficult to provide a clear answer about which interventions work best with children (Ungar, 2018), it must be noted that culture affects the experience of trauma and the impact of treatment (American Psychology Task Force, 2008; Linklater, 2014). Interventions for psychological trauma can therefore not be neutral in terms of gender, sexuality, race, class, ethnicity, culture, or other social divisions.

Moreover, mainstream developmental psychology comes from a Euro-American-centric canon that would never be free of biases and with obvious racial connotations (Palmary & Mahati,

2015). Uncritically transposing psychological tools to understand Black children in Africa, given our history, has been highly problematic, hence the revisions and extensive body of critique that culminates in African psychology. As such, repurposed theoretical considerations in Africa would acknowledge as vital, the poly-victimisation and multiple traumas of African children. This phenomenon is not as common in the so-called developed world where sexual trauma is likely to be the only victimisation they are dealing with (see Abrahams et al., 2017; Kaminer & Eagle, 2015; Mathews et al., 2013).

There has been sufficient problematising of work done on and about affected groups such as men speaking for women (Kiguwa, 2019), White women speaking for Black women (Carby, 2007) and women studying men (Makama et al., 2019). There has, however, been less work that problematises writing on children that speaks over and for children as opposed to work that speaks with children (Jamieson et al., 2017; Titi et al., 2018; Titi & Jamieson, 2020). For these reasons, work in the Methodology chapter will centre on children's voices in ways that are different from the normative practices that simply transplant or superimpose Eurocentric methods on Africans. A full appreciation of the agency of African children will be illustrated in later chapters where children's sense and meaning-making is analysed based on their narratives.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In his two classical works, *Black Skin, White Masks (BSWM)* and *The Wretched of the Earth (TWOTE)*, which have become foundational in decolonial scholarship, Frantz Fanon develops two important frameworks to guide his canonical theorisation of the Black condition. These moves by Fanon created a legacy for anti-colonial struggles and decolonial scholarship from which the current study benefits and hopes to contribute. The first move in *BSWM* is a critique of the Freudian individualist and general tendency to study humans in reductionist biological naturalist frameworks, as in the case of phylogeny and sociogeny, to make a case for what Fanon coined as sociogeny (Fanon, 1968), in which case he declares socio-diagnostics as the real question about the human study because “society, unlike biochemical processes, cannot escape human influences” (p. 11). Here Fanon makes a case for the interrogation of the entire society in its treatment more generally, and more specifically, the logic governing the study of that very society. This move is incredibly generative and instructive for generations of critical scholarship to mainstream theorisation in the humanities. The second move Fanon makes in *TWOTE* is also instructive for the same reasons as the first in anti-colonial struggles and decolonial scholarship. The move Fanon (1963/2004) makes is worth quoting at length:

In decolonization, there is therefore the need of a complete calling in question of the colonial situation. If we wish to describe it precisely, we might find it in the well-known words: “The last shall be first and the first last.” Decolonisation is the putting into practice of this sentence. That is why, if we try to describe it, all decolonization is successful. (p. 37)

In this citation, Fanon describes and characterises decolonisation and, by the same token, theoretically subverts the colonial order to make visible and audible those who have historically been marginalised and denied their agency. For purposes of this dissertation, the last (children)

shall be first and this sentence will be put into practice in the framework, methodology, as well as analysis. As Fanon states, all decolonisation is successful if we follow this route and this dissertation is committed to decolonisation, combining both Fanonian moves in shifting the geography of reason (Gordon, 2020). Similarly, the preeminent novelist and scholar Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1993), in a vital anthology fittingly titled *Moving the Centre*, makes a case for de-centring Western hegemonic assumptions in all spheres of culture. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1993) further makes an explicit case for racial, religious and gender equality which fits supports the underlying preoccupations of this study in its motivation.

From the onset, this study has been concerned about the epistemological position that undergirds psychology as a praxis commonly at odds with knowledge acquired through historical experiences; and practices from the orientation of African cultures (Asante, 1983, 1987, 1988, 1990, 1992, 2014). The framework is further driven by the need to make audible the voices of African children where their agency is typically overlooked as it was by archaic and Eurocentric theories. Finally, this framework appreciates the complexity of producing subjectivities of race, gender and class. These oppressive subjectivities are crudely shaped by colonialism as manifested in South Africa's spatial planning. This is better explained through Fanon's (2004) theorisation on Black communities. Fanon describes and articulates life in the township in what he calls the *zone of the damned* (2004).

While Fanon's work does not focus on children it does deal with the geographic locale of the sample. Fanonian theory on Black communities provides context to historic trauma due to colonial oppression which is the very space in which African childhoods occur. While Fanon does use the term "poly-victimisation" this what he describes in this phrase "zone of the damned". Through this dissertation, I extend Fanon's theory to decolonial African-centred child-centric work.

The determination to locate this study within, and informed by, an Afrocentric position is clearly expressed by its title. Child-centricity, also expressed in the title, is equally important for reasons stipulated previously as well as engaged within the literature review. The literature on Afrocentricity helps to ground theoretically the framework and scope that this research uses for engaging with the African context. African psychology theorists such as Puleng Segalo and Zethu Cakata (2017), Shose Kessi and Floretta Boonzaier (2018), Nhanhla Mkhize (2006) and Kopano Ratele (2019) usher and implement this broader intellectual tradition with decolonial openings that this dissertation augments with an acute application on children's work. Within this framework, I wish to highlight that working with children instead of doing work about children is vital. This approach provides a shift in paradigm and a shift in the effectiveness of interventions as will be demonstrated in the methodology and analysis chapters.

Feminist literature has been vital in theorising histories of violence and their shaping of modern-day society in general, and relation to sexual violence, as generative of subjectivities. As such, feminism is a salient theme throughout the study and addresses poly-victimisation, multiple traumas, and transgenerational trauma in what is acknowledged as the triple oppression of race, gender and class. Feminism however often falls short of appreciating age as an acute ground of dehumanisation. However, with the fusion of Afrocentricity and child-centricity as cornerstones, decolonial feminist literature connects all the fundamental tenets of this study. A thorough understanding and construction of townships as sites of violence and self-violations of Black people is another vital aspect of the study. A wholistic appreciation of these perspectives best positions an address of this study's aims. This approach is critical for locating and understanding the problem of child sexual violence in South African townships.

Against the rationale for the theoretical framework; data interpretation and analysis rest on an intersectional-, African-centred and child-centric approaches. The relevance of such a rooted framework in the praxis of psychology assists with better conceptualisation and

implementation of appropriate interventions in mental health in indigenous communities (Linklater, 2014; Sones et al., 2010). This lends itself to application for trauma related to sexual violence in children within an African context. This approach addresses the lack of culturally appropriate, inclusive and competent approaches in representational modalities which better serves the mistrust of mainstream psychology (Linklater, 2014).

The location of culture is an important part of this research with the language being the vehicle and repository of culture (wa Thiong'o, 1986). IsiXhosa being my first and home language was a crucial advantage in researching communities with participants whose first or home languages are also isiXhosa. While translation from English is the standard, working from the mother-tongue base enriches even the translations into English as will be evidenced in the data presentation chapter. There are unique nuances in the Xhosa original that ground the research in ways the works of Cakata (2015), Oyewumi (1997), wa Thiongo (1986) and Asante (1992) foreground. Non-indigenous researchers relying on translation would certainly miss the nuances that make this research a richer text with far fewer interpretation limitations. This would not have been the case without the deeper contextualisation that this research is driven by. The accentuation of the voices of children in their own words and their home languages is also underpinned by their right to participate in shaping sense and meaning-making to inform contextual child-centric interventions for trauma emanating from sexual violence.

Black children's social environments, though not unique, is specially marked and driven by societal factors, namely, poverty, inequality and patriarchy, and their expressions manifest in the alarming statistics and realities (Hunter, 2007; Ramphela, 2002; Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa [SERI], 2018). The knowledge that is expressed through children's voices, as informed by their phenomenological experiences (Heidegger, 1927/2011) shape children's identities despite being non-homogenous and further demonstrate pluriverse meanings (Mignolo, 2018). One of the cornerstone meanings in an Afrocentric perspective is

the notion of *ubuntu* which is highly pressured by the challenges of modernity owing to the brutalities people perpetrate on each other. Having said this, children's sense and meaning-making are still shaped by considerations of *ubuntu* especially in the context of family members who are often the perpetrators of child sexual violence and trauma. This complicates justice and social cohesion.

This framework espouses an African-situated, child-centric and intersectional perspective which is necessary to considerably reshape and inform contextual and developmentally appropriate trauma interventions relevant to this study (Gregorowski & Seedat, 2013; Kornhaber et al., 2015; McIntosh et al., 2013). Furthermore, the framework recognises that age is inadequately addressed as a register in the consideration of multiple traumas and poly-victimisation. To this end, the study has opted to be guided by a framework that looks through an African-centred perspective, is centred on children's voices and appreciates the intersectional oppressions in Black communities. These factors contribute to Black children's experiential knowledge of, and consequent meanings they derive from, sexual violence trauma within a longer history of colonial formations of modern-day Black subjectivities and identities.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

As the case with content, the ethic of decolonisation extends to methods that, historically, have been part of the colonial epistemic of violence against African knowledge (Gordon, 2014). In the previous chapter on the theoretical framework, Fanon's theoretical move from phylogeny and ontogeny to sociogeny (Fanon, 1968), demonstrated that methods of study are just as important as the content being studied. Having located this study within a decolonial discursive paradigm in terms of content by choosing Afrocentricity and child-centricity as perspectives of the work together with intersectionality, it becomes important to choose a research methodology that is also decolonial.

In their instructive works, Linda Tuhiwa Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999), Sylvia Tamale's *African Sexualities: A Reader* (2011), Bagele Chilisa's *Selecting a Research Approach: Paradigm, Methodology and Methods* (2012b) and Renee Linklater's *Decolonising Trauma Work* (2014), provide a solid base for this dissertation's orientation regarding research methodologies. All their work is grounded in doing work with indigenous people in ways that often subvert the standard normative line between the researcher or scholar to the respondent community in collecting data that is culturally situated, inclusive and a true reflection of the communities' realities. For this dissertation, their principles extend to research methodologies that would inform trauma interventions in and for indigenous and marginalised communities (Chilisa, 2012b; Linklater, 2014; Smith, 1999; Tamale, 2011).

It is therefore vital to select tools that best serve the above sentiments within the context of this study. To this end, a Qualitative Interpretivist Paradigm, with multi-dimensional apparatus such as life story research, participatory arts-based techniques and child-centric tools leading to thematic analysis, narrative analysis, data management and analysis, will be discussed below.

4.1 Qualitative Narrative Inquiry

According to O'Reilly (2009), "the term interpretivism refers to epistemologies, or theories about how we can gain knowledge of the world, which loosely rely on interpreting or understanding the meanings that humans attach to their actions" (p. 119). From this definition, the immediate connection with the motive and motif of this dissertation is recognisable. The research was located in the Qualitative Interpretivist Paradigm as it sought to create knowledge based on the subjective experiences of children, thus making knowledge socially constructed (Chilisa, 2012b; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The purpose of this paradigm is to understand individuals' subjective experiences (Wagner et al., 2011). Experiences are best understood within the social environment participants exist as Black existence is not a matter of individual devoid of society (Gordon, 2000). This is a similar critique by Fanon (1968) on Freudian theorising on children (see Chapter Three).

This approach's range of considerations is included the spiritual or even transcendental process which affords researchers space for a more participatory role in the research process. This paradigm, therefore, facilitated the provision of a wholistic (holistic) picture of how children make meaning of sexual trauma and provided tools to conduct an inductive and subjective inquiry (Jeong-Hee, 2015). The usefulness of the qualitative interpretative paradigm's suitability to seek children's first-hand experiences, understandings and perceptions of their subjective social and collective realities is self-evident, as will be seen later. The official statistics presented in Chapter Two are useful for quantitative purposes, but a qualitative approach is more suitable to ascertain sense-making and meaning-making.

Qualitative inquiry, particularly participatory research, is popular in studies with children (Bendo, 2020; Oulton et al., 2016; Stoecklin, 2013; Titi et al., 2017; Wyness, 2013). Participatory methods with children, like those being used by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and research initiatives in South Africa such as Save the Children (Moses, 2008) and

by the Children's Institute of University of Cape Town (Jamieson, 2017) enable the gathering of data from children for short-term studies.

Within a qualitative paradigm, children's own experiences and perspectives inform knowledge. Such methodologies demonstrate the value of children's voices and thoughts which are useful in understanding issues that affect children and in developing a more sophisticated understanding of childhood experiences (Mahon et al., 1996; Mayall, 2000). Through narrative inquiry, I was able to study the lives of children, collect their stories and record and present their experiences in the order of occurrence (Jeong-Hee, 2015; Polkinghorne, 1995). This being a child-centric study, the maturity and competency of children were carefully considered when choosing the method and techniques of the research process (Rubensen, 2005).

The strength of the narrative approach in children's studies is that it gives a verbal perspective of children's understanding (Sandelowski, 1991). The oral tradition is also, largely in Africa, the main and dominant mode of knowing and knowledge transmission. Because humans are narrative by nature, a narrative method was, therefore, best suited for this study as it presented a space for participants to recount the events of their lives through stories (Banks, 1982). Furthermore, the use of a narrative qualitative design was deemed best suited as it provided an understanding of certain underlying motivations of children's behaviours, reasons, and/or opinions about their experiences (Banks, 1982; Gobodo-Madikizela, 2015; Jeong-Hee, 2015). These understandings were child-centric. This means that data were derived from children based on their first-hand accounts and their terms. This is to say, data were gathered based on the idiosyncratic perspectives of participants.

4.2 Study Setting – Townships

As stated earlier, the research is townships, and in Chapter Two, I provide a thorough historical contextualisation of townships in South Africa within the longer history of violence that

manifested in spatial planning. For purposes of this study, the townships are located in Cape Town in the Western Cape, a province with a shared as well as differentiated history and dynamics in South Africa. In the national statistics, as reflected below, Cape Town police stations present alarmingly high numbers in incidents of contact crimes, sexually violent crimes being part of that. As established, like other townships in South Africa, multiple traumas and poly-victimisation characterise the living conditions. For context, it is useful to take a glance at the dynamics of the specific locale this study focuses on; that is, Cape Town townships in the Western Cape.

The City of Cape Town is situated in the Western Cape province of South Africa and comprises 190 suburbs and, alongside Gauteng, receives the most migrants in South Africa (Human Sciences Research Council, 2005). The City is surrounded by delimited Black Townships which were designed through the Population Registration Act to determine where people of different races would be housed. This was a consequence of forced removals which made Black people in South Africa migrant workers (Biko, 1996). Since the Apartheid regime, townships have remained socially, economically, and spatially segregated (Human Sciences Research Council, 2005; Raman & Roy, 2019). The continuities from the tragic past keep resurfacing even after the end of Apartheid in townships consistent with theorisation coined in the notions of afterlives and the post-colony advanced by Saidiya Hartman (1997) and Achille Mbembe (2003).

According to the Republic of South Africa's Police Services Report of the 2018/2019 financial year, Western Cape Province had the second most community reported crimes in South Africa, led by the Gauteng Province. The Western Cape Province also had the second-highest contact crimes nationally. The South African Police Services Government Report of the 2017/18 financial year further highlights the Western Cape Province as having the fourth-highest number of cases of sexual offences in the country. The highest increases of child sexual assaults

have also been noted in the Western Cape with a 4.4% increase in the current year (2018/2019). Three of the four study sites are in the townships whose police stations have reported the most murder cases in South Africa as well as the top 30 stations who reported the most rapes: namely Nyanga, Gugulethu and Khayelitsha. For rape, these townships respectively rank 6th, 18th and 21st nationally (SAPS Annual Report, 2017/2018) and 1st, 5th and 9th of the top ten stations for sexual offences in the Western Cape (Western Cape Police Services, 2019).

4.3 The Participants

4.3.1 Sample Description

Participants in this study were recruited from four townships in Cape Town, in the Western Cape Province of South Africa, namely, Nyanga (four participants), Gugulethu (five participants), Khayelitsha (three participants), and Dunoon (four participants). The sample of the study (see Table 4.1) is from communities whose police stations have the top incidents of sexual offences in South Africa and with crimes against children, namely, murder, attempted murder, sexual offences, common assault and assault with grievous bodily harm has increased in the course of the study, that is between 2017/2018 (South African Police Service, 2018) and 2018/2019 (South African Police Service, 2019) financial years. As tabulated in Table 4.1, participants live in townships of Cape Town, Western Cape. Study participants were children between the ages of 9 and 11 years. The choice for a young sample received heavy yet understandable criticisms from the ethics committee before the study was ethically cleared. There is a lot of necessary caution and gatekeeping regarding sexual violence research with children from ethics committees, as I experienced with this study. While I am aware that talking to children about their experiences of sexual violence is a topic that makes many uncomfortable, there is evidence that cannot be ignored that children are sexually violated and reported on from the age of 3 years (Schaeffer et al., 2011). As media reports show, in some tragic instances even infants as young as 2 months old are sexually violated (TimesLive, 2018).

However, research with children on sexual trauma is feasible and small samples with follow-up interviews are recommended. One such study focused on disclosure patterns in samples of children aged 7 to 12 years old (Hershkowitz et al., 2007). The study found that follow-up sessions were helpful as children rarely disclosed significant experiences in the first session. In another study, 14 interviewers conducted 51 investigations of child sexual abuse with children ranging from 4.4 to 12.9 years of age, with follow-up interviews (Sternberg et al., 1997).

This suggests that one interviewer, on average, worked with three participants, whereas in this study, I interviewed 16 children. Each of the 16 participants after the initial session had two or three follow-up sessions, which made up 16 complete thick-descriptive life stories comprised of 50 interviews. Aligned with the paradigmatic nature of this study, qualitative research methods are interested in gathering an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon and are focusing on meaning, as with this study (Dworkin, 2012). For this study, this entailed “the how” in children’s meaning-making of sexual trauma, each child’s process, (sub)culture, situation, scene and sets of social interaction in trying to understand their life stories (Dworkin, 2012).

4.3.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria:

- a) Black children between the ages of 9 and 11 years living with a history of sexual violence and who reside in areas where they are exposed to poly-victimisation, i.e., townships in Cape Town.
- b) Children must have used the intervention services of a welfare agency for sexual trauma.
- c) Children must have disclosed their sexual violation to a social worker and have gone through psychological intervention with a social worker or a psychologist.

- d) A social worker at a welfare agency confirmed that the child was able to narrate their life experience focusing on their sexual violence trauma.
- e) The child must have been confirmed by a social worker at a care agency to know the difference between right and wrong, lies and truth and have good morality.
- f) In line with Section 28 of the South African Constitution, only children whose parents or legal guardians had provided consent would be considered for participation.
- g) Participating children were selected based on their availability and only those who provided assent to participate in the study were included. As a result, one child declined participation although her grandmother had provided consent. The child's right to choose was respected.

Exclusion criteria:

- a) Children who had not received any sexual trauma intervention through a welfare agency contacted by the researcher were not considered for participation in the study.
- b) Children who were referred for participation by a welfare organisation and whose parent(s), guardian or caregiver(s) consented, but the child declined participation.

Table 4.1
Participant Referrals

Name	Age	Rereferring NGO & Location	Sessions
Angelina	9	Ethafeni, Nyanga	2
Nosipho	10	Ethafeni, Nyanga	4
Angela	10	Ethafeni, Nyanga	3
Bubbles	9	Ethafeni, Nyanga	4
Zintle	10	Childline, Khayelitsha	3
Busisiwe	9	Childline, Khayelitsha	3
Mandla	11	Childline, Khayelitsha	3
Buhle	11	Childline, Khayelitsha	3
Ntombentle	10	Ilitha Labantu, Gugulethu	3
Isipho	10	Ilitha Labantu, Gugulethu	3
Zenande	9	Ilitha Labantu, Gugulethu	3
Ncumisa	10	Ilitha Labantu, Gugulethu	3
Seki	10	Ilitha Labantu, Gugulethu	3
Siphokazi	9	Jelly Beanz, Dunoon	3
Lusanda	10	Jelly Beanz, Dunoon	3
Khanya	10	Jelly Beanz, Dunoon	4

4.3.3 Recruitment and Research Process

Participant selection criteria were predetermined. I used purposive sampling to select potential participants through welfare organisations. Purposive sampling allows for the identification and selection of participants specific to the study which, in this case, was children who had been sexually violated and were ready to share their experiences (Palinkas et al., 2015). The advantage of recruiting participants through organisations was that participating children had, at the time of data collection, been in a therapeutic process for their trauma. This means

participants had already disclosed and gone through the most difficult aspects of their trauma. The study, therefore, did not make it a requirement for participants to disclose again. I wanted to make sure that children would receive the necessary support after story-telling sessions and obtain the necessary containment when necessary. Selecting participants in this manner was a measure I put in place to diminish any harm that the study might cause to children as well as any negligible risk of re-traumatisation through the study.

Recruitment was in three stages: (1) request for study entry from organisations (Appendix B), (2) parental/caregiver consent (Appendix C), and (3) child assent (Appendix E). The welfare agencies acted as gatekeepers to participants. They assessed the suitability of the study as well as my suitability for working with their participants or clients based on study ethics clearance documentation. They each followed their respective internal procedures such as meetings with a site manager, head of counsellors or presentations about the study.

After organisations granted permission to conduct the study on their site, usually after consideration from the respective organisational board, the recruitment process began. Organisations shared with me a list of potential participants and their contact information. They first contacted parents to gauge their interest in possibly participating in the study before I phoned or met them for the initial meeting, which was arranged by the Centre. The decision regarding whether I would arrange the initial meeting with parents telephonically or whether I would meet them at the Centre for initial contact was centre-specific and dependent on my agreement with each organisation. The initial meeting was purposed for the informed consenting and assenting processes. The dates for follow-up sessions were also discussed on this day. After determining that the child was ready and willing to talk about their life experiences, as outlined in the Assent Form (Appendix E), I discussed the ground rules that would guide our time together. Ground rules entailed how the child and researcher would use

the story-telling space and the session, and thereafter data collection (storytelling) sessions would commence.

My relationships with child NGOs and welfare agencies in Cape Town that focus on child trauma benefited the swift recruitment process of the study. The participating child welfare organisations were Childline (participants were recruited through their Tygerberg, Dunoon and Khayelitsha offices), Project Playground, Ethafeni Day Care, Ilitha Labantu and Jelly Beanz. The participant from Project Playground was not included in this thesis as she turned 12 years in the course of setting up the first session. The organisations' Head Offices where the requests for conducting the study were made were in Wynberg, Khayelitsha, Nyanga, Gugulethu and Blaauwberg. I formed these relationships through networking at scholarly engagements such as conferences and workshops through the course of my academic career and, more intentionally, while I was awaiting ethics approval for this project.

In all organisations, upon the study entry request, the study's processes, ethical considerations, issues about the protection of the children, study limits and limitations, and the extent of the involvement of the researcher and that of the organisations were discussed. Some organisations preferred to explain the study to parents themselves as part of recruitment while others only gauged parents' permission for me to contact them and do the recruitment myself. In both circumstances, I still conducted the informed consenting and assenting processes. Organisations had the option of being present for the consenting and assenting processes. The presence of the social worker was extremely valuable in the cases of the youngest participants (9-year-olds) for the same reasons of establishing trust and credibility in the eyes of the children when having a parent present during this process.

Notable negotiations with organisations were around issues of time and venue of the sessions, and how the incentives would be managed. Some of the organisations participated with the

understanding that they would benefit from the study by the researcher informing them how well they were managing the children's cases. The study was not able to offer that assessment. However, an agreement was reached in line with the ethical requirements that the researcher would inform the social worker of anything the children shared that affected the child's safety and recovery from trauma.

Though the selection criteria were carefully thought out, recruitment presented challenges with the age inclusion criteria. Several organisations referred parents and caregivers of children outside the inclusion criteria. This produced a protocol and ethical dilemma as children (and parents) arrived for the consenting and assenting processes prepared for study entry. I felt uneasy about declining their participation in consideration of the best interest of the child standard pertaining to children's age and maturity, their emotional security as well as their emotional, social and cultural development (Children's Act 38 of 2005 nr. 7) (Republic of South Africa, 2006). This standard informed my decision to allow the participation of 12- and 13-year-old children but disapprove that of the 7-year-old child.

The children presented with a history of both abandonment and rejection, as well as issues with regards to self-esteem. In addition, upon inquiring of the social workers their reasons for referring ineligible children into the study as the criteria was unambiguous, their motivations were for the benefit of children. They thought their engagement with the study would be helpful for the children. Developmental regression and anger mismanagement were issues associated with victims of sexual abuse. In total, I allowed four children who were 12 and 13 years to enter the study; they formed the first two and final two participant entries. These children's stories are not included in the dissertation. I used the experience of the first two children as the study's pilot. Although the story-telling processes with the children outside the inclusion criteria were costly in terms of time and resources and would not be used in this dissertation, the data collection experience with the first was beneficial in three ways:

1. It was like a preparatory experience for data collection with younger participants given the graphic accounts, and immediate disclosures of their experiences with the one participant focusing on sexual victimisation and another about poly-victimisation in the form of physical and emotional abuse.
2. It showed me the benefit of refining the life story method as both children expressed satisfaction in telling their stories.
3. I learned innovative techniques that would enhance the story-telling sessions with younger participants.
4. I learned best-practice strategies for engaging parents, caregivers and gatekeepers.

I experienced dilemmas in the recruitment process and in resolving them I had to be sensitive and compliant to the study protocol, ethics of the University and Health Profession's Council and most importantly, that all decisions made were guided by the principle of the best interest of the child. It was in this phase of the data collection process where I had to make decisions about the extent to which I would be true to my identity as an African woman and honour African ethics in how I related with the parents and caregivers of participants. Parents and caregivers often shared their stories during the consenting process. I had to find the balance between my professional role that placed me in this study as well as my identity that I carry with me in my professional (and activist) role. In such instances, being aware that I was in the isiXhosa domain, isiXhosa being the community, I asked myself what the isiXhosa protocol (*inqubo yesiXhosa*) says in terms of the culture about a situation, for instance, in cases where a young mother divulges to me her experiences. In such cases, from my awareness that isiXhosa is guarded against exposing "one's nakedness", I understood the strength and courage it took for such individuals to make themselves vulnerable to me. This understanding prompted me to listen however long the time was required and afterwards referred them to where they could receive professional support. In some cases, driven by my personal politics as an activist

against gender-based violence, I offered perspective where mothers were beginning to feel weary about a case or sympathetic towards a partner who had raped their child and awaiting trial while in police custody (Shahrokh & Wheeler, 2014). It was in such instances that I both recognised and acknowledged the excessive vicarious trauma I had been carrying throughout the project (Munger et al., 2015).

While my disregard for maintaining detachment and objectivity might sound disconcerting, as prescribed by typical Eurocentric research, African Feminist scholarship attends to the intersectional issues of gender, race and poverty, and does not leave identity politics behind (Crenshaw, 1991). This scenario I paint above is an example of debates around research distance, issues of authenticity and objectivity which are common in qualitative person-centred research (Ravitch & Carl 2019). The scenario further highlighted the responsibilities Black Feminist Psychologist researchers face in the field of having to attend to activist-researcher-psychologist roles (Crenshaw, 1991).

4.4 Data Collection

I used a methodology that I shall name participatory child-centric art-based life story research. This is an original contribution and builds on the work of Linda Tuhiwa Smith (2009) in her book, *Decolonizing Methodologies. Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Like Smith, participatory child-centric art-based life story shifts the power to participants giving voice to marginalised groups. The method empowers children in that it gives them room to find ways of expression that work for them, embraces agency, and gives them control to direct their stories (Simmons, 2019). Giving children control over the direction, pace and modalities of telling their stories were important as it positioned them as knowledgeable respondents who understand themselves and their needs as opposed to the traditional knowledgeable Researcher Psychologist interviewer (Morrison & Flegel, 2017). Positioning Black children in this way

gives them the freedom to be themselves and in turn, gives them control over the process. These factors allowed them to express themselves in the most natural way possible.

4.4.1 Life Story Research

The story-telling method was relevant for this study as in African cultures stories are mainly used to educate about cultural standards, worldviews, morals, and values of African people (Dasyuva, 2007; Smith, 1999). Human beings are narrative by nature and telling stories of their lives allowed participants to recount their experiences of sexual violence, and I learned how they made sense of it (Banks, 1982; Sandelowski, 1991). Using storytelling as a method, I sought participants' narrations of their lived experiences from their perspectives on their terms, which would reflect their realities and environments. The children explained their lives according to their representations with minimal interruption from me. Consistent with their past experiences, through their stories they drew me to the details of their sexual violence-related traumatic experiences and the contexts of the occurrences (Etherington, 2009).

This method allowed children to remain in control of their stories, of how much they told and when they did so, and to reflect on their personal experiences in historical order (Bishop, 1999; Cohler, 1982). The tellings provided an ethical mode of self-understanding to the children (Meretoja, 2017). The ethic in this for me was in using a method that was within participants' mode of being culturally and developmentally without me, as researcher or adult, being intrusive or pretending to know more than they do about their lives and experiences. As a benefit of qualitative research, life story research allowed me to witness key observations such as children's discomforts and triggers which are unexpected components of violence research (Chongo et al., 2018).

Life story research further enabled children to co-construct knowledge and the meanings they give to their sexual trauma dialogue with the researcher and further provides them with the

opportunity to teach and learn about their experiences (Etherington, 2009; Smith, 2012). The stories are co-constructed by the participants and me because of the interactive nature of storytelling. I mostly began each session with, “I am interested to know you; would you please tell me about your life”, “please tell me what you do every day after school”, or “what is life like where you live?”. Sometimes, during long pauses, I would gently ask, “is there anything else you’d like to tell me?”. Given the sensitive nature of the topic, I was required to earn participants’ trust which was beneficial for rapport building and the gradual unveiling of parts of the stories in the different sessions. The process with each child comprised of an average of three story-telling sessions which provided the opportunity to seek clarification on accounts in a previous session.

However, consistent with critics of research with children, some of the participants required prompts that would help them express their realities and experiences (Christensen & James, 2000; Franklin, 1995). Children often do not respond well to question-answer sessions due to the power relations in adult-child communication. Sole reliance on verbal interviews would have limited the value of verbal data collection with children which was the key purpose of the study, which is getting the voices of children into the child sexual violence discourse.

There were many abrupt minutes of silence during the sessions. My experiences of the silence were at first uncomfortable and unpredictable as I did not know what they meant (Spyrou, 2016). After reflecting on the instances where there were silences, I discovered that at times participants had difficulties articulating and felt overwhelmed by what they had spoken. I learnt to embrace the silent moments and to work with them. There were instances when the best thing to do was to allow the silence and to stay in the moment with participants leading to most of our time spent drawing or sitting silently together. Often participants escaped into an imaginary world and had an out-of-body experience which at first was confusing for me (Briere & Hedges, 2010). As time with each participant progressed, I recognised such instances and

introduced creative ways to stay in the moment through participatory arts-based techniques and play. As Kara (2015) stressed, creativity in research is context-specific, depending on the knowledge, skills and abilities of those involved, when and where the research is carried out and other contextual factors. The games participants and I played and activities we did together, even if it were sharing a meal, helped develop a relationship with my research participants and was a technique I began to be intentional about, facilitating qualitative narrative inquiry in line with the developmental stage of the participants collectively but, more importantly, to work with each child based on their developmental epoch.

In quiet times during the life-story interview, I got opportunities for asking clarifying questions (Atkinson, 2001). Responses called to remembrance aspects of children's stories they may have forgotten up to the time they were asked about it, and possibly had not intended to share. This is because the story "tellings are remembrances, retrospections, and constructions about the past in a fleeting present moment" (Freeman, 1984, p. 4). Child-centric techniques were therefore helpful aids in the story-telling process and assisted in equalising power relations between participants and me. This was a powerful way to strengthen the story-telling method and to access children as portrayed in part of a conversation with Busisiswe (9 years):

- Researcher: What? The song is over. Alright, it's almost time for us to go. Almost. How are you feeling now?
- Participant: I feel brand new.
- Researcher: You feel brand new?
- Participant: (Giggles) No. I feel happy.
- Researcher: Okay. What's making you happy? Tell me.
- Participant: Ohm, ohm...reading the story and listening to the song and sitting with you here talking about me. Now I feel happy because... I feel happy because I have you by my side and you were comforting me when I was crying.
- Researcher: I'm happy that you are feeling happy. How do you feel about talking? Did you feel that it's good? Did you enjoy talking? You said you are feeling happy that we are talking. Do you want us to talk again?

- Participant: I don't know. Oh! it's up to me?
- Researcher: Yes, I'm asking *you* [emphasising that it was up to the participant to decide] do you want us to talk again another day?
- Participant: Oh! Yes.
- Researcher: One last time?
- Participant: Yes.

4.4.2 Participatory Arts-Based Techniques

The use of stimulating material and prompts in research with children requires innovation (Mate et al., 2010). Jones and Leavy (2014) offer a good motivation for arts-based techniques and stated, “any social research or human inquiry that adapts the tenets of the creative arts as a part of the methodology...the arts may be used during data collection, analysis, interpretation and/or dissemination” (pp. 1–2). Arts-based research, therefore, sits comfortably in qualitative research processes and is participatory in nature. There are many dimensions to arts-based research reflecting the large variety of art genres (such as performance, writing, painting, photography, collage and installation art) and these genres were used in a variety of ways, for example, as a method or as technical, communication or aesthetic elements (Franz, 2010). In the study I mostly used drawing, reading, writing, play and role-playing to stimulate discussion (see Gerber et al., 2018). Word games was also a technique I used for participants who indicated an interest in reading and writing. With them, I completed sentences like “I remember when...” to start conversations. Some children enjoyed reading so with them I read stories together from books that they chose from the selection I had brought to the sessions. After reading each story, we discussed those stories' main characters and connected them to their lives. This worked well in extracting key figures in children's lives which became the starting points of participants' self-narrations.

4.4.3 Participatory Child-Centric Arts-Based Techniques

The combination of life storytelling and arts-based techniques allowed children to be in control of the story-telling process as they spoke about their lives, and involved seven components:

1. Give children a variety of toys or writing materials to choose from so that they can either play during the session or write or read.
2. Be prepared to join in, in the art by drawing or writing and reading with them on the same page that they are creating their stories on.
3. Have food present and be prepared to talk while eating or taking food breaks.
4. The story-telling session ends when the child's parent(s) collects them therefore be flexible to do what will make the child feel good such as going to a food outlet, sitting in the car or outside.
5. Allow the child to lead you into an activity or game that makes them feel comfortable and in control of what happens in your time together.
6. Be prepared to play.
7. Welcome the silences.

The relaxed child-centred participatory structure of the life story sessions encouraged participants to speak freely and completely about their experiences, attitudes, behaviours, and opinions, as can be seen in the layout of the story-telling room (Art 1). Throughout the study, I did not come with a pre-identified toy or choice of play that any of the children would use in the session. I instead brought a variety of toys and arts-based materials they could choose from.

Although after each session I asked participants what they would like to do in the next session in terms of play art, it hardly ever did go as planned. I, therefore, needed to think out of the box during each session because each child is different and brought their different personalities into the room. Art, therefore, inspired singing, and play prompted children to recollect stories of

their lives. I found all the play and arts-based aids (arts 1–4) to be participatory in that children, for instance, used their drawings to explain their lives to me and referred to their readings or poetry to explain an aspect of their lives. These tools used together led to a deep understanding of children’s lives and how they make sense of the traumas they are exposed to and have experienced. When choosing a research method it is important to consider the maturity and competency of each child (Rubensen, 2005). For Angelina, for instance, playing out her home situation, through an indigenous game called *poppie-huisie*³ together as she showed me “her home” and how things work, her role and the daily routine, was more meaningful to her. This game provided an opportunity where I could gently ask her questions as she directed her story as we were on the floor role-playing her daily life. The whole experience was new to me but what was good about it is that it was not pretentious or staged – we were playing, and I got a glimpse of her world. Having the variety of art-based resources in the form of toys and books available at each session made the story-telling method more age-appropriate and culturally friendly.

³ Social organisation play also see social organisation in girls pretend play (Erkberg & Mjaavath, 1988).

Art 1

A Photograph of the Play Area



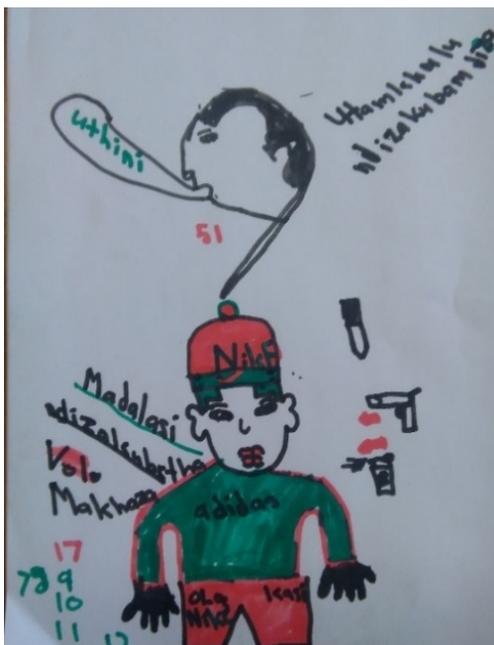
Art 2

Play Date with Ntombentle While Sharing Her Life Story



Art 3

Drawing by Mandla Talking About His Environment



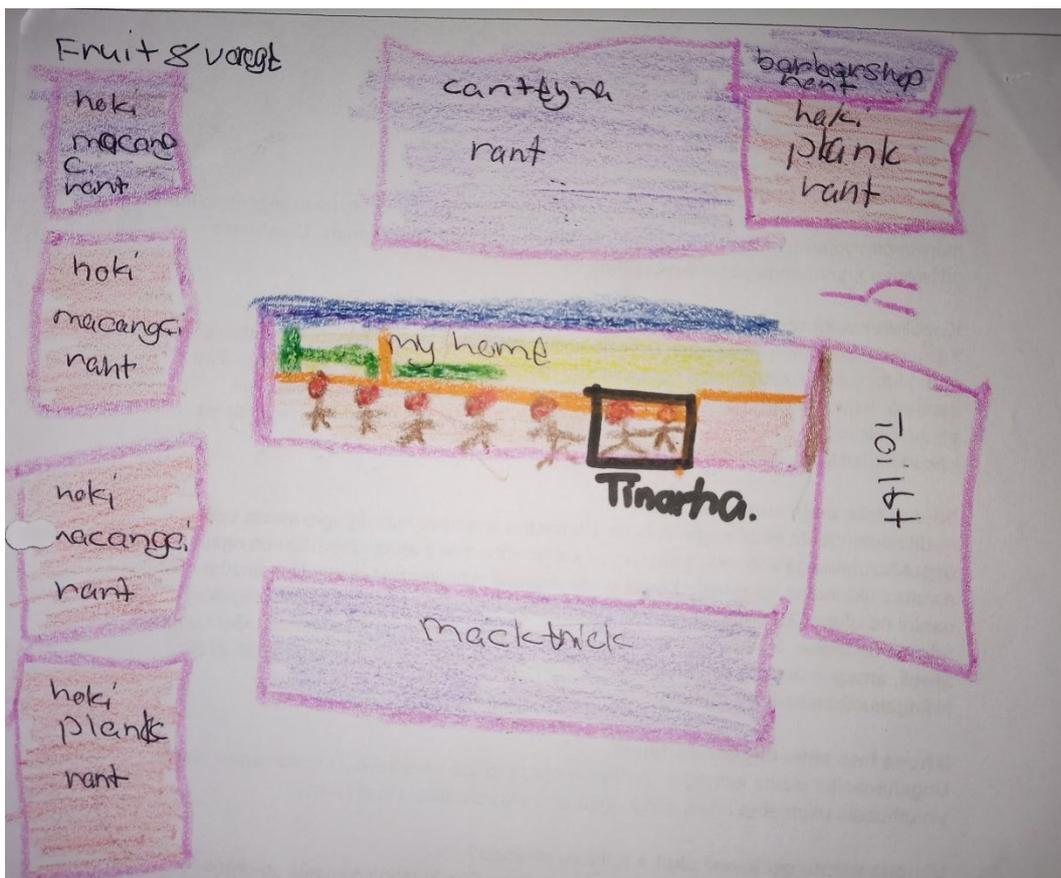
Art 4

Buhle's Drawing of Herself to Tell Who She Is



Art 5

Lusanda's Drawing of Her Yard to Explain Her Living Environment and Families Living in Their Yard



4.5 Data Management and Analysis

The study used a thematic narrative analysis approach to analyse data. The narrative analysis does not preclude the borrowing from non-African contexts and makes it a relevant tool to use within a study centring on African-centred epistemologies. Myerhoff and Ruby (1982) hold that studying narratives links “the sciences with history, literature and everyday life to reflect the increasing reflectivity that characterizes contemporary inquiry and furthers the postmodern deconstruction of the already tenuous boundaries among disciplines and realms of meaning” (p. 22). Narratives are valuable sources of knowledge and focus on participants’ stories’ whilst analysing the themes that emerge and interpreting the data (Banks, 1982; Creswell, 2013; Hancock et al., 2009; Jeong-Hee, 2015; Polkinghorne, 1988). The thematic analysis identifies patterns and themes in data and does not specifically tie them into one epistemological perspective, thus making it flexible when used to interpret data sets (Maguire & Delahunt 2017). The joint use of narrative and thematic analysis allowed patterns to evolve before, during and after the data collection stage, thus accommodating the evolving nature of data analysis (Hanley-Maxwell et al., 2007).

4.5.1 Narrative Analysis

I incorporated Afrocentricity principles of time and space in the analysis of children’s narratives by paying attention to the chronology of life stories (Asante, 2009; Creswell, 2013). Paying attention to the ordering of stories in terms of when and where the emphasis was made indicated the meanings participants gave to experiences and what informed those meanings, which is an important consideration for an Afrocentric lens (Asante, 2009). The narrative framework afforded the study special access to the human experience, order, and change; obliging the listener to listen to the human impulse to tell their stories (Baruch, 2012; Sandelowski, 1991).

The stories were not told in order; through conversational analysis in the narrative approach, I found the beginning, middle and end of each life story (Creswell et al., 2016). This I achieved by seeking clarification for participants, as explained in the data collection description. For each life story, I addressed the content of the narratives, the form of the narrative, the child's interpretation of their story, acknowledging the context of the story, as well as the intention of each narrative (Baruch, 2012; Creswell, 2013). The intention of the narrative for each child was an important factor to unpack at my subjective level as it is required of me, the researcher, to come to terms with what I have heard and to listen to how the children positioned themselves in their stories. Because this study is located within the broader gender-based violence discourse and a decolonisation agenda, I paid attention to how children positioned themselves regarding power, agency and the language that they used in their descriptions.

4.5.2 Thematic Analysis

I achieved the thematic analysis by following Ezzy (2002), Barusch (2012) and Sandelowski's (1991) guide to the analysis:

- i. The children's stories were audio-recorded with participant assent and parental or caregiver written informed consent, transcribed verbatim and then translated.
- ii. For immersion purposes, I started compiling the stories through a detailed transcription and translation of the narratives, paying attention to nuances and language (Ezzy, 2002). The transcription and translation of the stories as they were in isiXhosa was carried out with the assistance of two research assistants. Both the research assistants were ethically obligated to treat study data with confidentiality (Appendix A).
- iii. I did a quality check of both the transcriptions and translations. The transcription of the narratives, because it was carried out by a research assistant, at times mis-

captured the tone of either the researcher or that of the participants. The transcriptions were clarified during the quality check process before being sent off for translation. The translation process, also because of different isiXhosa dialects, at times changed meaning which was also corrected during quality check and inter-coding. The meaning was affected because some isiXhosa phrases cannot be fully translated to English; this necessitates the isiXhosa wording in Chapter Five. In the back-translation process which involved me as researcher and interviewer with the translator, an agreement was reached on how to best phrase English translated scripts for meaning not to be lost. It would have been ideal to keep the isiXhosa texts, but this was not possible as the thesis is written in English. The meaning was further fine-tuned during the intercoder analytic process for accuracy and sense-making.

- iv. After all the life stories were transcribed and translated, I began with the thematic data analysis process. The narrative analysis happened during the story-telling and was completed after the completion of each life story. This is because I had follow-up sessions with each child, which allowed me to explore, make links and clarify parts of the stories that the children had told me previously.
- v. Thereafter, I narrated the children's life stories in active voice as told by the children in temporal order and meaning. This enabled me to describe and explain how children make meaning of sexual trauma (Sandelowski, 1991). The written narrations were verified by the research assistant. I verified the life timeline of the children based on their stories after each session (Barusch, 2012). The completed stories were verified by the research assistants who played a co-read in the narrated stories and if there were any questions or gaps, I would ask for clarification at the next session with the respective participant(s).

- vi. After constructing the lives narratively using thematic analysis, I then analysed the content, the discourse, and the context of each story, focusing on children's insights and understandings of their experiences (Ezzy, 2002), about the plot, events surrounding their experiences, actions taken by them and others in their stories, the setting (environment), interpretations that they (children) made and justifications for their actions (Barusch, 2012). The research assistants served as inter-coders who ensured that the interpretations made of the data were reliable and reproducible (Campbell et al., 2013).
- vii. With the inter-coders, the stories were then compared and contrasted for similarities and differences in content, style, and interpretation (Campbell et al., 2013; Ezzy, 2002).
- viii. After having considered the stories, with inter-coders, the effects of background variables such as gender, language, spirituality, religion, culture, and ethnicity were considered (Barusch, 2012; Campbell et al., 2013; Ezzy, 2002).
- ix. Finally, after inter-coding (Campbell et al., 2013), I then identified stories (within each of the life stories) or content that illustrate the themes, insights, and child understandings of their sexual trauma (Ezzy, 2002).

After considering alternative explanations, I wrote the research thesis through interpreting the patterns, considering the research question posed and available theory to address the data derived from the themes of this narrative analysis (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). I presented findings on academic platforms such as conferences and seminars with audiences from different sectors, disciplines and orientations, and further considered all gaps and questions posed until data saturation was reached.

4.5.3 Ensuring Trustworthiness

Because qualitative research relies on inductive reasoning, there is a strong correlation between the data gathering process, the data gathered and the researcher. Being a Black, feminist scholar, my sense of self, personality, affect, past experiences, background, ethnicity and training in psychology were resources that I drew on to explain presenting data (see Castellan, 2010; Hills, 1986, Sutton & Austin, 2015). These resources in their totality enabled me to foreground decolonising methods and ethics for research with children and also research in Black communities and be constantly reflexive about my personal politics and biases.

Throughout this study, I aimed to be “transparent” and disclose every detail of the research process, including my doubts, conflicting takes on the data and uncertainties when reporting my findings. Integrity has been maintained by expressing the life stories as was reported by participants, although conversations that took place while the recorder was off are also reported for context.

The theoretical approach of this study, Afrocentricity, centres on truth, applicability in terms of context, space, and time, and asks the researcher to report the stories about the subject as told by the participants as a reflection of their realities (Smith, 2012). As such, I have reported all the steps followed to ensure that my research is true and valuable; that it contains truth, value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality in terms of reporting even when it was not comfortable to do so (Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

This study viewed children as contributing agents that are knowledgeable about issues that affect them. Guided by the child-centric nature of the study I disconnected myself from “the expert position” as this study believes that children are the experts of their worlds and can communicate their experiences, which they have done. The centring on the voices of children

strengthens the validity and truthfulness of the study as a child-centric research project, as opposed to the study being about childhood.

Due to the adult-child power differential, there is an ingrained understanding that adult knowledge is superior to that of the child. I was, therefore, mindful of the power dynamics that would be present during data collection. I cultivated awareness of how I could be influencing the child participants – by my age, profession, perceived position in society as an educated Black woman, attitudes, and behaviour as far as possible – in how they responded. Providing options for how, and which, data collection storytelling instrument they wanted to employ relieved potential barriers to self-expression. To guard against my (perceived) superiority I monitored my behaviour and was intentional about being led by each participant on how they wanted to engage with me; and how much they wanted to share about their stories.

I ensured the authenticity of results by being consistent in the coding of data through a process called inter-coding (Campbell et al., 2013; Kirilenko & Stepchenkova, 2016). Inter-coding ensures that the knowledge produced through this research is reasonably confident, reliable and agreeable (Campbell et al., 2013). I aimed for a high-level inter-coder agreement. This provided assurance in the validity of research results allowed division of coding work among the two coders this study utilised and ensured replicability of the study (Kirilenko & Stepchenkova, 2016). The goal was to ensure that a single knowledgeable coder may be reasonably confident that his or her coding would be reproducible by another equally knowledgeable coder, in the case of this study, me, the researcher.

To achieve this, I had two research assistants who assisted with the transcription and translation of the life stories. Each of them analysed an equal number of stories, and I analysed as well as quality controlled all. Because the inter-coders immersed themselves in the data within the

transcription and translation processes, it was easier to resolve coding discrepancies when they arose (Campbell et al., 2013). This is because the coding procedure was duplicated by two independent coders with whom I compared my coding outcomes. When there were differences, usually in meaning, mostly because of the different isiXhosa language dialects and translation, I sought inter-coder agreement to ensure data reliability (Kirilenko & Stepchenkova, 2016).

4.6 Ethical Considerations

The ethics in conducting this study had three important and sometimes competing components. The first was concerning the ethics body that approved the study, the second was towards the upliftment of children's rights to agency and the last one was toward African ethics. The tension was usually between institutional ethics and African ethics. The measure for good ethics pertained to ensuring that no harm was done to children and that participating children benefited from the activities that were involved in the research process. At a broader level, children affected by sexual violence would benefit from the study through its findings, which might influence psychological interventions for sexual trauma.

I entered the research environment as a participating adult who takes an overt role and builds a relationship of trust with the participating children. An overt role is one where the researcher is open and honest about her intentions. This approach upholds the ethical imperatives when working with children. The nature of this relationship is established so that the power differential between the adult and the child can be disrupted in an ethical way that puts each child's needs at the centre. Such a relationship further ensures that children are protected from harm. Such a relationship further ensures that children are protected from harm. Storytelling allows for this relationship as it is participatory and is within children's intellectual and social abilities. The methodology allows the researcher to uphold the social and ethical obligations

by protecting children against physical or emotional threats given that the stories are told by children and they choose which stories to tell (Birbeck & Drummond, 2007).

In research with children, consent is parental permission for a child's participation in the study and is recognised when granted from a parent (biological or foster) or a guardian, with the legal authority to do so (Hein et al., 2015). Assent recognises children's agency and capability of understanding the research in question to make a prospective informed decision whether to participate (Hein et al., 2015; Oulton et al., 2016; Wendler, 2006). Written voluntary informed consent was obtained from the parents or guardians of each of the participants in a language that they understand. Parents and/or guardians received a letter (Appendix C) that explained the study and requested the involvement of their children. The letter described and sought permission to collect data as well as to audio-record verbal expressions from the children. I went through the letter with the participants in a language that they are most conversant in. Parents and/or guardians who consented to the involvement of the children in the study were requested to sign the informed consent form as an indication of their agreement (Appendix C). Parents who could not write were requested to make a sign instead of a full signature with two witnesses.

Signed informed assent was obtained from each child after having obtained caregiver consent. The information about the study was pitched at a linguistic level and using constructs that a child would understand (Hein et al., 2015). The researcher sought active affirmation of a child's desire and willingness to participate, resulting in one child declining to participate. In line with Section 28 of the South African Constitution, only children who provided assent, irrespective of their caregivers' consent, could participate in the study.

Parents had an option to decline their children's participation irrespective of the organisation's approval by the referral. Similarly, children could decline their participation regardless of their

parents'/caregivers' consent. Given the child-centricity and child-rights focus of the study, I was careful in ensuring that children freely agreed to participate in the study in consideration of the information presented to them. The decline of the one child (potential participant) was an exciting moment for me as it validated that the consenting process of the study was conducted in a non-threatening and non-coercive manner. This confirms that I gave children the power and right to choose whether to participate for themselves irrespective of the approval of the organisations and caregivers.

To minimise psychological discomfort, only children who child welfare agencies considered ready to tell stories about their history of sexual violence were recruited into the study. However, because the history of sexual violence was an inclusion criterion to minimise harm, children were not required to disclose. Although recruitment was done through welfare agencies and did not receive any information received from research participants, study data or their families. An exception was made in cases where participants shared information that indicated that they were being harmed or when I questioned the eligibility of a participant to the study. For instance, one participant did not understand why they were attending trauma counselling sessions in the organisation they were in. I, therefore, approached the social worker the participants were referred by and it was clarified to me that said participant using avoidance as a coping mechanism which is common for sexually abused children (Kaplow et al., 2005; Shapiro et al., 2012). The participant had come to the centre for a third time at the age of 9 years. The recruitment technique, therefore, provided opportunities for me to communicate with social workers when I could not understand a child's processing of their trauma.

In addition, because this study was expected to evoke certain feelings associated with the reliving of the trauma, each participant was required to have a debriefing session with a counselling psychologist at her practice. However, because participants were already part of welfare organisations it proved unnecessary to have a study referral psychologist. In the cases

of children who I noted required attention, I alerted their social workers who then followed up on their cases.

To protect participants from negative labelling and stigmatisation, confidentiality was observed throughout the research process. Information derived in the study process was kept in a safe under the strict supervision of the researcher. To ensure participant privacy, pseudonyms are used in this dissertation as well as in conferences to protect children's identities in conformance with the Health Professions Council of South Africa's (HPCSA) basic ethical principles in health research (Health Professions Council of South Africa, 2016). So that participants understood how their stories would be used, I explained that pseudonyms would be used to maintain their anonymity and not to undermine their right to their names (Allen & Wiles, 2015). Participants and I generally used nicknames for pseudonyms in the sessions and when the nicknames were too close to their real names, I asked them to choose a name that they preferred.

I breached confidentiality when a child reported that they were still being violated or when they reported a life or death situation by informing the welfare agency through which the child was recruited. This breach of confidentiality was acting in the interest of the child so that they could receive help. For instance, one child shared that their perpetrator had come to threaten them with sexual assault. Upon hearing this disclosure, I asked for the consent of the child to report the matter to her mother and her social worker. Upon discussion, we agreed that she would share the information herself. As was the case, the matter had already been reported to the social worker, only it was her mother who had reported the matter and not her.

The issue of incentives, although it was meant to benefit the participants and their parents, produced an ethical dilemma. The study promised that transport fare would be provided to the child and their family to attend the sessions. I discovered that the social workers were not pleased with the incentive idea. I learned that this was because they did not want a situation

whereby some of their clients were given money when they came to the Organisations. In negotiation with organisations, I issued the reimbursement of participant transport costs.

4.7 Reflections

Due to the inversion of power that the study required, the sensitivity of the topic and the tenderness of participants, empathic care was a skill that I was required to constantly tap into so that optimal care could be afforded to all participants. This required constant self-reflexivity so that I could find a balance between the individualistic and objective stance Eurocentric ethics require versus the communal and sharing of hardships African communities are founded upon. To provide empathic care and understanding to participants, their parents as well as the staff of the participating organisation, required me to pay attention to my mental health.

The study confirmed from its beginning stages that researchers doing trauma work need help to deal with the gravity of the content and the data produced in the duration of the study (Greig et al., 2007). I had anticipated the experience of vicarious trauma which is due to hearing stories of sexual trauma as secondary trauma and empathic stress led to compassion fatigue. In the course of my research from my engagements with the children and their respective caregivers this was realised (Figley & Laurel, 2013; Hernandez-Wolfe, 2018). These are all experiences that are unavoidable consequences of hearing stories about trauma (Figley, 1995).

In the study's ethics application, I had indicated the importance of putting in place space for professional counselling before and throughout the study. This proposition was met with shock from the ethics body which indicated that ethics committees do not consider researchers' mental health an important factor in child sexual trauma research. While I do understand that children's wellbeing is most important in this type of work, the researcher's mental health is equally important for the study outcomes and participant wellbeing. This is to say, ethics

committees must take seriously and not downplay the emotional drain and fatigue resultant from secondary trauma in the research process.

The study required careful negotiations of institutional and African ethics as expressed through *ubuntu*. From a decolonising institution's outlook, this required awareness and respect for cultural diversity whilst observing and remaining within the boundaries of research ethics. Moral relativism, whilst being a cultural mediator by virtue of my "outsider within" Black feminist position, was a constant reflective point due to the socio-economic difficulties integral in Black Townships (Hills, 1986; Sewpaul & Henrickson, 2019). For instance, whilst participants' caregivers received incentives to cover travel costs participants oftentimes reported having walked to sessions. However, taking into consideration the socio-economic factors that surround African communities, especially those in Black Townships, as an African scholar building on the principles of *ubuntu* and humanising others, whether or not participants used the monetary incentive as prescribed, it would not be acceptable to leave people in need if I was able to assist.

My insider/outsider (Smith, 1999) or "outsider within" (Hills, 1986) position was therefore a useful resource in the project. There were cultural and socio-ecological dynamics and etiquettes that I could have misunderstood had I not been Black or African and had not shared some of the common experiences of the communities participants came from. This insider-outsider positionality played out in this study in my identity as an older woman whom participants either related to as an older sister, aunt (*usisi*) or mother figure thus giving reverential respect. As an African woman, every child old enough to be my child or belonging to my community is mine whether or not I have children of my own. At times my maternal instinct kicked in as I listened to their stories of trauma and struggles, as well as their proud moments. It was not possible not to form bonds with the participants as I could relate with some of their struggles and at times understood the hardships of their environments. Detachment in child-centric sexual trauma

work is therefore an unattainable ideal. At times it was necessary to step out of my researcher role to that of an activist and teacher to correct children's misconceptions of what rape is. For instance, when one of the participants said, "it was the first time she did it" (Isipho, 10), the statement indicated to me that was confusing sex with rape. Participants, the children, required assurance that they did not invite the rape of the perpetrators (Petersen et al., 2005). In those instances, I felt a strong need to protect them and provide the encouragement they needed.

This is to say, whilst I was prepared for the sensitive nature of the study before data collection, I was not prepared for the intertwined roles demanded of me by the dictates in the course of the research. The different roles I encountered during the research enriched the study in that the project became mutually beneficial to myself, the participants and their families, as well as the organisations I recruited them from. I believe my ability to invest myself in my research participants, built rapport and trust between the parents of my participants and me, as they saw that the study was from a place of care and not exploitation. I believe my approach to children contributed to the good retention and follow up rates of study participants.

Throughout the study, I was, however, faced with recurrent anxiety. The one anxiety I entered the study with was the possibility of re-traumatising children. I knew from the onset of the research that I would not be able to control the direction of children's stories which propelled me to design the recruitment strategy for children's social workers to be involved in the process. For my language capabilities, which is a result of my colonial upbringing, I had to remain authentic.

Finally, and most importantly, was the constant internal check about what it means to do child-centric research and to do this work within an African setting where there are clear hierarchies between not only children and adults but also gender tensions that impact children's perceptions of sexual abuse. Doing child-centric qualitative work on child sexual violence

using an African-centred lens, therefore, requires constant introspection. I have found the process to challenge my abilities in accepting children's truths to be absolute truths irrespective of whether I understood their realities or not. Key lessons prompted by the research were:

- Tensions between being an academic and an activist
- Use of expressive language
- Being comfortable with the silences
- Being confronted by my identity politics and self-discovery
- Being confronted with my privilege
- Allowing myself to follow children and sites in the data collection phase (trust)
- Showing vulnerability to self
- Learning to ask for help.

This chapter described and discussed the research design, methods, process, and techniques used in this study by providing a rationale that connects my choices during fieldwork with the overall rationale of the study. The report evidences that the process is as important as the outcome, or in other words, the path is as important as the destination. I ensured that the appropriate research methodology connects well with concerns and drives of Afrocentric, child-centric and intersectional approaches. The child participatory innovative techniques were extremely useful as will be demonstrated in Chapter Six aiding with child-led and linguistic (beyond just syntax) and cultural references.

CHAPTER 5: CHILDREN'S NARRATIVES

Spurred on by the aims of the study, literature, theoretical framework and methodology outlined in the previous chapters, in this chapter I present what the children say about their experiences of sexual trauma. I attempt to centre my analysis on their authentic voices, through their self-representations and to uphold their agency in my writing style. The presentation of children's experiences through narratives is a way of introducing participant circumstances. This chapter introduces the children's revelations in their own words, and these will be analysed and discussed in the next chapter. Throughout the process, there was validation and respect for children's narratives in the description of their childhoods. This was within participants' social contexts which have afforded them the experience as well as the resources to interpret that experience. The writing style of this chapter honours children's voices. This accounts for the writing style of narratives.

The chapter is divided into two segments. I first introduce each child through a brief profile and synopsis of their life stories with each child's account of sexual assault *if*⁴ they disclosed. Individual life stories are then followed by collective accounts of children and childhoods in the study setting, using thematic analysis, to acknowledge each child as part of a collective (Ezzy, 2002; Oswell, 2013). The collective accounts are organised into themed accounts with children's experiences of their location or locale (Townships), descriptions of their childhood and the resources that inform, or which children draw from, for sense-making. I provide explanatory notes in brackets when necessary to provide necessary context provided by my presence in the room with the children as words alone cannot communicate experience.

⁴ Disclosure was not a requirement of the study.

Table 5.1⁵ below contains participants' demographics with information about where reported, their living arrangements or co-residency, who cares for them, patterns of disclosure and who violated them.

Table 5.1

Participant Demographics

Name	Self-Disclosure	Age	Present Father	Absent Father	Father Figure	Primary caregiver	Perpetrator
Angelina	No	9	No	Yes	Non-reported	Mother	Mom's numerous boyfriends
Nosipho	Yes	10	No	Yes	X	Mother	Male Cousin Boy (15)
Angela	Yes	10	No	Yes	Non-reported	Granny (mom present)	Family friend Adult man
Bubbles	Yes	9	No	Yes	X	Granny	Family friend Boy, teenage
Zintle	Yes	10	Yes	No	X	Parents	Brother
Busisiwe	Yes	9	Yes	No	Non-reported	Father	Next door neighbour Boy
Mandla	No	11	Yes	No	X	Parents	Teammate Boy
Buhle	No	11	No	Yes	Non-reported	Mother	Stepfather
Ntombentle	No	10	No	Yes	X	Granny (mom present)	Not reported
Isipho	Yes	10	No	Yes	X	Mother	Acquaintance Adult man
Zenande	Yes	9	No	Yes	Non-reported	Mother	Neighbour Adult man
Ncumisa	No	10	No	Yes	X	Granny	Not reported
Seki	No	10	No	Yes	Non-reported	Mother	Not reported
Siphokazi	No	9	No	Yes	X	Granny	Not reported
Lusanda	No	10	No	Yes	Non-reported	Granny	Not reported
Khanya	Yes	10	Yes	No	X	Parents	Stranger/Neighbour Adult man

⁵ The names provided in the table and throughout the study are pseudonyms.

5.1 Individual Narratives: Meet the Participants

Meet Angelina

Angelina is a 9-year-old girl, second-born and only girl in a total of eight children from different fathers. She bears the bulk of care work, in part shared with her big brother as their mother works long hours as a cleaner at a hotel. Sometimes Angelina and her siblings eat from the school feeding scheme when they do not have lunch to carry to school. At the end of school, the two eldest siblings fetch the younger ones and ensure they are all home safely. Angelina cleans their house and ensures that her siblings are taken care of. Angelina enjoys some play with her peers in the community. In our first session, we played house, and, in this time, she demonstrated how her family is organised, her role and how their life is organised. In the second session, Angelina is drawn to a teddy bear who she names “Mamu”, dresses her up but shows no emotions while interacting with them. She later expresses how she does not love Mamu.

Incident(s) of sexual violence: Angelina did not personally disclose but was reportedly sexually violated by several men who are lovers of her mother. By her admission, Angelina does not know why she is in the welfare organisation counselling system and the welfare organisation programme.

Meet Nosipho

Nosipho is a 10-year-old girl, lives with her mother, her uncle, who is her mother’s younger brother, and three siblings, each with a different father. Nosipho knows her father and occasionally visits him and paternal aunt in Khayelitsha, while Nyanga is home. She loves to read her favourite English book and to play with her friends. She does well at school to an extent; her favourite game is playing school with her siblings. Nosipho also enjoys singing gospel songs and attends church. She has an especially close relationship with the Mama Pastor whose is mother to the close friends. Nosipho says adultery hurts children because their father

breaks their promise to never leave them and does not buy them nice things anymore and she starts to miss him. Her mother was once admitted to the hospital for a long stay. Nosipho says if someone was beaten up and had to go to the hospital, she would give them a blanket and accompany them home to help with their school stuff and help them iron their school clothes. While she acknowledges that children live with trauma, she does not disclose knowing the experiences of other children and emphasises knowledge of her story only.

Incident(s) of sexual violence: Nosipho disclosed that she was raped by her cousin, Madoda. She stated:

*My mother's brother and my other three siblings...my mother was at work and we were at Phillipi with my cousins. I went to the toilet when I was about to go out, *Madoda my cousin entered and asked who used the spray and I said it's me, then I asked to go out because he was standing at the door and he said I will not go out because I am the one who used the spray. I went to sit on a sofa and watched the cartoons and then I went to the bedroom, slept on my stomach and I was wearing a skirt and *Madoda came in and lifted my skirt. I told him that I will tell my aunt and he said if I tell her he is going to do something to me or kill me. He then went to lock the door and took out a knife and then raped me and I bled, and he said I must say someone kicked me at the park. My aunt called my mother, and my mother took me to the hospital. My mother said I must tell her who did this to me, she will not do anything to me, and I told her that it was *Madoda... I was 7 years.*

Nosipho continues to find refuge in the church and the bible. She still enjoys play and is triggered only when she sees Madoda. According to her, the family instructs Madoda to leave and go to another township when she visits his home. Nosipho says this makes her happy.

Meet Angela

Angela is a 10-year-old 4th grader who lives with her mother, grandmother and her relative who is 13; there was no mention of the father. She says she enjoys playing with her friends and her best friend is Wanda. They play skipping rope and netball together. She shares how she routinely washes her school uniform as a house chore and that she is also fond of reading her prescribed English book. She shares her friendship with Mandi and Anelisa; she says they are respectful and care for each other. Angela believes children should take care of themselves by washing themselves and keeping their houses clean.

Incident(s) of sexual violence: Angela disclosed having been raped by a male neighbour. Angela says the man moved away from the community as he burned his house while cooking.

This is what she said:

I was sleeping...another uncle who likes to sleep at my home...the three of us were sleeping at my home. It was him, my [cousin] sister who is 13 years and me. Then he said I must not tell my mother. He gave her money and went away with her and came back with her on Monday, he went with her to have drinks.

Break

It's a man who acts like a woman who acts like my grandmother's friend.... I don't know how old he is [but] he is old. I fell asleep then I felt something on top of me when I opened my eyes, it was him. I was 9 years.

Meet Bubbles

Bubbles is a 9-year-old girl who lives between three homes: her granny's house in Nyanga, her father's house in Gugulethu and her mom's house not far from her granny's house. She often visits her paternal granny who lives in Mfuleni. Nyanga is her primary home where she lives

with seven people comprising her extended family. In the yard are three separate shacks rented out to tenants, two men and one woman. Bubbles' mother relocated her to Nyanga from Khayelitsha where she previously stayed with her mom and her mom's boyfriend. Her mom has since moved to Nyanga to be close to Granny's house in Nyanga and Bubbles visits her mother on weekends. Bubbles loves animals. Her closest friends are her relatives, she plays with them after school and does not like playing outside of her home as she says she does not like to play with boys anymore. She refuses invitations to play with friends as she does not like the activities the children down the street do. She has once reported a friend of hers who was in a deserted car with two boys. As a result of what happened in that car, the girl got a beating from her mother. Bubbles has toilet phobia. When she is in Mfuleni her grandmother often complains that Bubbles does not eat a lot. Bubbles says she does not like eating too much to avoid going to the toilet. She knows many other children, boys and girls, who are also victims of sexual violence. Some of the children were raped by other children, like a girl in her school who was raped in the toilet. When she does not see her friends or friends of her friends at the programme, she encourages them to attend the programme. Bubbles sees herself as recovered and wants to help other children too. She believes mothers must take care of their children and pay attention to them.

Incident(s) of sexual violence: Bubbles disclosed having been raped by a 13-year-old boy as part of her accounts of other children's stories of sexual violence and poly-victimisation within her own life story. She disclosed, stating:

That child who was raped did not tell that she was raped...they were not coming to [the Centre] like I did when I too got raped. I used to not to come [the Centre] here also. And then now, and then now I started coming here at Thafeni and she stopped. We used to come together and would go home together. We would go with another older child. He is a boy also, he is a boy and he also lives in Zwelitsha on the second street, no...on

*the third street... He is taught by Miss *Zimkitha that one...the one who is in that class, we are taught by her.*

While Bubbles was continuing with her drawing, I clarified with her: Okay, that other one [reflecting on Bubbles' account]...okay so the time it happened to you, what is it that you did so that you become alright? Did you report that child?

She responded:

Mh-Mh [yes] To his mother and his mother asked him what he did to me. Then her mother said if he doesn't tell her she will take him to the police station. Then he told the police, the police said when he is old, he will be arrested. He is 13 years. I forgot [when it happened]; it was long ago. His family was sleeping [when it happened], that child, so I was also sleeping in a chair then he came and slept next to me. In the chair. At his house. My mother was not there.

Meet Zintle

Zintle is a girl of 11 years, lives with her mother and her father in New Cross. She has a close relationship with her father, and they jog together in the evenings. Zintle is a top athlete at her school, always winning first or second place. Zintle's relationship with her mother is not strong, as she experiences her mother as a strict disciplinarian who expects her to do house chores immediately after school even if she is tired. One day her mother beat her heavily and she ran away to her aunt in Khayelitsha who helped her reconcile with her mother. She describes herself as a peacebuilder and as someone who forgives easily, but she also loves to tease her friends. She enjoys playing with her friends from her neighbourhood. Zintle wishes to be protected from being abducted by strange people in cars. Before she sleeps, Zintle baths and prays with her mom. After they pray her mom performs a spiritual cleansing ritual. In the mornings she and her mom pray again for protection and that everything will go well in the

day. They were doing this routine even before Zintle was raped. Zintle tries but is struggling to forget about what happened to her and asks to be helped in this regard.

Incident(s) of sexual violence: Zintle did not personally disclose. Her aunt reported that she was raped by her brother who also raped their cousin and that her brother was in jail. In the next session I reflected on the conversation saying:

The time you were leaving here yesterday to go home, your aunt told me about what happened to you. What did you think about that? How did you feel...you did not tell me, right? Did you not want to tell me? [slight break]. But now your aunt told me. How did that make you feel?

Zintle replied stating: *It made me feel alright. Because it happened long ago.*

Meet Busisiwe

Busisiwe is a 9-year-old girl who now lives in Delft with her father but is mostly with her loving aunts in KwaLanga. Before this, she lived in Dunoon with her mother and maternal grandfather who sometimes shared care responsibility with a neighbour until he had to go back to the Eastern Cape. She was moved to live with her mom's friend for a short while and in that time her baby brother was born. She missed her mother terribly, but her mother did not let her come back home. Since moving to Delft, her father got her into a new school KwaLanga. She is a devout Christian and goes to church and believes that having her family and the Lord by her has helped her feel happy.

Sexual violence Incident(s): Busisiwe disclosed being raped by a neighbour:

I got raped. I got raped and... and now...I'm unable to sleep because of what happened to me.

Later:

Ohm Athina's mother went to work...Athina is Simthe's sister [sister of the boy who raped Busisiwe]. Ohm Athina came and asked us to go be with her (original transcript is, siyomhlalisa, with means to go stay with her while there was no one) at her home and play together with her, with the toys. Uh-huh, so I couldn't deny it because she would've felt very sad...Sorry.

Meet Mandla

Mandla is an 11-year-old boy who lives with six people at home: his mother, father and siblings in Khayelitsha. He enjoys playing with his friends at the park, riding bicycles and playing games. Before living in Khayelitsha, he lived in an area called PM and while there, he tells stories of people stealing and raping children. Mandla also describes the silence amongst children who have been sexually violated out of fear of gossip. He also notes that children do not perform well in school and they always think about what happened to them. He says children are afraid to walk in the street at night and in the daytime should only go where they need to be and go home. He also notes disruptive and disrespectful behaviour of young people toward the elderly, acknowledging that sexual trauma changes a person. He acknowledges that play is important for children as it makes them feel happy and better. He encourages the children in PM to always alert their parents about their whereabouts and they should limit the time outside for fear of being raped. He also encourages older people living in PM to watch out for the children and to guide them.

Sexual violence Incident(s): Mandla did not disclose but discussed that the boys who rape others do so because they are forced to. He was reportedly raped by a senior boy in his local soccer club and grants that it is not the survivor's fault but fears the cycle repeating. He speaks

of sexual violence indirectly and distances himself from it. He believes that children who have been sexually violated are in pain and live a painful life of fear of playing with other children.

Meet Buhle

Buhle is a girl and is 11 years old. She lives in PM, Khayelitsha, with her mother and her 2-year-old brother. Buhle's father lives in Wynberg and she has not seen him in a long time. She speaks very fondly of him and says that the last time they spoke he told her that he misses her. Buhle helps her mother take care of her brother. After school, she fetches her brother from crèche, cleans the house, prepares and serves the family meals. Currently, she is in preparation for court under the advice of her social worker from ChildLine. There were frequent long silences in our sessions. Her drawing of herself told a story that is depicting her struggles of aloneness, feeling alienated from other children, outcast and lonely. From her doorstep she sees other children play and knows the games that they play but is not allowed to join them. She and her brother play with their toys at home. Buhle took a liking to Cinderella, particularly the sense of dress and says that she does not have those clothes. Buhle believes that people who harm children should go to jail.

Sexual violence Incident(s): Buhle did not disclose. She was reportedly raped by her stepfather. The neighbour suspected something untoward and tipped Buhle's mother off, who one day decided to come home unannounced and found her new husband raping her daughter.

Meet Ntombentle

Ntombentle a girl and is 10 years old. She lives in her grandmother's house of 11 people made up of extended family. It is a house of love with lots of laughter. She honours special occasions like Valentine's Day and in one of our sessions, she gifted her mother and grandmother with cards she specially designed for them. During the day her grandmother takes care of her while her mom is at work. Two years ago, in 2017, Ntombentle's mother told her that she would no

longer visit her father who lives in George during the school holidays. The decision came after her father breached the visiting agreement causing Ntombentle to start school late that year. Ntombentle believes in loyalty among her group of four girlfriends. She spends a lot of time playing with them and has a loving bond with them. They have a pact to resolve issues speedily and are accountable to each other's families. She also believes that when something terrible happens in the family, people outside the family should not be told because people like to meddle in people's affairs. To her, the family must address the matter and involve the person so that the perpetrator can be arrested. Ntombentle does not like selfish behaviour and thinks that children learn certain behaviour from their homes. She is Christian and her faith guides her.

Sexual violence Incident(s): Ntombentle did not disclose.

Meet Isipho

Isipho is a 10-year-old girl who lives with her mother. She is a distinguished learner who wants to be a medical doctor. She is a leader in an after-school programme in her community and a member of her school's inter-school athletics team. Isipho believes that kind people are those who love children. Her relationship with adults is characterised by people who shout and hit children, from the athletics coach to what she observes in the community. Isipho defends herself even from an adult who is believed to be a witch in her community and is said to be the cause of her trauma. After her ordeal, Isipho's mother told her to start wearing jeans. She also had to come back from playing with other children no later than 3pm in the afternoons. Where she lives, she knows of many other children and older people who have been raped. She knows of children who have raped other children too, as well as girls who have raped boys and of older sisters who teach their younger brothers how to have sex and who then do the same thing to others. Isipho intends to beat anyone who tries to do that to her. Her cousin was raped by the husband of one of her aunties. The man had bought clothes for Isipho's cousin and made her

fit the clothes on in front of him and then raped her. Although Isipho acknowledges the pain that she endures as a result of the sexual trauma, she does not consider herself a victim and tells me to rather focus on the pains of other children and not bother much about her. The Programme she attends has been a great source of support and help for Isipho. She is concerned and deeply hurt by the stigmatisation children face who have been raped. She is devastated by examples about “childline kids” during one of her classes at school. In her community, her peers often tease or blackmail each other with the knowledge of sexual violence experienced.

Incident(s) of sexual violence: Isipho disclosed and detailed the circumstances surrounding the rape:

*I was going to a shop in Kanana. That is where I met that man. He said to me, “Where do I stay, what is my name”, I told him my name and said, “I am Isipho”. He then asked me which number I live in, and I said, “I stay at number 20”. That man said...**he touched my bums and said do I want to go see his shack.** He took me inside his shack. He then said I must take my clothes off. He said if I don't want to take my clothes off...he took out another huge thing, a huge panga and said I must take my clothes off. Then I cried, I said I want to go home. He said I must climb up the bed, I stood up and climbed the bed. I then said, “Leave me alone”, my grandmother knew that man, but she passed away before this thing happened. **Then he did it after that.** He wanted to see whether my grandmother will pass away or not. My mother said this man was eyeing me for a long time. **He took my clothes off, and raped me in the anus and vagina, that man raped me.** I got out crying, I went home and told my mother everything.*

Isipho faced a lot of stigmas which made her angry and resulted in her being involved in fights with her peers and one old lady. Her perpetrator and his family continued to harass and bully Isipho and her mother during and after court hearings.

Meet Zenande

Zenande is 9 years old and she lives with her mother. She loves school and loves playing make-belief school with her friends where they do mathematics, isiXhosa and English. She enjoys writing and also pens letters to her friends, she enjoys playing house with dolls too. She plays this game with children who live in her neighbourhood, the games are played at Zenande's home. Zenande's friends have built her courage to tell her story to adults.

Incident(s) of sexual violence: Zenande disclosed early. The perpetrator is a known neighbour.

He called me, I was playing with my friends and he said he wants to send me to go buy him a cool-drink. I went as sent, came back with it and he said I must put it on the table as he was walking towards the door to lock it. He picked me up and put me on the bed. I was wearing a dress. He lifted it up, pulled my panty down, pulled down his pants, took out his penis and put it in my vagina. I cried, he closed my mouth and said I must not tell anyone. When he finished, he bathed me and said I must go home and not tell anyone because he will kill me. I told my aunt. My aunt (uMakazi, maternal aunt) beat me and said I must not tell anyone.

Second incident

I don't know what the date was...we were in the house. It was 9pm but we had not locked the door yet. That guy that raped me came inside my house and I went to the bedroom. He walked up the stairs and stood by the fourth step. Then my mother said I must go lock the door. Then when I was walking towards the door, he showed me his penis. I moved back. He turned and ran and went back to his house. My mother then locked the door.

Meet Ncumisa

Ncumisa is a 10-year-old girl who lives with her grandmother, aunt, cousin and two uncles. She is doubly orphaned as both her parents have passed away. She and her grandmother are very close. They spend long hours today, with her grandmother telling her stories of how safe it was back then and how people could sleep with the windows open and nothing would happen to them. Ncumisa loves doing her homework, especially mathematics. She aspires to be a teacher one day. She also enjoys reading her schoolbooks as well as doing house chores as that is a bonding moment for her and her (cousin) sister whom she is fond of. She learns a lot from her. Ncumisa has a best friend with whom she plays. Ncumisa believes that adults should take responsibility for child abuse. At the same time, she wants adults to protect children from the abuse other adults put children through. She is aware of the vulnerability of children. In addition to the abuse from adults, in her school and community she loves Sotho people as and she loves speaking the language too, she learnt how to speak at school, but her family speaks IsiXhosa and English. Ncumisa witnesses many forms of violence against children by other children. At a play scenario created, Ncumisa's play highlighted her deep concern with violence at school. Ncumisa was accompanied by her grandmother to our sessions but is sometimes indisposed as she has Diabetes and TB.

Incident(s) of sexual violence: Ncumisa did not disclose.

Meet Seki

Seki is a 10-year-old girl who lives with her mother, she has two siblings, a sister aged 13 and a brother aged 5. She is currently in grade 4 with favourite subjects as English, Afrikaans and Mathematics. Seki grew up in Klerksdorp and moved to Cape Town. We had our conversations in English as her home language is Sesotho as we cannot speak each other's indigenous or first languages. She enjoys reading, music and dancing and does cleaning when happy and sits on her bed when sad. Seki's value system centres around kindness, and for her kind people are not

selfish, rude or abusive. At school, they are taught not to trust selfish people. Seki says she does not know any kind-hearted people. She believes that people who abuse children must be arrested and advises children to tell their parents if they know of anyone who ran from the police for rape. She knew that the child should go to the clinic with their mother after an incident of rape. She states that to make a child happy after experiencing something bad, the child should be supported by showing them love.

Incident(s) of sexual violence: Seki did not disclose.

Meet Siphokazi

Siphokazi is a 9-year-old girl living in a flat with her grandmother, her siblings and three other adults living on the property totalling seven people in her house, with other people living in the other flats that the grandmother rents out, on the other side of her house. Her family has three houses: two in the Eastern Cape and one in Cape Town. She washes her uniform after school, does homework then plays outside but not till the evening as she says that's when the gangsters in Dunoon come out to roam the streets and take people's belongings and stab them. She has fond memories of outings with family, plentiful providence, television watching and big days like Christmas. Siphokazi describes her life in Dunoon as lovely as they get sweets when it is Christmas. Her family goes to the rural Eastern Cape at the end of a school term and these road trips have fond memories with grandmother spoiling them. When they arrive in the area, they see their house which is built on the mountain. She reconnects with other family members in the Eastern Cape and loves seeing her grandfather there waiting for them outside their big house.

Incident(s) of sexual violence: Siphokazi did not disclose.

Meet Lusanda

Lusanda is a 10-year-old girl and has two siblings who live eTinarha in the Eastern Cape. Lusanda lives in Cape Town with her mother and grandmother in a compound where her grandmother has shacks which she rents out to six other families and businesses. She sometimes plays with the children of those families. The main house (her grandmother's house) is also in the yard and no man lives with them. She draws a picture of her home and the other homes in the yard. She enjoys doing her schoolwork and is well taken care of in terms of her needs and wants by her mother and grandmother. In our session, I introduced two play characters to whom Lusanda advised against coming to live in Dunoon based on her personal experiences and that of her relatives. She is concerned that if Mandlakazi and Siphiso play outside frequently they might adopt the bad behaviour of other children. Lusanda believes that to prevent this from happening, the children should frequently visit the rural areas. She tells me a story of a pastor who gave children in her area blood to drink and persuaded them to steal from people, promising that nothing will happen to them. She says the children were consequently caught, beaten up and burnt to death by the community. The children were aged 13 and 12. Lusanda saw the incident in a video. Even though she mentions that she enjoys living in Dunoon she is concerned about children that are frequently kidnapped by a man named "Bra N." She saw a similar story on a news programme on television of children being kidnapped in her area. On the programme, young children were being warned to not speak to anyone in a car selling them airtime or anything. Lusanda's mother accompanies Lusanda wherever she goes.

Incident(s) of sexual violence: Lusanda did not disclose.

Meet Khanya

Khanya is a 9-year-old girl and in grade 4. She loves living in Dunoon. She lives with her mother, her father, her elder sister and three adult brothers. Seven people are living in the house.

Her mother and father buy everything she wants. She says she enjoys playing with dolls and toys. She picks up a doll and names her Pinky. She starts to dress Pinky. She tells me that she does not like Pinky, but she likes Pinky's clothes. She expresses that she does not want to have children when she is older. She doesn't like showing her expression when she is happy because the children in the class tell her that she is forward and bully her for it. Her mom went and reported the matter to her teacher, and it was then resolved.

Incident(s) of sexual violence: Khanya disclosed and gave details with sad and heavy emotions:

I was sent by another man, a man that was sitting next to the road, he sent me for a cigarette. When I came back, he took me to his house, and he left. (Khanya cries and I encourage her not to talk about it if she doesn't want to talk about it. She ignores me and continues). He took me to his house and left, then came back and raped me. (I console Khanya for a few minutes and invite her to come to sit on the couch. We were standing when Khanya instantly burst out her story just as she walked into the room. She is emotional and crying as she continues telling her story). I saw when he wiped me, and I saw that I am ruined. My mother took me to the clinic. They asked me who it was that did this then I said it's another man who stays next to Nkwenkwezi. He took me and locked me in his room then he went out and ran away and never came back.

5.2 Collective Accounts

5.2.1 There are other children too

In the disclosures, it was striking how participants shared accounts of how other children were raped. While this focus on other children could be seen as speaking for others instead of concentrating on their traumas, as evident in especially Bubble's story, this shows how prevalent sexual violence is and how children are willing and able to witness each other. Mandla, who did not disclose his experience, gave a general account of what children face,

saying: *They steal us, sell us or rape us*. Michelle Davies (1995) in her book, *Childhood Sexual Abuse and the Construction of Identity: Healing Sylvia*, reflects on how child rape survivors find a community in themselves where they learn of each other's stories, though silenced, and either form a community of support or become each other's allies:

I said I will not tell anyone then they said, "okay we will tell you". They then told me their things (referring to sexual abuse) and I told them my things. I told them if any one of them reviled my things I will take them out of my life. I was begged to tell that child and I told that child. She said she doesn't know but she said it in Afrikaans.

– (Isipho, 10 years)

5.2.3 Finish quickly I have work to do

Engaging in housework duties was one of the main collective stories in many but not all of the children's stories. It is generally expected of girls to engage in domestic responsibilities which involves housekeeping, cleaning and cooking and was often described as an enjoyed pastime activity after school:

[After school] I get home, wash my socks, wear, eat, clean the house and then go play.

– (Zintle, 10 years)

[I like] Cleaning [up] I wash dishes and sweep.

– (Ncumisa, 10 years)

While some children added doing chores as a hobby they enjoyed, there are repercussions for them when not completed and a punishable offence in some households:

She shouts at me and then beat me up with anything that she is carrying, even if it's a shoe that she is carrying. Maybe she is carrying a plastic full of things or a bag that has things, she beats me up with it. [when my father comes back from work] He asks

me, why I am crying, and I would tell him that my mother beat me up because I did not wash my socks. My mother then says, "I have told Zintle many times that she must wash her socks when she is coming back from school". My father would then say she cannot just beat us up just because I came back tired from school.

– (Zintle, 10 years)

Poverty is one of the traumas children living in contexts where they are exposed to poly-victimisation deal with and parents have to work long hours. As a result, I could only meet Buhle on the weekend because it was the only day that she could be available. During our session, Buhle became very withdrawn. For these girls, doing household chores was something that took priority over everything of the day:

[When I get home] I have to help my mother with cleaning. I will sweep the floor when I get home. [Researcher asks: so, you want us to finish quickly so that you can go?] Yes.

– (Buhle, 11 years)

The child-centric participatory methodology of the study enabled participants to share their life stories in whichever way was comfortable for them. While Angelina is not talkative, she was agentic and expressive. During our doll-house playdate she acted out her daily routine and demonstrated her key roles to me, bringing me into her life:

Interviewer: What are we going to do with water?

Angelina: We are going to use it for the porridge. Take here and pour (participant instructs researcher).

Interviewer: In the mealie-meal? (participant starts dishing six bowls and feeds the baby...I feed the other baby....She stops me from feeding them saying, they can eat by themselves). Who taught you?

Angelina: My mother.

Angelina later explains her tasks:

When I come back home from school. The thing is we are six at home, I'm the first one to come back from school then my older brother fetches others from crèche or from the house that they are kept in. When I get home, I clean the house then take off my uniform and then eat.

– (Angelina, 9 years)

As evidenced in Angelina's story who has an elder brother, patriarchal prerogatives dictate gender discrimination of play and domestic duties, which is also seen in Mandla's story. While it is generally mandatory for girls to be engaged in housework, this expectation did not reflect in Mandla's story. When he gets home he "take [s] off [his] clothes, eat[s] then go[es to] play".

5.2.2 This is an abnormal life

Children reported the locale where they live to have many structural problems such as living arrangements and congestion. Lusanda and Siphokazi drew their houses during their sessions and described to me where they live:

There is a big house which is our house and a shack. They are fixing the cars there and some people are staying there. There is a container here. [Pointing towards an image on the drawing] This is an outside toilet for the people that are renting. This one is our house's toilet [pointing to a different drawing]. That structure fixes cars [car mechanic workshop]. It's in our house's yard but it's facing that way [pointing in a different direction]. This structure is for people that are renting. They are four, three then two on this side. They are shacks. This one is made out of a plank and these are made out of zinc.

– (Lusanda, 10 years)

From the life stories and the disclosures, one can appreciate the intensity of trauma children are having to deal with daily. Children are aware of the rapes and injustices that their mates go through. This knowledge and reality make sexual violence seem like an inevitable fact of life for those who live there:

There are many other kids who have been raped.

– (Bubbles, 9 years)

The quality of life of children living in communities, like those of this study's participants, is also an obstacle to the wellbeing and healing of all children as there is perpetual fear of being attacked. I asked Mandla to advise my imaginary friend about their decision to come to live in the Khayelitsha PM neighbourhood, and this is what he said:

I would say it's wrong. Because there is someone that we don't know who has come, who can do anything to us.

– (Mandla, 11 years)

Children understand the dangers and risks of living in their communities and are alert to being influenced by their environments to inflict the injustices that have been inflicted on them:

Don't play too much here in Dunoon you will end up being silly. Maybe you have friends that are silly they will teach you how to be silly and you will be. Things like that.

A child must at times go to Eastern Cape [to avoid being corrupted].

– (Lusanda, 10 years)

While Lusanda says taking breaks from the community is a good way to prevent child delinquent behaviour and to also avoid harm. Nosipho explains that good people experience violence:

Researcher: So, what kind of people does this thing happen to?

Nosipho: Who are good.

5.2.4 This is why I think of it like this

5.2.4.1 You did not ask me, told me to keep quiet but I will talk about it anyway

Children are not silent about the rape and use their agency to speak out about sexual assault among those who they think will believe them. Many of the children were able to speak out about sexual violence and trauma if adults listened to them.

Researcher: Okay will they not think about these things [the sexual trauma] when they are inside the house? [children isolate themselves “stay in the house”]

Lusanda: [Children living with trauma] maybe they think about them [the trauma] [they should] maybe tell her mother. It will be like it is coming out...

In the stories, it can also be noted that there is a refusal to be silenced by proactively seeking who will listen to them in both adults and their friends giving clear messages that they want justice. Zenande, who was beaten after reporting Songezo for raping her later, confides in me that she told her friends regardless of both the rapist and her aunt’s instruction not to tell:

Only my two friends know. I told them I was raped by Songezo. They said sorry.

– (Zenande, 9 years)

The boy who raped Bubbles was not arrested. However, the boy’s mother, to who Bubbles reported the rape, believed Bubbles. The policeman who attended the case told Bubbles what would happen to the perpetrator without asking her what she wanted to have happened to him:

[I reported him] *to his mother and his mother asked him, “what he did to me?” Then his mother said if he doesn’t tell her she will take him to the police station. Then he told the police, the police said when he is old, he will be arrested.*

– (Bubbles, 9 years)

Like in Bubbles’ case, Nosipho reported that she was not consulted about what should happen to the boy who raped her. She communicated to me that she wants her cousin who raped her “*to be arrested so that he cannot rape another child*” and I asked her if she had told anyone this. She responded:

Nosipho: Yes, I told the pastor’s wife. I told her the next day this thing happened to me.

Researcher: Did you tell your mother that you want Madoda to be arrested?

Nosipho: No. She never asked me if I want Madoda to be arrested. [...] I want to tell her when she asks me. I will tell her [if she does not ask me].

Zenande, who earlier reported disobeying the instruction not to talk about Songezo raping her, withheld information about knowledge about the release of the man who raped her. The man subsequently made a second attempt to rape her but failed the second time. I asked her if she reported this information to anyone and this was her response:

Ooh, he was arrested by the one with dreads [referring to a woman police officer working with Thuthuzela], I haven’t told aunty Zanele [social worker from the NGO she is with]. My mother knows. I haven’t told that aunty with soft dreads [another

*official]. He was arrested by the one with dreads from the house and came back. [Here at ⁶*Organisation X] I haven't told them [because] I was not asked.*

– (Zenande, 9 years)

5.2.4.2 Umthetho awuthethi: The law is speaking neither for nor to us

In this study, only one sentencing of a perpetrator had been made from the 16 child victims of violence and trauma. Most of the participants reported to still be in the process of getting their cases heard. The proceedings are long, emotionally draining and trauma-inducing, with further exposure to violence. Children reported that they are going through a lot of trauma and effort in the hopes that they will get justice:

I went there [referring to court] to talk, sis Lungiswa [the social worker] said I am not ready to testify [original transcript: ukuxoxa which means “to contend”]. [She said] I must come to see her for sessions. Yes. [I am now ready to testify] I can feel it inside me. It [the rape] is eating away at me.

– (Buhle, 11 years)

Children are dissatisfied and frustrated by the justice system:

[I saw her] a long time ago. She [the woman police officer who arrested the man who raped her] was in court. I don't know when [I'll be going back to court], but I know I'll be going again.

– (Zenande, 9 years)

⁶ Name of the organisation has been removed.

Isipho elucidates the details and implications of the extensive court processes on account of frustrating experiences of the language used in court. Her age and having to go back to the township where she and her mother are verbally and emotionally attached because of her testimony are some of the issues faced by children who are sexually victimised. In the excerpt Isipho also reflects on the high prevalence of sexual violence in Townships and of children in proximity with similar stories. Here she highlights the importance of having a support system during the court hearing process in her peer group. Isipho declares:

It's another child who is my relative. She was staying in my house with her mother, but her mother left long ago....It's house number 6. She was raped there, I don't know whether she had a friend, but she was raped there...we usually met her mother there in Wynberg court, we had the same date.

– (Isipho, 10 years)

Isipho describes officials who handle court cases and reflects on her process:

A magistrate is a White person, but I have changed the investigator because I can't speak Afrikaans, but they are now a Xhosa.

– (Isipho, 10 years)

Children reported that the justice system is generally experienced to be dysfunctional and with dire consequences for children and their families in terms of long court hearings as well as lack of arrest of perpetrators. Zenande's evidences:

He was arrested but he came back again. He was arrested in the morning and came back at night [and tried to rape her again].

As we were about to end our session, I asked Zenande if there was anything that she wished for me to know. After a short silence, I gently asked her again. She nodded her head and I

invited her to tell me. She gave me an account of the night the man who raped her came back to sexually assault her a second time and “*since that day he is still there. He still [lives] in our flats*”.

5.2.4.3 They should go to church and be saved

Many of the children draw on spirituality and religious assets in the form of religious leaders and religious practices for self-healing and have reached out to the church for intervention.

Here are their accounts:

At night after I am done taking a bath I pray with my mother. Then my mother steams herself. Then I get on the bed. We then wake up in the morning and pray again.

– (Zintle, 10 years)

She said [pastor’s wife] what happened to me is very painful and then she prayed for me and then she called my mother. [her prayer did not work] The problem is that I think about it every time I see Madoda.

– (Nosipho, 10 years)

Mandla, who is angry with perpetrators and in part wished that gangsters in his community be sent to jail, believed that the church can reform boys who engage in criminal activities:

They should go to church and be saved...Get saved so that they can go to church...Kamva...Yes and stop what they are doing.

– (Mandla, 11 years)

5.2.4.4 She ran [away] to Eastern Cape and said she will never come back again

Children’s narratives presenting accounts of stigma and harassment show how the community is punitive toward children who have disclosed being sexually violated by men and boys in

their communities. The additional violations increase when children go through the justice system either as witnesses or victims of rape by men. These are children's accounts:

They say that child is dirty [referring to herself]. Me. They say I am lying, it's not that man that raped me. I keep quiet and close my mouth. [it is] Painful.

– (Angela, 10 years)

Isipho narrated how her family is harassed by the perpetrator's family and the perpetrator himself:

That man [who lives in my street] was arrested and went out on parole....That mother⁷ [woman] likes to go to my house and my mother doesn't know why she keeps coming to my home, my mother is furious about it and she chases her away. My mother says to her, "You don't know that your brother did something bad to my child", then she chases her away. Every time that man sees me and my mother in court, he gossips about us to other people. Even to another aunty who was sitting in a corner there next to the court, he gossiped about me saying that I am lying about his name to the magistrate, then he said the magistrate can also hear how's my story.

– (Isipho, 10 years)

Children recalled being removed from their communities after the sexual assaults:

I was taken to Delft [moved away from mom in Dunoon to live with father in Delft], I stayed in Delft. Then, my father looked for a school for me in Langa.

– (Busisiwe, 9 years)

⁷ Also, "woman". Mother because African culture.

Relocating after the rape is a common occurrence in children, as it is with adults:

That aunty ran away, she was staying in Kanana, she ran [away] to Eastern Cape and said she will never come back again. That man was arrested and went out on parole in my street, my mother knows him because my mother's friend stays in that man's home.

– (Isipho, 10 years)

5.2.4.5 They said she likes it because she does not tell. I did the same thing

In their narrations, children expressed deep-seated shame and guilt for having been raped, with some blaming themselves for the violations they experienced. The discourse of the patriarchal idea that the rape of girls is the responsibility of victims to report and to stop, is captured in Busisiwe's reflection of a conversation that she overheard her father have with her uncle. The conversation was about Busisiwe's cousin who was also raped:

Yesterday I heard, my uncle...and...my father...talking about Avela....They said that thing likes to happen to her, they were saying this yesterday. They said she likes it because she does not tell. I did the same thing. I did not tell my mother or father what happened to me.

– (Busisiwe, 9 years)

The statement below shows how children develop feelings of shame and guilt and question themselves about the rapes. These internal conflicts about what consent, sex and rape are, are provoked by those around them:

They keep quiet and not talk about it, but I talked about it...because I didn't like what happened to me and it was my first time doing it [suddenly becomes shy].

– (Isipho, 10 years)

I asked Ntombentle, who was of the view that family issues must not be told to people out of the family, how someone could help a child to whom bad things happened and her response was as follows?

To pray for me. For Satan to get out and for Jesus to enter. [Satan to come out from] Me.

– (Ntombentle, 10 years)

5.2.4.6 It is adults that do wrong things to children

The stories through children's utterances illuminated the mechanics of adult's sexual violence on children and whose responsibility child sexual trauma is:

Adults do not understand that they do bad things to children. It is adults that do wrong things to children. It's rape and...and...I forgot. They [adults] must understand that children are abused.

– (Ncumisa, 10 years)

I asked Lusanda to explain to my imaginary friend why she thinks such bad things are happening to the children and she attributed adults' sexual violence on children to pre-meditation:

*Because you [an adult] can easily deceive children. It is people who are filthy.
[Original: Ngabantu abangcolileyo]*

– (Lusanda, 10 years)

While the government is shown to be inefficient in protecting child rights, families and police also drive the injustices faced by children concerning violence and trauma. In some families, sexual offence crimes are dealt with “under the mango tree” (Holly, 2017, p. 158). “Under the mango tree” is a metaphor used to communicate the informal way in which decision-making is done between families, independent of and outside the court of law. In such cases, families and

sometimes officials of the law hold a family meeting to determine how the crime will be dealt with outside the law and without the involvement of the victim:

[That person who did wrong] will be arrested. [but if the family does not get the person arrested] The person will keep on doing it.

– (Ntombentle, 10 years)

Then his mother said if he does not tell her she will take him to the police station. Then he told the police, the police said when he is old, he will be arrested.

– (Bubbles, 9 years)

In previous accounts, participants shared that children are easy to manipulate. However, children also have the ability to perceive intent although these indicators are guided by their developmental stages:

By looking at him or her inside. Check how they walk [...] Look at how he speaks to you. It can be he or she. Doesn't walk well...Like a criminal. [And kind people] walk nice.

– (Seki, 10 years)

In the next chapter, an analysis of these narratives is presented and the implications for psychology as a praxis discussed.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION & SYNTHESIS

In this chapter, I synthesise the findings of the study. I discuss and analyse by way of integrating the data presented in the previous chapter together, in response to research aims, motivation, and research questions via the literature and theoretical framework and methodology. The chapter will follow a similar structure to the previous chapter. It will discuss and analyse children's utterances relative to the overall analysis. This will demonstrate the implications of what children say about sexual violence and trauma in townships given the heightened exposure to poly-victimisation. The study found three narrative thematic areas namely: (1) a witnessing: statistics have faces, (2) "[township] culture" is a product of locale, and (3) meaning is a testament to language. I interpreted the findings with support from literature in response to the collective accounts of children's narratives. The first theme, *from collective witnessing to collective healing*, speaks to children's focus on the experiences of others and the impact of parenting forms. The second theme, *"[township] culture" is a product of locale* speaks to children's narratives about the abnormality of township life and the responsibilities children have toward their homes, themselves, and others. The third and final theme, *meaning is a testament to language*, speaks to the centrality of language in children's meaning-making of trauma.

Furthermore, given the decolonial nature of this study and my insider-outsider positionality as acknowledged and explained in the methodology chapter, the reflexivity section does not – and cannot – sufficiently explore all there is to reflect about this project, as advocated for in conventional qualitative research studies. This is to say that this chapter, as part of analysing the data, will contain an exploration of my reflections about how I may have influenced the findings as demonstrated in the works of Monique Huysamen (2018) for instance. Derived from the findings, the chapter will conclude by offering conceptual tools towards the design of

an African-centered, intersectional child-centric approach for sexual violence and trauma psychological therapeutic interventions based on the underlying theoretical approaches, treatment modalities/packages, and specific interventions.

6.1 *Phunga upheandle: An analysis*

6.1.1 From Collective Witnessing to Collective Healing

At the beginning of the previous chapter, I introduced you to the participants and relayed children's verbatim accounts of incidents of sexual violence that occurred within other forms of victimisation. I further dealt with the sexual violence disclosure patterns reporting back on partial, non-, and selective disclosures of children. The study notes that peer sexual violence in townships is considerably high and children's risk of being sexually violated is complicated gender, failure of the criminal justice system and lack of parenting support.

6.1.1.1 *Statistics have faces – the enormity!*

Of the important factors to highlight from children's self-narration is the enormity of violence in their environments. Virtually half the crimes in South African townships are contact crimes, as evidenced in the annual South African Police Crimes reports (see Chapter Two for details). Children's stories as contained in Chapter Five placed identities, faces, to the statistics we may already know; and this is rarely done with children's voices. Rape being the highest of these crimes reported was evident throughout the narratives with the children and in stories within children's life stories. Further, also in line with the literature, the perpetrators are known to the children either through familial ties, closely related or connected to an adult in their lives such as a parent or neighbour (Matthews et al., 2013; Turner et al., 2012). As evidenced through study data – only Khanya was raped by a stranger but the rest of the children who disclosed were all raped by someone known to them or a family member (see Table 5.1). Furthermore, as evidenced by data presented, an enormous number of girls seek support after being sexually

violated as opposed to boys. This is demonstrated in that participants were recruited from NGO's current participants, and from a sample of 16 children, only one was a boy.

In addition, the sample shows a high number of sexual violence to be the violations by men and boys. There was no woman or girl perpetrator of sexual violence reported. This picture demonstrates the grading scale of the patriarchal system and that at the most vulnerable zone is the Black girl child. She must deal with threats on her body in addition to being dealt with by the structural violence that affects everyone living in townships within the context of poly-victimisation, continuous and multiple traumas. These issues compound the oppression of Black girls as not only not heard, but unseen too.

6.1.1.2 The criminal justice system fails children

Furthermore, from our sample, half of those who disclosed were sexually violated by peers (see Table 5.1). Within peer-to-peer sexual violence, this study showed that boys violate girls, and boys violate and are further violated by boys too. In this study, there was no account of girl to girl violation although it is known that such cases do exist (Forsyth, 2019; Papakyriakou, 2017; Singh, 2019; WHO, 2012). The gendered dimensions of the peer-to-peer group, therefore, indicates that boys are perpetrators as well as victims of sexual violence. Mandla's reply and attitude of boys' sexual violations against other children being a rite of passage of sorts indicates that the numbers may be much higher in peer-to-peer sexual violence amongst boys. This is especially so considering that boys (and men) are less likely to speak about being sexually violated than girls. As with Mandla in his soccer fraternity, the complication of peer-to-peer sexual violence is that survivors, parents and authorities can excuse or relegate its seriousness by rationalising it as peer pressure and some form of initiation or rite of passage in which boys assert their masculinities and power (Bhana, 2005; Evans, 2019; Maphalala, 2014; Pinnock & Douglas-Hamilton, 1997). A similar pattern can be observed in situations where families are protecting the perpetrator because the perpetrator is a family member, as in the

case of Nosipho who was raped by her cousin, Madoda. These cases are not made any easier by authorities that defer the matter to the victimised child to take action or state that the perpetrator will be arrested later when they are older, as was the case with Nosipho and Bubbles, respectively. To give an illustration, as of the time of data collection, three years after the incident, the boy who had raped Nosipho had not yet been arrested. It appears from the children's narrations that the criminal justice system did not offer respondents and their families any other recourse. What is evident therefore is that these communities lack services for delinquent boys for behavioural reform so that prison is the only avenue considered.

6.1.1.3 Disrupted collective child-rearing cheats children

The living arrangements, supervision, co-residency and the levels of support to caregivers or parents of children contribute to children's risk for sexual violence either as victims or perpetrators (see Table 5.1). While most primary caregivers of children in the sample do have a support system, results show that unmarried mothers and fathers have the least support for caring for their children. Interestingly though, we also see that unmarried mothers again have the highest rate of no support.

Formative research on *Understanding Fatherhood in South Africa* by Heartlines (2020)⁸ offers a detailed exploration of barriers that impede the involvement of biological fathers in children's lives often resulting in absence. The report reported cultural, environmental (i.e. historical and migrancy), notions of masculinity, socio-economic and systemic (governmental and religious) factors to be some of the reasons children are raised without their biological fathers. Nhanhla Mkhize (2006) offered a perspective on African traditions and the social, economic and moral dimensions of fatherhood are have been negatively influenced by individualistic western forms

⁸ For further reading on Fatherhood in South Africa please read the Heartlines (2020) report.

of family structures. Unemployment has made it difficult for young African men to raise *ilobolo* resulting in them not being able to access their children. Migrant work and life in townships also obstructed collective forms of child-rearing which are central in African societies removing African men's sense of responsibility for all children as their own. Sonke Justice in its State of South Africa's Fathers Report however emphasised that absent fatherhood should not be perceived as a racial problem, but one heavily influenced by economic factors (Van den Berg & Makusha 2018).

I provide a graphic tabulation of a snapshot of the levels of support parents and primary caregivers have below:

The primary caregiver has no support system:

Biological mother: 6

Maternal grandmother: 1

The primary caregiver has a support system:

Grandmother: 5

Biological mother: 1

Biological father: 1

Heterosexual nuclear family: 3

Furthermore, as seen in Table 5.1 (and above), only three out of 16 children in the study co-reside with both parents and the rest of the participants are either single mothers and/or grandmothers. From these children, some are essentially raising themselves as the mothers work long and odd hours and so the older siblings take care of the younger ones. Taken from the lens of Afrocentricity we can locate our understanding of the living arrangements in terms of who cares for children as described by the children within the larger and longer history of White settler colonialism and its total disfiguration of the lives of natives in South Africa predominantly marked by the migrant labour system that was the lifeline of the metropolitan economy that townships are part of (Mamdani, 1996; Ramphele, 2002).

The gendered dynamics of children's living arrangements or co-residency correspond with the literature that greater numbers of children live without their fathers (Statistics South Africa, 2018). Although not the focus of the study, findings showed that in several cases children were exposed to multiple fathers. These are grounds to refute claims such as that made by Sikweyiya et al. (2016) which suggests that children are safer with their fathers, whether such men are biological, traditional or social fathers. As shown in the study, fathers and brothers rape their daughters and sisters respectively in South Africa, and at alarming proportions. For Africans, children risk to children is further complicated because from a cultural perspective there is the notion that all men of the same age as a child's biological father is to be taken as a father. This perspective puts Black children at additional risk of sexual exploitation if such relationships are not facilitated.

6.1.1.4 Self-disclosure as witnessing of self in stories of others

While half of the sample did not disclose, it is evident that children recognise themselves in the stories of their peers, for instance, Bubbles. In the same vein, given this information listeners could infer the stories of the children who did not disclose in the stories of those who did. Angelina, Seki, Mandla and Ntombentle for instance did not share their personal experiences with sexual assault but the background to the trauma they suffered can be accounted for in the stories of their peers. This recognition of self in others can be understood within the ethic of *ubuntu* in that children want for others what they want for themselves; that is to be heard and to feel safe. Of this witnessing for another, Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1999) said, "Mutual recognition is fundamental to being a fellow human being, a relational subject in the context of community. A person with ubuntu 'is open and available to others, is affirming to others....' ...My humanity caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours" (pp. 11, 31).

It is for this reason that individual accounts of sexual assault were not critical for the study more than an acknowledgement of the trauma ingrained in the lives of children collectively.

The stories that children shared about each other shows the interconnected nature of the communities participants come from. The stories also indicate how subjectivity arises from being witnessed, what in isiXhosa is referred to as *wandenza umntu* (validating my existence) (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2015). From examining the findings *ubuntu* comes out strongly as an ethic where children validate each other's existence bringing meaning to the expression that best captures *ubuntu*, "*Umntu ngumntu ngabanye abantu*", which in a literal translation means, "A person is a person through being witnessed by, and engaging in reciprocal witnessing of other persons," or "A person becomes a human being through the multiplicity of relationships with others" (Goboda-Madikizela, 2015, p. 1089). This reciprocal witnessing is embodied in Isipho's relationships with her peers as shown in how she, similarly to other participants such as Ntombentle and Zenande, confide in each other and holding space for each other. In a later theme, it is evident that witnessing each other becomes important during court cases where children become each other's supportive networks, a true case of "I am because we are".

There are however numerous ways in which participants' non-disclosure may be interpreted. One of the ways that it may seem like they avoid talking about their experiences of sexual trauma is a way of protecting themselves mentally. Another way in which children's non-disclosures could be interpreted is participant self-distancing. For instance, Seki denies knowing any child who was affected by sexual trauma although she reports on the occurrence thereof in her community.

Nonetheless, it is important to emphasise that children were not required to disclose their personal experiences of sexual violence as part of the research design and selected methodology. The study was designed purposely to minimise children's secondary victimization through forced recall of sexual violence and sexual trauma. Recruiting known cases of sexual trauma was an intentional decision to protect children.

Despite the study not requiring children to disclose, Bubbles in her reflections of the story-telling sessions indicated that children being asked to speak about sexual violence would carry the potential of “hurting them”. This was a factor that the study in its design was highly sensitive to and set out to avoid unless children themselves volunteered the details. That said, Bubbles volunteered her story and that of her peers. In contrast to Bubbles, however, Angelina notably used avoidance as a coping mechanism to the extent that I too was unsure of her eligibility to the study as discussed in Chapter Four.

All things considered regarding children’s non-disclosure is a consideration of the necessity thereof. Firstly, given that history of sexual violence was a pre-requirement for inclusion in the study disclosure patterns⁹ are not discussed in this thesis. Secondly, in consideration of the aim and motivation of this study, which was to (a) understand children’s sense-making of sexual trauma and (b) to give voice to children on their terms, I am persuaded that a reflection on children’s reflections of collective trauma and their pathways to healing signal to Afrocentric and child-centric ways of healing as largely ingrained in *Ubuntu*.

6.1.2 “[Township] Culture” is a product of locale

Owing to the centrality of the urban-rural divide of the metropole and the countryside as shown in literature, townships as spaces have engendered cultures that are often contradictory to the culture of Africans as reflected in the *ubuntu* that Black South Africans come from. The children ascribe this deviation in their comparison of the Eastern Cape visits being crucial for one to remain, in a way, rooted in ethical behaviour as told by Lusanda, for instance. These stories reveal a keen understanding on the part of children about the abnormality and dangers

⁹ For further reading on children’s disclosure patterns of sexual violence read Hershkowitz et al (2007).

in township life. In this section, I seek to demonstrate how children's narratives indicate that culture, is generated by locale, so far where participants attributed the social ills and lack of safety to township life, which is in turn influenced by socio-economic circumstances

6.1.2.1 Heightened sense of awareness for danger

Children's experiences of sexual violence and the literature on the history of Apartheid attest to the fact that the current lifestyle in townships is at odds with *ubuntu* so much so that Siphokazi expresses joy when the time comes to visit the rural Eastern Cape. Lusanda's narrative explains Siphokazi's joy through her belief that for children to avoid learning bad habits in the Cape Town townships, children must frequently vacate from Cape Town to the Eastern Cape. This advice is extended even when the visit to the Eastern Cape is also in a township as it is for Lusanda who frequents Uitenhage township in the Eastern Cape.

A large body of work as discussed in Chapter Two demonstrates the violent reality expressed in the children's stories. Townships were created violently and are a manifestation of spatial violence deliberately created on the registers of race, class and gender. The residual problems for appropriate housing in townships therefore remain, and crime and violence have both risen and are probably better recorded now than in the past (Sigworth, 2009). As evidenced in all the narratives, these living conditions leave children with an extremely heightened sense of awareness of danger. This awareness is a major preoccupation of their daily considerations and affects them inside and outside the home to the point of affecting routine exercises like going to the toilet. In the case of Bubbles, the trauma was due to toilet phobia. Townships therefore truly remain the context in which all these acts of brutality and violence occur and were contextualised within the history of South Africa.

The conditions of desperation for survival and historic state brutality in the townships account to a larger extent for the maladies evident in townships that the children discussed in their

narratives. For example, as mentioned, the immensely gendered character of childcare as women have the higher representation as sole or present caregivers. This can be traced to the literature discussed on Black men being alienated from their families for generations over the migrant labour system thereby creating new cultures whose remnants confront present-day realities as evidenced in the data.

As an additional consideration regarding what may be perceived as “township culture”, in her narrations, Zintle speaks about her misfortune in a blasé manner stating that bad things always happen to people. This type of resignation to misfortune and damnation is therefore understood by children to be transgenerational, and the way of life. This damnation is better articulated by what Fanon (2004) calls *the zone of the damned*, the zone which is akin to townships. Lewis Gordon (2015) reflected on this zone in the observation that Black communities are in a constant struggle against this damnation which is the harm, hurt or injury that colonisation brought to us. This is all in recognition that this damned zone was purposively orchestrated by the coloniser through colonisation itself, slavery and racism, which birthed Apartheid and the absurd living conditions Black children find themselves in. This analysis by Fanon reflects the dehumanisation that Black children and their communities face across generations and is perpetuated by the cycle of sexual violence, as Linklater’s (2014) work on decolonising trauma has reflected.

The racist regimes of the past saw to construct townships as a manifestation of the already structural violence that the entire colonial enterprise composed of. Therefore, overcrowding or high-density population or cramping Blacks in small spaces, yards and confined in locations was core to the mandate of colonialism in South Africa (Biko, 1978). With its order already gendered, in the historic gender dynamics of township life, townships to this day reinforce masculinist dominance (Gqola, 2015; Ratele, 2013; Sikweyiya et al., 2016). This of course

does not suggest that men are not in danger in townships, they are. However, they are in danger mainly because of other men which means everyone on a continuum is in danger from men.

Children's life stories collectively narrate forms of victimisation that they experience in different settings. They not only evidence but also show effects of poly-victimisation and multiple traumas as occurring in a cycle. As reflected in Mandla's story, children's vulnerabilities in terms of race, class and gender predispose them to this violence either as perpetrators, victims or both (see Art 3). Mandla's explanation of the constant awareness of danger gives expression to what Steve Biko (1996), articulated in his statement,

“Township life alone makes it a miracle for anyone to live up to adulthood. It is evident that a situation of absolute want is created, in which black people will kill on other black people to be able to survive. This is the basis of vandalism, murder, rape and plunder that goes on while the real sources of evil—white society—are sun-tanning on exclusive beaches or relaxing in their bourgeois homes” (p. 75).

Overcrowding is a characteristic of township life in South Africa that brings its host of additional challenges from devastating winter fires in Cape Town to the spread of disease. This is the reality in other places with a high concentration of people in compressed spaces. From the testimonies, in small plots of land and consequently small houses, households have many people living in them, as shown in the life stories. For instance, Lusanda's story (see Art 5) reveals that her family lives in the main house and that there are rented-out flats with six other families living in the same compound. This was also evidenced in the case of Bubbles whose grandmother also rents out three shacks to non-family albeit familiar people but statistically increase the chances of sexual violation against children. In some instances, there are several families or units on the same small plot sizes that everyone has with shared toilets and other facilities. This puts children at a greater risk for sexual violence, leaving them vulnerable to be

harmful by others living nearby in places out of sight of people who can protect them. The risks are aggravated further by the long periods children stay without parental or caregiver supervision due to parents working long hours and far from home as reflected in Angelina's story. This is a consequence of the historic migrant labour system. Therefore, while living in compounds may arguably turn out to be the most affordable type of accommodation and renting out flats in the yard manages poverty, as it is a way of generating income, both these types of housing are a costly trade-off for children's safety.

6.1.2.2 Stolen childhoods

There is however yet another complexity to the legacy of the migrant labour system, which is the early domestication of Black children, especially girls. Black children, because their parents are away most of the time, have early domestic adult responsibilities, towards self, and others, that is best characterised as "stolen childhoods" (King, 2011). While it would seem that the domestication of children, particularly girls is a way of being in Black communities, South African history is ingrained in the domestication (and policing) of Black female bodies dating to the era of slavery (Cock, 1989).

From the stories, it could be concluded that while some children enjoy their domestic chores some are coerced into housework. For others, however, such work may function as an escape from their realities. Nevertheless, these responsibilities teach responsibility and how to survive in the world. This form of socialisation, particularly for Black girls, was revealed through pretend play with Angelina and a teddy bear she named Mamu. In this scenario, Angelina is projecting how she experiences her mother towards herself in a conversation with the teddy bear. Angelina carefully dresses up Mamu but is displaying an emotional disconnect, in contrast to how she cared for her "sibling" in the dollhouse pretend-play the week before. In this scenario Angelina was acting out the role of her mother whereas in the earlier dollhouse pretend play, she was acting like herself and demonstrating her daily routine. The emotional

disconnect when relating the role of a mother during pretend-play was an experience that was also shared by Buhle when she described interactions with her mother.

Care for the household is further related to extending care to others, especially peers who are experiencing the same pain as theirs. From examining the stories it appears that children defer and avoid their own pain and suffering to focus on the traumas of their peers as reflected in the narratives of Bubbles and Isipho. Bubbles and Isipho keep other child victims and survivors of sexual violence accountable to the healing process and further extend spaces for containment to each other. The act of extending love, support and compassion to others are principles of *ubuntu* and also reflected in Mandla's story. His expressions were however not found to be rooted in domestic responsibilities but in an empathic understanding of what drives boys to be perpetrators of sexual violence against other children, specifically boys.

In tangent with children's heightened sense of awareness for danger and the issues with regards to child safety in townships, it is apparent how children's experience of childhood is robbed in several instances in the stories. This is from reminiscent elders in the case of Ncumisa's grandmother who dreams of the olden days when they could sleep with their windows open, to accounts of restricted play by children out of fear of being physically violated as in the cases of Mandla, Bubbles, Siphokazi and Lusanda. Based on her story, Lusanda had internalised this fear to the extent that she advises even her play characters, Mandlakazi and Siphoh, not to spend too much time outside the home.

Children's living conditions, therefore, have implications for how they make meaning of sexual violence and trauma and navigate their lives from that point which affects their experience of childhood. This in turn has consequences for the psycho-social development of children in terms of the attainment of psychological wellbeing later in life. This evidences that culture, what is deemed to be a normal way of living for people from a shared environment, is generated

by locale and affect how children see and experience the world. Children's lifestyles are therefore directly affected by their families' and communities' economic status and class. Where living in small and congested housing is perceived as some people's "so-called cultures", as though they choose such lives, such conditions are unliveable but those living in them have no choice but to exist in them.

6.1.2.3 A miscarriage of ubuntu for victim self-blame

The narratives about children's experiences of sexual violence and trauma throughout the study generally reflect the miscarriage of *ubuntu* for ill gains because *ubuntu* as an African cultural ethic is founded on justice. *Ubuntu*, as experienced by children through these stories is seemingly a double-edged sword that is weaponised to silence children and drive the violence enacted against them. Because *ubuntu* is also a comforting set of principles it never feels quite like repression because there is acknowledgement and kindness extended to you as a victim. However, the act itself can be treated sometimes as a test or a metaphysical trial to overcome, attaching it to faith, spirituality and family preservation. This is to say, from children's reports it appears *ubuntu* is used as a catalyst to inspire self-blame.

Considering the life stories, the principles of *ubuntu* firstly work to silence victimised children for the preservation of family dignity or family cohesion with the result of self-blame. For example, Ntombentle is required to repress her emotions and thoughts to protect her family's reputations. She is further required to not discuss adversity affecting her family, and herself, with outsiders. She apportions blame for the violence experienced to herself and saw the solution for her trauma to be a deliverance from sin. She asks for help: for "Satan to get out of her and Jesus to enter". In this statement, it is apparent how children use spirituality to make sense of their experiences in that Ntombentle views herself as the carrier of a bad spirit. This suggests that she believes that she is carrying something within her that invited or invites sexual violence.

In the second instance, it can be argued that there is a manipulative use of *ubuntu* to silence victims as expressed in Isipho's life story. Although Isipho shows great courage and consistently she speaks out against the rape on her body she believes that she participated in the man raping her. Before I clarified to her what rape is, she could not differentiate between rape and sex as reflected in her statement, "it was my first time doing it". There is a wealth of literature that explains the notion of Black girls seeking or inviting rape, what is commonly referred to as the unrapeability and hypersexuality of Black girls (Davies, 2002; Gqola, 2015; Tillet & Quinn, 2007). This is a historic tool by perpetrators dating back to slavery and still used to silence victims and further perpetuate sexual violence and instigate trauma in the modern-day.

Victim-blame and self-blame give further insight for the reasons it is not uncommon for victims to have their lives so disturbed that they relocate from the locale the rape happened as they are forced to carry the responsibility of the crime (Tlhabi, 2017). Busisiwe and Mandla relocated to different townships after being sexually violated and Isipho speaks of someone she knows who relocated to a different province after being sexually assaulted. This shows that when the justice system is punctured or lost altogether, it engenders retreat or resignation. Victims and their families then seek other avenues to heal, even within themselves, which re-victimise children and their families further. This in turn determines the course the futures of violated children will take.

Another example that captures the essence of self-blame is presented in the reflections of Busisiwe. Busisiwe did not immediately report the boy who raped her. She later overhears her father and uncle trivialise her cousin's rape and blaming her cousin for it which causes her to question herself. The two men in their conversation afforded the man's rape on Busiswe's girl cousin's body to her pleasure accusing her of sexualising the assaulting implying that she brought it on herself. Self-blame, therefore, serves to the silencing of victims. When victims

are not silenced, self-blame part of a lacklustre approach towards seeking justice. This is informed by the difficulties in accessing justice for vulnerable people in South African townships. This silencing is exacerbated by how perpetrators qualify for bail conditions and can still make victims' lives miserable as evidenced in several life stories – Zenande's story in particular.

Finally, given what is known about childhood in African contexts, children are socialised to interact with older men in obedience and respect. This same reverence is extended to older members of society as they would their parents and to inspire social harmony. The manipulation of this ethic for the sexual gratification of adult men and boys, based on family and familiar relations betrays *ubuntu*.

6.1.3 Meaning is a testament to language

The factors discussed above point to what children must navigate and make sense of following sexual violence. In light of the evidence children's meaning-making occur along with a view of emergent themes such as location, community cohesion, culture, spirituality, and the criminal justice system. Thus far, there is enough precedent to hold that children learn meanings of sexual violence and trauma, and subsequent responsive behaviours, from their primary caregivers. It appears that children learn how to interpret events and make meanings of traumatic events from their own past experiences in such or similar situations, as well as through interactions in their environments. From examining the findings, children, therefore, find their meanings of violence and trauma during their lives. They are [then] able to express the meanings that they make of adverse events. The next section discusses how children use voice and age-agency dialect through a variety of language forms to make meaning.

6.1.3.1 Language regulates understanding of reality

The show of courage and bravery by children through the use of their voices to respond to sexual violence cannot be missed as evidenced throughout this entire dedication. The previous chapter evidences children's capabilities to use their voices. It captured children's stories of how they use and can interpret others' language and the meanings they derived from what was said to and about them. For example, Isipho when was assigned an investigator who spoke Afrikaans whereas she does not understand the language requested to get an isiXhosa speaking investigator which indicates that she was not passive about the court verdict. The fact that Isipho is perturbed by the fact that she has a White Afrikaans-speaking magistrate presiding over her case further shows that there is something deep about language and what it communicates about social order and feeling understood. In addition, Busiswe's story reflects how the participant overhears her father stating that her cousin "likes being raped" as an apparent reason for why she (the cousin-sister) did not report the violation. From the telling of the story, Busisiwe begins to doubt herself for the violation she also experienced. From this analysis, it can be argued that Vygotsky's analysis of verbal thinking confirms that social beliefs and internalised social rules inform children's sense-making of experiences as also posited by Nsamenang and Lamb (1995). The messages that children, therefore, receive from their environment with language inform how they think of – and making meaning of – sexual violence and trauma. From these examples, it can be deduced that language, for children, carries meanings about social hierarchies, social rules, and communicates their place in society as well as the realities of speaker- and listener environments. The findings, therefore, indicate children's meaning-making of sexual violence and trauma as multi-faceted in a dynamic context. It is further evidenced that language used with children is an instrument that must be employed with great care and caution because language is not innocent – it regulates how reality is understood.

In turn, the languages modalities and forms of expression children used to tell their life stories require effective listening mechanisms to hear what they say. This is to say, as reflected in the methodology of the study, a certain kind of mechanics of listening, respect of, and proficiency in versatile languages is therefore required to properly listen to, and hear children.

6.1.3.2 Defying silence

Concerning disclosing sexual violence, the narratives show that there are various intimidation tactics used by perpetrators and their accomplices on children even though this is in direct contravention with the law. These silencing tactics may cause children to be generally fearful in that perpetrators may not get a straight conviction. This in turn causes children and their families to be less likely to pursue the case. All these factors serve patriarchy and demolish the humanity of children through silencing. This is evidenced by the literature reflecting the experience of women who are silenced, even by other women, when they seek justice for having been violated by men (Gqola, 2017; Tlhabi, 2017). Nevertheless, through the narratives, it is evidenced that children defy silence and use their voices to express their desire for justice and the conviction of perpetrators of sexual violence. The barrier to hearing children, therefore – because children do speak – is the array of institutions from family to the criminal justice system who do not listen to them thus rendering children less human. This happens through invalidating children’s realities.

Furthermore, there is silencing that comes for victims and survivors of sexual violence, who hope in the criminal justice system through emotional and financial exhaustion due to prolonged court cases that can go on for a protracted period (see Brodie, 2020). The question, which has already been answered through the narratives and this discussion is “*What is behind children’s silences*” (Infographic 1). Us being in a patriarchal society that affords Black men privilege over Black women and children, even when they (as Black men) are dehumanised in relation to all White people, Black men are feared and believed to be unjustly favoured by the

law (hooks, 1952/2000). The burden of proof in the South African legal system adds to this problem as it stands with the accused, who is presumed not guilty till proven otherwise. For instance, in Zenande's story, this is substantiated by how the man who raped her got arrested and was released into the same community. The perpetrator consequently returned to sexually assault Zenande a second time causing her further trauma as he breaks into her home. Such experiences indicate how the law is quiet on children.

Given the length and the experiences of children with the courts and the justice system alike, it suffices to say that the law does not work for children as it currently stands. This is further complicated in a country like South Africa where there is overfamiliarity between perpetrators and survivors. A complication driven by cultural etiquettes such as obedience to elders and *ubuntu* manipulated by perpetrators of child sexual violence to work against the agency and protection of children. This abuse of power and culture by men and boys is evidenced in children's disclosures which indicate clear signs of premeditation on the part of perpetrators for the rapes on children. This is exemplified by the case of Nosipho who was raped by her cousin, at home, and knifepoint. The threats by perpetrators on children's lives and the acts of bathing children after raping them as told by Zenande and Khanya – which is washing evidence away that could potentially be presented to the court – further suggests that perpetrators do not only have sufficient access to their victims but are also well acquainted with the court systems. These acts frustrate children's chances to be served justice.

However, despite children's perceived disfavour from the court and society, they still, defy silence. This defiance is reflected in Zenande's story who immediately tells her two friends after her aunt (*uMakazi*) who beat her and told her not to tell anyone of the neighbour's rape on her. Khanya also immediately reported the rape to her mother when she got home as did Isipho and Bubbles. Nosipho, when her family excluded her from decision-making about the

consequence for her cousin who raped her, immediately tells her Pastor's wife her desires for the perpetrator.

Infographic 1

What's behind children's silences on sexual violence



Source: Source: Titi, N. (2020). *How children make meaning of sexual trauma: Towards decolonised African-centred child-centric psychological interventions*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of South Africa. Pretoria.



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These examples show that children are not passive victims of sexual violence and trauma. Much to children's betrayal by South Africa's justice system who is a pathfinding country in the global partnership, to ending violence against children, perpetrators seem to be invincible in the eyes of the law (Pathfinding Countries, 2020). As was the case with Whites under slavery, victims tend to cultivate silences and find other ways to cope which includes forming supportive networks for each other. They find ways to avoid the risk of sexual violence in the first instance, and in the second instance hide from a seemingly unyielding system that exposes them to further trauma for reporting perpetrators. To avoid these risks, children have been found to police each other as found to be true in the case of Bubbles. Bubbles report her peers when she sees them playing in a run-down car. In some instances children self-police as in the case of Isipho and Mandla who restrict their play and are at times required to do so by their parents and caregivers to avoid the unavoidable, that is, being at risk of sexual assault.

Noteworthy is how participants' voices change when it comes to peer-to-peer conviction. Children seem to extend compassion to children who sexually assaulted them, as was emphasised in Mandla's story although some participants did not share this sentiment. A possible explanation for this compassion is perhaps due to pressure from adults, as evidenced in Bubbles' and Nosipho's cases. Both the families and the justice system, as represented by officials of the law, put the burden on the victimised child to shoulder the responsibility for the perpetrator's wellbeing and the consequences of their sexual crimes. It can be concluded therefore that children consequently learn to minimise their voices because of intimidation from adults who speak for and over children. Children's minimisation of their voices, therefore, occurs within the bounds of a cultural environment that has not learnt to fully appreciate children as fully human while developing into adults.

Child-centric work honours the agency of children matters and including their voices through giving them access to languages of their choice. In my sessions with the children, before and

after, on several occasions, I contended with adults who still wanted to speak for children. After spending many hours with participants in the course of data collection, it became clearer to me that children are ready to speak if afforded, not only space and time to do so but also a variety of methods of self-expression.

Hearing children requires a certain type of listening mechanism and exercise of patience that appreciates the enormity of what these children are battling with and want to express. I found that establishing trust through encouraging familiarity between myself and each child, granting them a sense of authority over the story-telling process communicated to them that I believe in their abilities to help me, the adult, understand their experiences. This I achieved by allowing and being attuned to a multiplicity of languages they came to me with. It is the researcher's ability to connect with children that will enable them to narrate their stories authentically. This required attentive listening on my part while simultaneously observing cultivated silences which entailed affective languages enrooted in cultural modes of communication. Undoubtedly, my insights as a researcher were enriched by my ability to understand and speak isiXhosa as a mother-tongue and home language like the children. The centrality of language is therefore key. This is argued and demonstrated previously, highlighting the connection between language and culture, as reflected in the literature review, theoretical framework, and methodology of the study.

The accounts from children show that skills and abilities of South African society – from adults in the lives of children, parents and families, neighbours, care professionals, responsive service providers, therapists, criminal justice system – to listen to children are wanting. What is evident from this thesis is that children speak. Perhaps beyond asking the question about whether we, as adults, can hear them, we need to acknowledge that we as adults and professionals are not doing enough to listen to children. Having noted how children make sense and meaning of sexual trauma from a contextual and child-centric perspective, this brings us to the question,

what can an African-, intersectional child-centric approach offer sexual violence trauma psychological therapeutic interventions?

6.2 Child Sexual Violence and Trauma: Towards Decolonised African-centered Child-centric Trauma Interventions

Up to this point I have addressed the first three research questions this study sought to address:

a) How do African children make meaning of sexual trauma? b) What are the cultural and social reserves that children draw from to make sense of their experiences? and c) Is the historical context of colonialism in Africa of any relevance in the praxis of psychology in Africa, and if yes, in what ways? Or, can psychology be studied and practised in the global South as it is in the global North?

Chapter Five provided the basis for formulating interventions based on children's phenomenological experiences. The findings point to the importance of having therapeutic interventions and -interventionists who are mindful of the sense-making resources that children draw on to make meaning of their traumatic experiences. In Chapter One I painted the rationale which addressed the difficulties with Euro-American or mainstream psychology. Chapter Two established the difficulties in providing a clear answer about the kind of intervention strategies that would work best for children exposed to multiple and continuous trauma. The literature surrounding the history of Africa and the peculiarity of South African history (Chapter Two), helped establish the theoretical frameworks (Chapter Three) and methodologies (Chapter Four) the study utilised. The intersectional issues as highlighted in the theoretical framework accentuated the linkages between language and cultural ideologies, demonstrating that culture informs meaning-making and children's pathways to healing from trauma. From the children's accounts and rich descriptions of their lives, there is evidence that children's environments, cultures, religion and spirituality, socio-economic circumstances and age all affect how they

make meaning of trauma. Their self-narrations also provided insights into children's pathways toward healing.

In this section, I focus on the fourth research question which is, *What are some of the insights that can be drawn from an African-centered child-centric approach to positively influence effective ways to improve the experience of therapy for Black children who are exposed to poly-victimisation and live in townships?* Through answering this question, I propose an African-centered child-centric psychological conceptual tool to inform the formulation of psychosocial interventions that address child sexual violence-related trauma (see Diagram 1).

In my conceptualisation of the intervention, I am guided by Collard's (2019) model. The model facilitates the communication and discussion of psychological therapies across the three different levels. On the first level are the theoretical frameworks¹⁰ of psychological functioning. These frameworks stem from the study's theoretical approaches will be the underlying assumptions of the intervention. The second level contains the therapy packages developed within these theoretical frameworks. These are proven therapy packages¹¹ or treatment modalities/packages which address the main problems associated with child sexual trauma as discussed in the themes of the analysis. The third and last level constitutes the specific interventions¹² utilised in therapy. Below I highlight and address four modalities needed to

¹⁰ Collard (2019, p. 329) "The theoretical framework, in terms of psychological functioning, is what provides an understanding of how various aspects of psychological functioning interact (e.g. thoughts, feelings and behaviours)".

¹¹ Collard (2019) Therapy packages or modalities focus on liberating individuals from harmful mentalities based on strong beliefs and expectations; and may further concentrate on specific or multiple intervention or focus or outcomes as guided by the theoretical framework.

¹² Collard (2019, p. 329) "The intervention level describes the specific strategies, techniques and tools used within therapy to create change for individuals".

deal with the different aspects of children's traumas, namely the psycho-spiritual, family, psycholinguistics, and play.

6.2.1 Psycho-Spiritual Intervention

Children reported spirituality and religion to be recurrent themes in their individual life stories. From the data, these factors are identified as resources for sense-making, healing and rehabilitation, connecting the inner self with a higher power or God. The spiritual integration of mind, body, and spirit is therefore relevant to health and wellbeing as suggested in Chapter Two. Considering the narratives and findings as per Chapters Five and Six, spirituality and religion are central in children's cultures and socialisation processes. Linklater (2014) refers to "wholistic", derived from whole, in reference to *holistic*, to honour the spiritual element of humans who may not necessarily hold "holy" views as according to dominant religious belief systems.

Diagram 1

An African-Centered Child-Centric Psychological Conceptual Tool to Inform the Formulation of Psychosocial Interventions that Address Child Sexual Violence Related Trauma



Consideration of cultural definitions of mental health and wellness point to the fact that the discipline of psychology's approach to mental health should go beyond the mind and body to "consider equally the spiritual, emotional, mental and physical aspects of the person" (Linklater, 2014, p. 21). Spirituality plays a central role in overcoming sexual and intergenerational traumas (Duma, 2006; Linklater, 2014). Spirituality also improves overall psychological wellbeing in children dealing with traumas linked to sexual violence (Weber & Pargament, 2014). As an indication of the centrality of religion and spirituality in people generally, four continents across the globe have reported dissatisfaction with psychology's lack of spiritual care (Hathaway et al., 2004). Integrating psycho-spiritual interventions within a pluriverse ideology and theoretical framework would therefore benefit psychological therapeutic interventions for children with a history of sexual trauma.

Furthermore, spirituality and faith-based religion are often performed (Masondo, 2015). Both require active participation from their members to receive desired outcomes (Staples & Mauss, 1987). Religion across affiliations and faiths is believed a key instrument among people of all “racial communities” in perpetuating harmful patriarchal attitudes and norms that encourage silence, and the acceptance of female subjugation is all too great (Gordon, 2008; Kobo, 2018; Messina-Dysert, 2015; Sigworth, 2009).

Given spiritual and religious diversity in its performances, it is expected that the linkage between spirituality and religion in the psychological intervention would be a controversial issue in psychology practice (Gonsiorek et al., 2009; Ivtzan et al., 2013). Its central role in healing can however not be ignored. It is therefore expected that there will be differences between spiritual and religious practices, clients, and therapists, that would take the form of indigenous versus Western forms of religion. Diversity in spirituality and religion makes it critical for psychology professionals to grasp colonial history. Such understanding may be critical when dealing with children seemingly presenting with identity struggles. This may well be due to the enmeshing of some spiritual practices consequent to the catastrophe colonisation created for us Africans.

Understanding spirituality and religion from the therapist may therefore present an opportunity to foster respect for the child’s values and culture. This may ensure that children do not feel alienated from their identity during the therapeutic intervention. The danger with alienating children from their spiritual belief systems is that decreases in religious and spiritual beliefs and practices have been associated with negative coping and consistently linked to poorer mental and physical health (Grubbs & Exline, 2014).

As part of cognitive behavioural therapy, spirituality and religion might motivate adherence to therapeutic interventions which serves the observation that mental healthcare deteriorates when

spirituality is ignored (Koenig et al., 2015). This is because spirituality and religion foster self-healing through interventions such as prayer, worship, meditating, yoga, spiritual journaling, extending forgiveness to self and others, and connecting with nature (Hodge, 2004). It would therefore be beneficial, essential, and respectful towards children to conduct a spiritual assessment upon intake to avoid harmful stereotyping in the therapeutic room (Peteet et al., 2018).

While children bring beliefs and the meanings spirituality and religion bring into their lives, as they do their culture, these may surface in children's recollections through language (see Chapter Two). Psychologists and therapists, therefore, require knowledge of the vocabulary used in different religions and spiritual forms. This is an additional layer for indigenous language proficiency by therapists and psychology professionals. While vocabulary, in this instance, is specific to different religions and spiritual beliefs, psycholinguistics helps to decipher meanings associated with vocabulary. For example, there are peculiar greetings used in Christianity, Islam and Rastafarianism that discern them from each other and other religions. Speech and verbal thinking may help the therapist understand the contexts in which children use them.

6.2.2 Family Therapy

Chapter Two discussed the concept and complexities of the family structure in Africa in protest against global exploitation and cultural domination by Western standards (Pala, 1977). The chapter highlighted challenges to parent-child and caregiver-child relationships expounding the intersectionality that hinders trusting relationships between the child and primary caregivers. Chapter Five gave accounts of the non-existent childhoods of Black children, particularly girls. Their accounts, understood with the theoretical framework of the study as outlined in Chapter Three, contain self-representations of how the economic and political relationships that

Africans face, and how socio-economic norms, regulate the social behaviour of Black girls which is also influenced by their position in society (Mugo, 2012; Imam, 2016).

Chapter Six, guided by the theoretical framework through the Afrocentric lens, highlighted the effects of history in children's modern-day living experiences of living in poverty, and within poly-victimisation. From examining the stories, it is evident that childhood is not a universal category (Oswell, 2013). Children in different contexts have different experiences of family, as evidenced in children's co-residency. The family, therefore, has implications for safety, belonging, perceptions of respect towards children, children's voice and dignity and all factors that particularly position girl children last in the social order.

The difficulty with the issue of family in contexts where there is poly-victimisation and intergenerational trauma is the perceived notions of neglect that Black Feminists are grappling with relating to raising children, financial freedom and the struggles of balancing child supervision and work. These effects can be labelled by psychology praxis as child neglect. Other examples of instances where Black caregivers' parenting styles may be questionable is around child labour in relation to the domestication of children and measuring children against Western developmental standards.

This is to say, in terms of addressing issues associated with the family in Black communities, family therapy as a modality in practice should come from an African intersectional child-centric theoretical framework. Children must be engaged with from the point of their realities and understandings of life, as opposed to an existing standard that is alien to their contexts and cultures. Racial differences, poverty and attitudes of therapists who may not fully understand the child's family cultural context make much-needed family therapy inaccessible to Black families. These factors cause further distrust of therapy by primary caregivers (see Chapter

Two). These challenges are avoidable and can be a barrier for children's psychological interventions.

A key tenet of family therapy is that the challenges children face exists with a family setup and should then be resolved in that context to create an enabling environment for the child by and within family members (Kasiram & Oliphant, 2007). Culturally responsive efforts to engage families in therapy can therefore be effective in meeting those challenges. Techniques used in family therapy would depend on the problems faced by children in relation to their family members within the larger family units. While a simple assessment may communicate characteristics about the family, it would serve the child and their family better if therapy is conducted in a manner that is meaningful to them. Such an experience would allow for authentic interaction and expression by family members that are devoid of clients being required to adapt to the therapeutic setting and to perform their lives for the therapists. This can be likened to a battle with English. English has culture and when used for assessment it may produce acontextual results and lead to misfit therapeutic interventions. That is to say, practitioners require an understanding of the language of the families children come from. This would benefit them with a nuanced understanding of the context in which child sexual trauma and healing would occur.

6.2.3 Psycholinguistics

An intervention that would serve the complex lives of children living in townships prioritises children's indigenous languages. As shown in the literature (Chapter Two), in the theoretical framework of the study (Chapter Three), as demonstrated in the methods applied in the research (Chapter Four) and evidenced in children's accounts of their lives (Chapter Five) and through the discussion of findings (Chapters Six), psychology cannot effectively help someone whose language they do not know. Given the cultural nuances within a language, it does not suffice to just speak the language; practitioners must have an understanding of the culture embedded

in a client's language to pick up on the nuances. This has been a central theme of this dissertation and a point that has found expression across all the stages of the study.

As reflected in work by Fanon, wa Thiong'o, Oyewumi and Cakata, language is psychological and the social, cultural, historical, and political factors that influence social rules of a particular context. The possession of children's languages is important for sexual trauma therapeutic interventions as it can tell the complexities embedded in abuse hidden in gendered and hierarchical nuances. In African languages, language communicates "seniority, culture and status and has missing expressions for differentiating the different genders, factors which cannot be transferred or interpreted to English...is intertwined with self-concept and how people make sense of the world around them" (Oyewumi, 1997, p. 157). In psychology practice, psycholinguistics should therefore be the primary modality in the therapeutic package and draw from what Vygotsky termed "speech thinking" or "verbal thinking" (Vygotsky, 1987). This is an effective tool for understanding the spoken words children use to communicate their meanings. Against this background, indigenous languages should be a compulsory requirement for psychology professionals and therapy interventions offered to children in African contexts, particularly in South Africa.

6.2.4 Play in Therapy

Chapter Four shows that play as an instrument in either research or practice when used appropriately is a good tool for accessing children's thoughts and meanings (Odendaal & Moletsane, 2011). Such a tool requires careful integration of children's cultural worlds into therapy. Children's play, and not only my ability to play with the children, but my understanding of how play occurs in African childhood, enabled the research to unfold as presented in the findings.

As reflected in the theory and framework, African children have a complicated relationship with play stemming from the history of slavery and the implications of Apartheid on the modern-day living of Black families. Some researchers have problematised play in research into children living in adversity on account of insensitivity to children's situations when expecting them to have fun (Hunleth, 2011). This is not surprising given the complexities I have painted above, and the accounts children provided in Chapter Five about the repercussions for prioritising play over household domestic duties.

Discomforts around play with children from low socio-economic backgrounds might be valid if play in therapy is structured on European or upper-class standards. A child-centred approach to play in therapy packages, whether family therapy or any modality, requires a space where the child will determine their preferred mode of engagement and thus set out their own rules preferences for play. There is credibility in the view that practitioners are not familiar with how children interact with play activities as work still needs to be done that seeks to understand how children play outside of adult awareness (Goodwin, 1997, 1998). A suggested way of learning what would not be known about children is inviting them to introduce their games into the therapeutic setting and participate in their play according to their rules of engagement. While play is intentional and demonstrative of culture, values, norms and traditions; children's speech, particularly talking, is without an agenda (Goodwin, 1990, 1997).

Psychological services offered to children living in continuous trauma must therefore pay more attention to contextual relevance rather than changing children's behaviour (Bottrell, 2008). Effective psychological interventions should begin with the recognition that culture is highly relevant to children's everyday behaviour. Children's values, collective histories, experiences, and language affect their perception and experience of phenomena. These resources are based on culture, and influence how much value children will place on therapeutic goals (Tawanda, 2006).

Psychological interventions, therefore, need to mirror the child's world and general life experiences in the therapeutic setting. Practitioners need to use what the children bring into the therapeutic room, and what the client values. If that is spirituality and religion, play and cultural etiquettes, then these beliefs should be used as resources to inform therapy (see Table 6.1). Accordingly, the next and final chapter of this dissertation discusses the study's recommendations, reviews its limitations and presents a conclusion of the research findings.

Table 6.1

Intervention Level Strategies, Techniques and Tools to be used within Therapy

Psycho-spiritual intervention	Family Therapy	Psychology in language	Play
Show respect for child's religion and spiritual practices	Help children return to typical routines according to what is normal in their household and culture	Show regard for child's indigenous language (if they speak English)	Present a variety of games and wait for the child to choose what resonates with them
Refrain from alienating children from their religion or spiritual practices	Make caregivers part of the process	Draw on the nuances and cultural etiquettes contained in the language child uses	Follow the child's lead, ask for permission to join and follow child's lead
Reduce unnecessary secondary exposures & separations	Demonstrate trust in interaction with caregivers	Facilitate open but not forced communication with the child about his/her reactions to the traumatic event	Explain to the child in developmentally appropriate terms
Use their religion or spiritual practices as a tool for delivering messages	Provide support to caregivers so that the child and family feel safe and secure	Focus on constructive responses	Refrain from psycho-analysing play; ask for the child to explain to you their behaviour in shared activities
	Maintain healthy relationships with the child's primary caregivers	Be careful not to be extra supportive (i.e. condescending tone)	Embrace playing in silence when it comes
	Create an atmosphere for the family to engage authentically in terms of language and cultural expression	Speak to the child as an equal	

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This study sought to understand how Black children who are exposed to poly-victimisation and are living in townships make meaning of sexual violence and trauma from an African-centred and child-centric perspective. It was rooted in and extends, the decolonial praxis of Afrocentric, intersectional and child-centric psychology in content and methodology. The framework was instrumental in opening avenues to channel understanding of sexual violence trauma by Black children to substantiate the horrendous statistics on child sexual violence in South Africa. Child sexual violation determines the kind of future victims and survivors will face and this necessitates effective interventions.

To do justice to this study, the research needed to be rooted in a deeper understanding and appreciation of the African context and that of children hence its specific focus on Afrocentric and child-centric perspectives. Through engagement with literature, it was apparent that intersectionality compliments and enriches Afrocentricity and child-centricity. Intersectionality so became part of the study framework unveiling cross-cutting themes of poly-victimisation and multiple traumas faced by children in townships along with race, gender, class and age.

Voices of the children demonstrated noteworthy realities about South African society. Children have a general mistrust of the criminal justice system and demonstrate a degree of fatigue and fear of its processes pertaining to the arrests of perpetrators, the police's relegation of duties and language use in court processes. Children also expressed how seeking justice can be harmful within the community in terms of relations with many ending up ostracised and some to the extent of being exiled. Children further acclimatised the culture of violence that is generally pervasive in South African society and have used their agency to devise strategies within their available means to navigate the spaces they call home. This study also

demonstrated that sexual violence is still highly gendered to the extreme detriment of the Black girl child which also manifests in peer-to-peer relations – a problem that requires considerable attention.

The study was driven by, and acknowledged, the agency of children and belief in them as knowledgeable. It recognised that children are products of the environments whose meanings are informed by their culture and living experience. The study was therefore deliberate in listening, hearing and amplifying the voices of children. This was to make audible the voices of children and to make them seen, which is discursively denied in standard cultures of living and research. In so doing, the study gave insights into the inner life worlds of children in their meaning-making of sexual violence trauma. This was achieved through contextualising children's backgrounds within a longer and larger social history, as well as within the immediate contextualisation of their living conditions. A clear voicing of children's words was produced in the discussion and analysis of children's stories – a total consideration of all the factors preceding integrated thoughts and ideas that children have to make sense of sexual violence trauma in relation to poly-victimisation.

One of the major drives for this dissertation was to gather grounded and better-informed knowledge directly from children so that any interventions practitioners use going forward are better informed. The dissertation provided a critique of mechanisms that simply adapt Western practices that are still dominant in mainstream psychology to an African context. It upheld the critique of African psychology and further went on to put into practice operative tools to better understand the specific context of African children. The intent was to inspire changes in the very conceptual tools of psychology as praxis if it is to gain trust and traction within African communities.

It was apparent throughout the study, as reflected by the methodology in Chapter Four and findings in Chapter Five, that culture is vital, and language is at the centre of culture. The study also suggests that unless and until psychologists learn the languages of the communities they work in; psychology will remain a blunt tool in the hands of well-meaning practitioners who potentially end up doing more harm than good. This is especially true for a context like South Africa given its history and demographics as a field vis-à-vis the demographics of the country. Most importantly, the study demonstrated that transformation is not sufficient, and decolonisation as described by Fanon is more necessary and urgent.

The dissertation demonstrated that only an approach rooted in working with children, as opposed to working on or about children, will suffice in serving the communities of children with multiple traumas and poly-victimisation. The study further indicates that child-centric psychological interventions would heal the wounds of the past that continue to fester through generational trauma, and it will give Africa a fighting chance to change its future by impacting the future of the children.

7.1 Limitations and Delimitations

While an African-centered perspective was applied in this study, Africa is not a homogenous context, but findings may be used to reflect on the cultures in the African Diaspora. The sample was predominantly representative of isiXhosa speaking children in Cape Town townships and thus not representative of the broader Black community. Joined to this is the gender representation that is mainly female resultant from boys reporting less on sexual violence arguably as a consequence of patriarchy and (in)accessibility of services to boys. The issue of gender representation in child sexual violence work is deserving of further study as it could not be avoided in this research. As this study suggests, more girls than boys are accessing formal centres for trauma support which is where study participants were recruited from.

7.2 Recommendations

The study's recommendation about decolonising sexual violence and trauma to dismantle colonial outlooks, patriarchal systems pertaining to the justice system and cultural practices.

This first recommendation pertains to decolonising sexuality discourses through policy and public education. Changes to public discourse must focus on perpetrators of violence instead of victims and survivors thus emphasising the action of the perpetrator instead of victims using language such as men's rape on girls (his rape) and opposed to the narrative of "her rape".

Secondly, there is a need to change gender-based violence policy so that perpetrators, particularly in the case of men who abuse women and children, are removed from their homes instead to avoid recurrent sexual re-victimisation. This calls for the dismantling of the drivers of gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence. For instance, currently, interventions require behaviour change in women and children whereas there should be a refocus so that interventions concentrate on changing the behaviours of perpetrators, particularly men. For example, women and children are moved to shelters to prevent them from being harmed by men. Such requirements place the responsibility of safety on women and children. These regulations are embedded in male-controlled, patriarchal, notions that manifest in the justice system and cultural norms. Men who perpetrate violence on women should instead be moved to shelters or rehabilitate centres for dangerous men. This principle should be extended to boys who are sexually abused toward the redress of toxic masculinities.

Thirdly, it is common knowledge that boys get sexually abused, but as this study has shown, boys are seemingly not coming forward for help and rehabilitation. I, therefore, propose that a review be carried out to establish what programmes are available for victims and survivors who are boys and for such programmes to be strengthened.

Chapter Two highlighted how Black girls' coping mechanisms for sexual trauma are psychopathologised. The scarcity of literature on decolonial perspectives of sexual trauma drive these problematic myths and misconceptions about black girls' sexuality. To this end, as the fourth recommendation of this study, an investigation into how Black children cope with sexual violence and trauma through a child-centric African-centred lens is gravely needed. South Africa's sexual violence problem is a central part of the colonial legacy and carries as part of its agenda how the behaviours of black girl children are perceived. Research is needed to understand how Black children who are sexually victimised negotiate their agency and what coping mechanism they employ to control their situation.

Fifth, the study has made a strong case and with evidence from the children's narratives that townships are not a safe or good environment to raise children to the fact that poly-victimisation is inevitable in the locale. While this study did not compare villages to townships children have suggested in their narratives that the former is a safer space for childhood. Social sciences would benefit from a study that explores the factors and African philosophical ethics such as ubuntu to answer whether rural areas are indeed safer or not, than townships in terms of both children's exposure to poly-victimisation and risk for sexual violence.

As a sixth recommendation, in consideration of the discussion on collective witnessing and children's non-disclosures, it would be prudent to investigate the significance of self-distancing as a way of healing trauma in African communities. Therapeutic services should further prioritise issues of language by ensuring that counselling and therapeutic support for victims of sexual assault are available in clients' home languages. Language is a cultural repository that carries meaning. This in itself requires insight on the part of the psychologist or therapist for effective communication with the client.

In conclusion, there is therefore urgency to decolonise psychological interventions. As a seventh recommendation, this study calls for a decolonial approach to studying sexual violence

that considers context and agency. The study has provided evidence that there is a need for a situated African-Psychology for both research and practice. Identity and cultural beliefs influence participation in research as well as receptivity and adherence to psychological interventions. This study, therefore, calls for a psychology that is representative and inclusive for it to be ethical.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Confidentiality agreement form for the research team



Title of Research Project: How children make meaning of sexual trauma

As a member of this research team, I understand that I may have access to confidential information about study sites and participants. By signing this statement, I am indicating my understanding of my responsibilities to maintain confidentiality and agree to the following:

- I understand that names and any other identifying information about study sites and participants are completely confidential.
- I agree not to divulge, publish, or otherwise make known to unauthorised persons or the public any information obtained in the course of this research project that could identify the persons who participated in the study.
- I understand that all information about study sites or participants obtained or accessed by me in the course of my work is confidential. I agree not to divulge or otherwise make known to unauthorised persons any of this information unless specifically authorised to do so by approved protocol or by the local principal investigator acting in response to applicable law or court order, or public health or clinical need.
- I understand that I am not to read information about study sites or participants, or any other confidential documents, nor ask questions of study participants for my personal information but only to the extent to perform my assigned duties on this research project.
- I agree to notify the local principal investigator immediately should I become aware of an actual breach of confidentiality or a situation that could potentially result in a breach, whether this is on my part or the part of another person.

Signature	Date	Printed name
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Signature of local principal investigator	Date	Printed name
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Appendix B: Welfare agency request for referral



Title of Research Project: How children make meaning of sexual trauma

Dear Manager,

I am, Neziswa Titi, a researcher from the Violence, Injury and Peace Research Unit from the South African Medical Research Council-University of South Africa. I am doing Doctoral research to learn how children make meaning of sexual trauma by listening to black children's stories about sexual-related violence so that the stories I hear from African children can help psychologists come up with better ways to help other black children. I am doing my doctoral study at the University of South Africa. The South African Medical Council is supporting my work.

This letter is to ask you for referrals of eligible individuals/patients interested in the study. I provided an information sheet about the study to give to the individuals/clients. If interested, the caregivers of the children may contact me for further information or if they prefer, and permission is granted, I will contact the caregivers of potential participating children about their child's enrolment.

Please note that I, UNISA and the SAMRC are bound to maintain the participant confidentiality, privacy and anonymity and can therefore not share with you any research data. However, should a child disclose continuing sexual violence we will notify you so that we do not hinder the child's intervention process as managed by your institution. Children will receive debriefing during data collection. Children who require counselling as a result of the study will be referred to a psychologist free of charge.

If you would like any more information about the project or have questions or comments to share, please feel free to contact me on my contact details below or Prof. Kopano Ratele who is the supervisor of this project at **tel: (021) 938 0536; email: kopano.ratele@mrc.ac.za**.

Kind regards,

Neziswa Titi, MA Research Psychology, UWC

Scholar: Violence, Injury and Violence Research UniT

PhD Student: UNISA

Tel: +27 21 9380930 | Cell: +2773 7268301

Francie van Zijl Drive, Parow Valley | Cape Town | Western Cape

Appendix C: Parent/legal guardian information and consent form



PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: How children make meaning of sexual trauma

Dear Parent/Legal guardian,

I am, Neziswa Titi, a researcher from the Violence, Injury and Peace Research Unit from the South African Medical Research Council-University of South Africa. I am doing Doctoral research to learn how children make sense of sexual trauma by listening to black children's stories about sexual-related violence so that the stories I hear from African children can help psychologists come up with better ways to help other black children. I am doing my doctoral study at the University of South Africa. The South African Medical Council is supporting my work.

This letter is to ask you for referrals of eligible individuals/patients interested in the study. I provide-approved Information sheet about the study to give to the individuals/patients. If interested, the caregivers of the children may contact me for further information or if they prefer, and permission is granted, I will contact the caregivers of potential participating children about their child's enrolment.

Please note that I, UNISA and the SAMRC are bound to maintain participants' confidentiality, privacy and anonymity and can therefore not share research data. However, should a child disclose continuing sexual violence we will notify you so that we do not hinder the child's intervention process as managed by your institution? Children will receive debriefing during data collection. Children who require counselling as a result of the study will be referred to a psychologist free of charge.

What is this research project about?

Children and teenagers who have experienced sexual-related violence.

Why has your child been invited to take part in this research project?

Your child has been invited because I want to listen to life stories of children who had been sexually violated or know someone who has been sexually violated regardless of whether they reported the assault or disclosed it to others.

What will happen to my child in the study?

I will ask your child to tell me a story about his or her life. I will listen to the story. If the child did not finish their story in the first meeting with me or I would like to talk further with your child I will then ask your child to meet with me again. It will only be me and your child in the session and the session will be about 60-90 minutes. It will take place at a place is easier for

you [_____], in a language that can be understood by the your child (including isiXhosa and/or English).

What will happen to your child in the study?

If you agree, your child will also be asked if he/she would like to tell me his or her story. The session will take place at a suitable place for your child [_____], and will last for about 60-90 minutes, in a language that suits the needs of your child (isiXhosa and/or English). Your child will be asked to tell me a story about his or her life.

If for any reason you agree that your child can decide whether he or she wants to participate, please let me know by ticking the appropriate box at the end of this document in the consent form. If your child consents as well, I ask that you kindly ensure that he/she travels safely to and from the venue.

What are the risks?

I do not expect that anything bad will happen to your child. Talking about his or her experiences or those that they may have witnessed could make your child feel uncomfortable but this may be a useful experience. If you do not want your child to tell me his or her life story, you do not have to. If you as a parent want to discuss something after I meet with your child, or later, please call Lungeka Mveli at the Medpark Building at 083 925 2759.

What are the benefits?

There are no direct benefits to taking part in this research. However, you may find that it is good for your child to talk about their life. Also, should your child need psychological counselling after his or her sessions with me I will ensure, at no cost to you, that she or she receives it. Should you also as a result require counselling, I will also arrange it for you.

Will anyone know that your child is in the study?

No. All the information you share will be *confidential* which means that I will keep your child's information secret. Importantly, I am interested in what your child has to say, not who said it. Researchers are not allowed to share your child's name or any other personal information that your child may share during the session with me, unless the researchers think that, based on what your child shared, your child or someone around them could be in danger and needs help. If that happens, I will tell you that I need to share the information with people who could help.

What happens to the information your child shares?

I will share what your child says, without naming him or her, in the form of written reports and professional articles. No-one or any information that could identify your child will be used in the reports.

Does your child get something for taking part?

Your child will not be paid to take part in the study, but your child will receive an R150 Shoprite voucher for your time and travel expenses because you might need to travel with your child and accompany him or her. I ask that you please accompany your child. Your child will also receive refreshments when you arrive at the venue.

What if you do not want your child do not want to do this?

Your child's participation is completely voluntary, so you have the right to withhold consent (permission) or to stop the participation of your child at any time my conversations with your

child if you wish. If you decide for your child not to participate, you and your child will not be treated negatively in any way.

Who can you talk to about the study?

You and your child can ask as many questions as you like, at any time, throughout the research. If you would like any more information about the project or have questions or comments to share, please feel free to contact me, Prof. Kopano Ratele, who is the supervisor of this project at **tel: (021) 938 0536; email: kopano.ratele@mrc.ac.za**.

Do you have to participate?

Your participation is completely *voluntary* and that means you and your child have the right to say yes or no to taking part. You and your child also have the right to stop or pull out at any time, without being treated negatively in any way. In other words, changing your mind will not affect you or your child in any way.

This research has been approved by the University of South Africa and the SAMRC Ethics Committee which are committees whose task it is to make sure that research participants are protected from harm. You may also direct any questions or comments to Prof K Moodley (committee chairperson) at **tel: (021) 938 0687; e-mail: adri.labuschagne@mrc.ac.za**

Kind regards,

Neziswa Titi, MA Research Psychology, UWC

Scholar: Violence, Injury and Violence Research Unit

PhD Student: UNISA

Tel: +27 21 9380930 | Cell: +2773 7268301

Francie van Zijl Drive, Parow Valley | Cape Town | Western Cape

CONSENT FORM

If you agree to participate in the study, please read and sign this consent form:

- I understand the information that was given to me today. It has been explained to me in a language that I understand, and my questions about the study have been answered.
- I understand that my participation is of my own free will.
- I understand that the discussions will be **audio** recorded.
- I understand that I or my child may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without being treated negatively in any way.
- I agree to be contacted if the researchers have any further questions to ask me about the research project.
- I agree to be visited at another place of my choice
- I give my consent to participate in this study,
- I give my consent for my child to choose whether he/she would like to take part

Name and signature: _____

Date: _____

Name and signature of witness: _____

Appendix D: Ifomu yolwazi nesivumelwano yomtwana nofikisayo



IFOMU YOLWAZI NEYEMVUMELA YOMNTWANA NOFIKISAYO

UMBA WOPHANDO: Abantwana benza njani umqondo ngokuhlukunyezwa kwesonto

Molo!

Ndenza uphando ngokuba ngokuba abantwana abenza umqondo njani malunga nokuhlukunyezwa kwesonto. Ndicela ukukumema ukuba uthathe inxaxheba kolu phando ukusnceda ukuba siwuqonde ngcono lombha ukuze sifumane ezinye iindlela ezinga nceda abantwana bhetele.

Yintoni uphando?

Uphando yinto esiyenzayo ukufumana iimpendulo kwimibuzo esinayo. Sisebenzisa iiprojekthi zophando okanye uphando-nzulu ukusnceda sifumane iinkcukacha ezininzi ngezigulo okanye ngokwenzakala. Uphando lusnceda nasekufumaneni iindlela ezingcono zokunceda abantwana nabafikisayo ukuba bachache emva kokwenzakala.



Imalunga nantoni le projekthi yophando?

Baninzi abantwana abathe bahlukunyezwa ngokwesonto. Umphandi ufuna amabali abantwana abathe bahlukunyezwa ngesonto okanye abazi umntu okhe wahlukunyezwa ngesonto.

Kutheni ndimenyiwe ukuba ndithathe inxaxheba kule projekthi?

Umenywe kuba unamava ngokuhlukunyezwa okanye wazi umntu okhe wahlukunyezwa ngesonto noba sekhe wayichaza okanye hayi. Sicele umzali wakho okanye umzali wakho osemthethweni kwaye uvumile ukuba ukhethe ukuba uyafuna kusini na ukuthatha inxaxheba kolu phando.

Ngubani owenza uphando?

Ndingumphandi oofunde kweezengqondo. Ndineemvelaphi zophando kwezengqondo kunye nakwimpilo yoluntu kwaye nineminyaka ndisenza uphando ubentwaneni. Oluphando ndilwenza kumabanga abaphezulu (Phd).

Kuzokwenzeka ntoni kum kolu phando?

Xa uvuma ukuthatha inxaxheba, uzocela undibalisele ibali lobomi bakho. Uzobalisela mna qha. Ndizojolisa kuhlukumezo ngokwesonto nendlela wena uqondisa ngaye isiganeko esinjalo. Iseshoni yethu izokurekhodwa amazwi. Amabali azokwenziwa endaweni ekulungeleyo [] imizuzu e- 60 – ukuya ku -90 ngolona lwimi oluva kakuhle (iIsiNgesi, isiBhulu, isiXhosa).

Ikhona into embi engenzeka kum?

Andilindelanganto embi engakwehlela. Ukuthetha ngamava akho kungakwenza uzive ungakhululekanga kodwa ungafumanisa kungawona mava abhadlileyo. Ukuba ngaba awufuni ukuthatha inxaxheba kwezinye zeengxoxo awunyanzelekanga. Ungathatha nekhefu nanini na ufuna. Xa ungathanda ukuxoxa ngenye into wedwa emva kweqela eligxilileyo ndicela undazise, okanye kamva ungaqhagamshelana nogqirha wengqondo uGqr Lungako Mwel, amagumbi akhe aseMedpark Building, kwinqolobane 083 925 2759. Ndingakudibanisa naye mahala.

Ikhona into entle engenzeka kum?

Ungafumanisa ukuba kulungile ukuthetha ngezinto ezikwehleleyo. Ungafumanisa ukuthi yintuthuzelo ukuthetha nowe zengqondo emva kondibalisele ibali lakho.

Ukhona umntu ozokwazi ukuba ndikolu phando?

Hayi. Lonke ulwazi osinika lona luzakuba yimfihlo. Oko kutsho sikhusela ubuwena ngokugcina ulwazi lwakho luyimfihlo. Okubalulekileyo, ndinomdla wento oyitshoyo hayi ukuba itshiwo ngubani. Abaphandi abavumelekanga ukuba badalule igama lakho okanye naluphi na ulwazi ngawe othe wasinika lona ngexesha lengxoxo. Lukhetho olulodwa qha ukuba ngaba abaphandi bakholelwa ukuba kolulwazi othe wabelana ngalo, wena okanye umntu okufutshane nawe kungenzeka abesengozini kwaye udinga uncedo. Abaphandi bazoqale bakwazise ukuba kuyimfuneko ukuba wabelane ngolwazi kubantu abangakunceda

Ikhona into endiyifumanayo ngokuthatha inxaxheba?

Uzofumana ivawutsha yeR150 yakwaShoprite umzali wakho anokuysebenzisa ukuze nikwele nifike emhlanganeni wethu. Ndiza kukuninika amaqebengwana neziselo ezibandayo xa ufika kwindawo yokudibanela.

Kwenzeka ntoni kulwazi endininika lona?

Ndiza kumamela izishwankathelo ezingenamagama zamava amaqela eziza kuba ziingxelo namanqaku abhaliweyo. Ngalandlela unganceda nabaye abantwana ekungenzeka ba sekhe bahlukunyezwa ngesonto eMzantsi Afrika. Oku uzokwenza ngengoba ibali lakho licocisela abazengqondo ukuba abantwana abantsundu bayiqonda njani ukuhlukunyezwa. Akukho nanto ozokuthi uyichaza ikolathise nakweyiphi ingxelo.

Ndingathetha nabani ngoluphando?



Molo, igama lam ndingu Kopano Ratele! Ndim ophethe le projekthi kwaye ndifuna ukukwazisa ukuba uvumelekile ukuqhagamshelana nam xa uthanda ukwazi ngakumbi ngophando. Ungabuza yonke imibuzo ongathanda ukuyibuza kwaye uvumelekile ukuvakalisa izimvo onazo. Ndingakuvuyela ukuba kuwe. Nditsalele umnxeba ku 021 938 0536 okanye imeyili ku kopano.ratele@mrc.ac.za

Xa ngaba ndingafuni ukuyenza lento?

Ukuthatha kwakho inxaxheba kukuzithandela kwakho, oko kutsho ukuba unelungelo lokwala okanye lokurhoxa ekuthatheni inxaxheba. Abazali bakho basinikile imvume yokuba sikucele uthathe inxaxheba. Oko kutsho ukuba ungakwazi ukukhetha ukuba uyafuna okanye awufuni. Unalo nelungelo lokuyeka okanye lokurhoxa nanini na, ngaphandle kokuphathwa kakubi. Ngamanye amazwi, ukutshintsha kwakho ingqondo ngeke kukuchaphazele okanye umzali wakho/ umzali osemthethweni nangayiphi na indlela.

Olu phando luvunywe yiKomiti Yokuziphatha yakwaSAMRC umsebenzi wabo kukuqinisekisa ukuba abathathi nxaxheba bophando bakhuselekile. Xa ufuna ulwazi oluthe kratya ngale komiti ungaqhagamshelana noNjing. K Moodley (usihlalo wekomiti) kwinombolo: (021) 938 0687; imeyili: adri.labuschagne@mrc.ac.za.

Ozithobileyo,

Neziswa Titi, MA Kuphando Lwengqondo (Research Psychology), UWC

Isifundiswa: Kupando Lomphando kweZobundlobongela, Ukwenzakala, noXolo

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IFOMU YEMVUMELWANO

Uyaluqonda olu phando lwesisifundo kwaye ungathanda ukuthatha inxaxheba?

EWE

HAYI

Ingaba umphandi uyiphendule yonke imibuzo yakho?

EWE

HAYI

Uyaqonda ukuba iingxoxo zizorekhodwa?

EWE

HAYI

Uyaqonda ukuba ungayeka ukuthatha inxaxheba kuphando nanini na?

EWE

HAYI

Amagama kunye nesandla: _____

Umhla: _____

Amagama nesandla sengqina: _____

Appendix E: Child information and assent form



Title of Research Project: How children make meaning of sexual trauma

How children make meaning of sexual trauma

Hello!

I am researching how children make meaning of sexual violence trauma. I would like to invite you to take part in this project so that you can help me to better understand child sexual violence-related trauma and your story can help psychologists come up with better ways to help other children.

What is research?

Research is something we do to find answers to questions that we have. We use research projects or studies to help us find out more about illness or injuries. Research also helps us to find better ways of helping children and teenagers to get better after a traumatic experience.



What is this research project all about?

Many children have experience sexual violence. The researcher wants life stories of children who had been sexually violated or know someone who has been sexually violated regardless of whether they reported the assault or disclosed it to others. The stories can help psychologists come up with better ways to help other children.

Why have you been invited to take part in this research project?

You are invited to take part in this research project because had been sexually violated or know someone who has been sexually violated regardless of whether you or they reported the assault or disclosed it to others. We have asked your parent/legal guardian and he/she has agreed for you to choose if you want to take part in this research or not.

Who is doing the research?

I am a researcher who has studied psychology. I have been doing research in psychology and on children for many years. This research is my Doctoral study.

What will happen to you in the study?

If you decide to take part in this project, you will be asked to tell me a story about your life. You will tell your life's story only to me. I will focus on sexual violence and how you make sense of it. The session will be audio recorded. The storytelling will take place at a place that is easy and non-threatening for you [_____], and will last for about 60-90 minutes. You will be able to talk to me at any language of your choice.

Can anything bad happen to you?

I do not expect that something bad can happen to you. Talking about your own experiences could make you feel uncomfortable, but you may find it a useful experience. If there are parts of your life that you don't want to include in your story to me then you don't have to. You can also take a break whenever you want to. If you want to talk to someone after you've told me your story, or any time afterwards, you can contact Lungakho Mweli who is a Counselling Psychologist. Her offices are at Medpark Building. Her number is 083 925 2759. I will arrange for you to meet her free of charge.

Can anything good happen to you?

You will hopefully find that it is good to talk about your experiences. It may also be comforting to speak to the psychologist after telling me your life story.

Will anyone know you are in the study?

No. All the information you share will be *confidential* which means that we will keep what you share with us a secret. Researchers are not allowed to share your name or any other personal information you shared during the discussion. The only time I will share your information is if I think that you or someone around you could be in danger and needs help. In that case, I will tell you that I need to share the information with people who could help.

Do you get something for taking part?

You will get a Shoprite voucher for R150 which your parent or legal guardian will use for travel costs. I will also provide snacks and cold drinks when you arrive at the meeting place.

What happens to the information you share?

I will listen to the main points that you made in your story without the names, and share this information with others in different ways, including writing a report. In this way, you and I will help other children who might have also experienced sexual violence-related trauma in South Africa by helping psychologists understand how black children make sense of trauma. Nothing that could identify you or any part of your story will be used in the reports.

Who can you talk to about the study?



Hi, my name is Kopano Ratele! I am in charge of this project and want you to know that you are welcome to contact me if you would like to know more about the study. You can ask as many questions as you'd like and are also welcome to share any comments you have. I would be happy to hear from you. Call me at 021 938 0536 or email at kopano.ratele@mrc.ac.za.

What if you do not want to do this?

Your parents have agreed for us to ask you if you want to take part in this project, but your participation is completely *voluntary* which means you have the right to say yes or no to taking part. You also have the right to stop or pull out at any time during the group discussion, without being treated negatively in any way. In other words, changing your mind will not affect you or your parent/legal guardian in any way.

This research has been approved by the UNISA & SAMRC Ethics Committees which are committees whose task it is to make sure that research participants are protected from harm. If you wish to find out more about the committee, you may contact Prof K Moodley (committee chairperson) at tel: (021) 938 0687 or e-mail: adri.labuschagne@mrc.ac.za.

Kind regards,

Neziswa Titi, MA Research Psychology, UWC

Scholar: Violence, Injury and Violence Research UniT

PhD Student: UNISA

Tel: +27 21 9380930 | Cell: +2773 7268301

Francie van Zijl Drive, Parow Valley | Cape Town | Western Cape

www.samrc.ac.za

CONSENT FORM

Do you understand this research study and are you willing to take part in it?

YES

NO

Has the researcher answered all your questions?

EWE

HAYI

Do you understand that the discussion will be audio-recorded?

EWE

HAYI

Do you understand that you can stop your participation in the project at any time if you wish?

YES

NO

Name and signature: _____

Date: _____

Name and signature of witness: _____

Appendix F: Ifomu yolwazi neesivumelwano kanozala okanye umzali osemthethweni



ULWAZI KUNYE NEFOMU YESIVUMELWANO KANOZALA OKANYE UMZALI OSEMTHETHWENI

UMBA WOPHANDO: Abantwana benza njani umqondo ngokuhlukunyezwa kwesonto

Mzali / mgcini wezomthetho obekekileyo

Ndingu Neziswa Titi, ndingumphandi ophuma kwicandelo lobundlobongela, ukwenzakala kunye noXolo kwezoPhando kwiBhunga LoPhando lwezoNyango kwiUnivesithi yaseMzansi Afrika apho ndiqhuba khona izifundo zam eziphezulu, iPhD, ndizokwazi banzi malunga neendlela abantwana abenza ngawo umqondo ngoku hlukunyezwa ukuze abasebenzi bengqondo baze nendlele ezibhetele ekuncedeni abantwana abantsundu. Oluphando luxhaswa lwiBhunga LoPhando lwezoNyango.

Ingantoni le projekthi yophando?

Abantwana nabafikisayo abanamava ngobudlova ngokwesondo.

Kutheni umtwana wam emenyiwe ukuba uthathe inxaxheba kule projekthi?

Umtwana wakho umenywe kuba ndifuna ukuba amabali abantwana abanamava ngobudlova ngokwesondo okanye abazi umntu owayethe wasifuman esosahlelo noba wayisa ngaphambili okanye hayi.

Yintoni eza kwenzeka kum kolu phando?

Ndizocela umntwana wakho andibalise ibali ngobomi bakhe ndim mamele. Ukuba umtwana akaligqibanga ibali lakhe ngomhlangano wethu wokuqala okanye ndinqwenela ukuthetha naye futhi ndingamcela aphinde adibane nam futhi. Izokuba ndim naye qhaye kwi seshoni imizuzu engama 60 – 90 kwindawo efanelekileyo [] ngolona lwimi luwiwa kakuhle ngumntwana (isiNgesi, isiXhosa).

Kuzokwenzeka ntoni emntwaneni wam kolu phando?

Ngemvume yakho, umntwana wakho uzocelwa naye ukuba angathanda na ukuba athathe inxaxheba ekundibaliseleni ibali lakhe lobomi. Elibali uzondi chazela kwindawo efanelekileyo [_____], imizuzu engama -60 ukuya kwengama -90, ngolona lwimi luwiwa kakuhle ngumntwana (isiNgesi, isiBhulu, isiXhosa).

Zeziphi iingozi?

Asilindelelanga ukuba kungakho into embi engakwehlela. Ukuthetha ngamava akho kungakwenza uzive ungakhululekanga kodwa ungafumanisa kungawona mava abhadlileyo. Ukuba ngaba awuthandi ukuba yinxalenye yengxoxo awunyanzelekanga. Ukuba ngaba uva

ngathi kukhona into othanda ukuyixoxa yedwa emva kweqela eligxilileyo okanye ngokuhamba kwexesha nceda uqhagamshelane noLunga Mveli useMedpark Building, kunombolo 083 925 2759.

Zeziphi iinzuzo?

Azikho iinzuzo ngqo ngokuba yinxalenye yolu phando, kodwa ke, ungafumanisa into yokuba kubalulekile ukuba umntwana athethe ngobomi bakhe. Kwakhona, kungenzeka ukuba umntwana adinge udlelwano ndlebe nooggqirha wezengqondo emva kweseshoni yobalisa ibali lobomi bakhe, ngoko ke, ndizo kwenza alifumane elothuba mahala. Nawe ungalifuma ukuba kuvele ukuthi uyalidinga.

Ingaba ukhona omnye umntu ozokwazi ukuba mna okanye omntwana wam sikhona kolu phando?

Hayi. Lonke ulwazi osinika lona luzakuba yimfihlo. Oko kutsho ukuba siyakukhusela wena buqu ngokugcina ulwazi lwakho luyimfihlo. Okubalulekileyo, sinomdla kwibali hayi ukuba libaliswe ngubani. Abaphandi abavumelekanga ukuba baveze igama lakho okanye naluphi na ulwazi ngawe othe wasinika lona ngexesha lengxoxo. Lukhetho olulodwa qha ukuba ngaba abaphandi bakholelwa ukuba kolu lwazi othe umntwana wabelana ngalo kwibali lakhe, yena okanye umntu okufutshane naye kungenzeka abesengozini kwaye udinga uncedo. Umphandi ozoqala amazise ukuba kuyimfuneko ukuba aabelane ngolwazi ebantwini abangamceda.

Kwenzeka ntoni kulwazi onikisa ngalo?

Kuzosetyenziswa endikufumene kwibali kwiingxelo ezibhaliweyo. Andizokuchaza umntwana wakho kwaye ayikho into ezokubanda kanya umntwana wakho kwiingxelo ezibhaliweyo.

Ingaba ikhona into endiyifumanayo okanye untwana wam ngokuthatha inxaxheba?

Akazobhatalwa ngokuthatha inxaxheba kuphando umntwana kodwa uzofumana ivawutsha yaseShoprite ye-R150 yexesha lakho kunye nembuyekezo yeendleko zokuhamba zakho nomntwana wakho nisiya naxa sele nibuyela emva nisuka kwindawo yokudibana. Ndicela ukuba umkhaphe umntwana wakho. Nakufika kwindawo esizosebenzela kuyo umntwana uzofumana endo etyiwayo.

Kwenzeka ntoni xa umntwana wam singafuni ukuyenza lento?

Ukuthatha komntwana inxaxheba uyenza ngokuzithandela, kwaye unelungelo lokwala okanye lokurhoxa ekuthatheni inxaxheba nangaliphi na ixesha ngeke kubekhona ziphumo zibi kuwe okanye emntwaneni wakho

Ndingathetha nabani ngophando?

Wena nomntwana wakho ninelungelo lokubuza noba mingaphi imibuzo enifuna ukuyibuza nangaliphi na ixesha kude kube kuphela uphando. Xa ungathanda ukwazi ngcono ngeprojekthi, okanye unemibuzo okanye iingxelo, qhagamshelana noNjing Kopano Ratele ongumphathi kule projekthi kwinombolo: (021) 938 0536; imeyili: kopano.ratele@mrc.ac.za

Kunyanzelekile ukuba ndithathe inxaxheba?

Ukuthatha kwakho inxaxheba kungokuzithandela ngokupheleleyo oko kutsho ukuba wena nomntwana wakho ninelungelo lokwala okanye elokuvuma ukuthatha inxaxheba. Wena nomntwana wakho ninalo nelungelo lokuyeka okanye lokurhoxa nanini na, ngaphandle kokuphathwa kakubi nangayiphi na indlela. Ngamanye amazwi, ukutshintsha kwakho ingqondo ngeke kunichaphazele nangayiphi na indlela ninomntwana wakho.

Olu phando luvunywe yiKomiti Yokuziphatha yakwaSAMRC umsebenzi wabo ikukuqinisekisa ukuba abathathi-nxaxheba bophando bakhuselekile. Ungathumela imibuzo okanye amava kuNjing K Moodley (usihlalo wekomiti) kwinombolo: (021) 938 0687; imeyili: adri.labuschagne@mrc.ac.za.

Ozithobileyo,

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IFOMU YESIVUMELWANO

Ukuba uyavuma ukuthatha inxaxheba kolu phando, nceda ufunde uqgibe utyikitye ifom yemvumelwano eqhotyoshelweyo:

- Ndiyaluqonda ulwazi oluziswe kum namhlanje, lucacisiwe kum ngolwimi endiluvayo kwaye nemibuzo yam ngolu phando iphendulwe.
- Ndiyaqonda ukuba ndithabatha inxaxheba kolu phando ngokuzithandela.
- Ndiyaqonda ukuba ulwazi endinikezela ngalo luza kurekhodwa (amazwi odwa)
- Ndiyaqonda ukuba mna okanye omntwana wam singakwazi ukurhoxa kuphando nanini na ngaphandle kokunika isizathu kwaye ngeke kubekhona ziphumo ezibi.
- Ndiyavuma ukuba abaphandi bangaqhagamshelana nam ukuba ngaba baneminye imibuzo abafuna ukundibuza yona ngeprojekithi yophando.
- Ndiyavuma ukuba ndityelelwe kwenye indawo endizikhethela yona ukuba mna okanye umntwana wam asikwazi ukuba kwindawo elidibanela kuyo iqela eligxilileyo
- Ndinikeza imvume yokuba ndithatha inxaxheba kolu phando.
- Ndinikeza imvume yokuba umntwana wam akhethe ukuba uyathanda okanye akathandi ukuthatha inxaxheba.

Amagama kunye nesandla: _____

Umhla: _____

Amagama nesandla sengqina: _____