

GENDER SECURITY, GENDERED VIOLENCE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE: THE RIGHTS OF PROTECTION THROUGH THE EDUCATION OF URBAN YOUTH IN AFRICAN CITIES

Professor Madeleine Arnot and Georgina Oduro, University of Cambridge, UK
Dr. Sharlene Swartz, Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa
Dr. Fatuma Chege and Professor Paul Wainaina, Kenyatta University, Kenya.
Dr. Leslie Casely Hayford, Associates for Change, Ghana

Paper presented at the Paper presented at the Engendering Empowerment: Education and Equality Conference (UN Girls' Education Initiative) 17-20 May, Dakar, Senegal.

This paper locates the development of girls' schooling and the promotion of gender equality through schooling (the subject of MDG Goal 3) within the context of the ambition to have achieved by 2011 'a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers' (MDG Goal 7). This increasing level of urbanisation is associated with global warming and climate change and the destruction of agricultural livelihoods and consequent family breakdown brought on by economic globalisation - but it is also associated with the liberalisation of economies and increasing migration into cities encouraged by structural adjustment programmes. Davis' famous book (2007) *The Planet of Slums* captures global concerns about the increasing number of people living in urban slums globally, especially their unsustainable lives in conditions of extreme poverty and overcrowding. However there is also increasing worry about the effects of such conditions on women's lives and livelihoods. As Kiwala, Masuad and Njenga (2009) point out 'climate change is not gender neutral' – slum dwelling has particular consequences for women arguably making them even more vulnerable and lacking in security. This paper places the promotion of girls' schooling and indeed the struggle to achieve gender equality within these environmental concerns about urbanisation and slum life, but also the effects of the associated rise in crime and violence particularly amongst youth living in such settings.

The UN commitment to reduce the violence against women¹ suggests that those concerned with promoting girls' schooling need to address not just the quality of schooling offered to youth living in such severely economically deprived urban environments but the high levels of violence experienced by girls and young women living in such 'habitats'. Such violence is not gender neutral – its forms, rules and uses is closely linked with gender identities and gender relations and is also age specific. In this paper, we argue that young people living in urban slums both experience and use violence. Whether male or female, they confront different types of violence – for example, sexual, domestic, and street violence. Gender equality programmes cannot therefore easily isolate girls from such violent environments – gender relations whether male-male, male-female or female-female are the site in which violence occurs. Girls living with violence also themselves 'do violence' in certain circumstances. In this paper we argue that it is essential if we are to promote gender equality through education to engage with the complex gender dynamic outside schools, whilst recognising that the violence found within schools may also provide lessons on where and when violence is an appropriate response. The data we present here demonstrate just how young people living in townships, slums and cities describe the role of violence in their lives. These voices are voices that should provide, in our view, the starting point for the formulation of government policy and international aid. Their voices capture the real world in which

young people lead poverty stricken often desperate lives in which their social, economic and political rights as young citizens are often denied and their chances of escape are minimal.

Our starting point for this paper are the insightful comments made in 1969, by the renowned British historian Eric Hobsbawm in his short paper entitled 'The Rules of Violence'. He argues that since:

.....we are probably once again moving into an era of violence within societies... we had better understand *the social uses of violence*, learn once again *to distinguish between different types of violent activity*, and above all *construct or reconstruct systematic rules for it* (Hobsbawm, 1969/1998: 305 cited by Swartz 2010, emphasis added).

For Hobsbawm, investigating these social uses and rules of violence are essential since 'genuinely violent societies are always and acutely aware of these 'rules' ...because private violence is essential to their everyday functioning' (p. 301) and not only does violence provide 'subjective psychological relief' (p. 305) but that 'for the weak and helpless poor, violence and cruelty... are the surrogate for private success and social power' (p. 304).

Our starting point for the analysis of such social uses and rules of violence is to consider what is meant by gender based violence. The UN Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women defined gender based violence as:

Violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty (UN Doc A/47/38 11 Jan 1992, para 6.)

It is now recognised globally, women are frequent victims of gender-based violence in contexts where there are chronic 'congested housing conditions', a lack of security and privacy, anger and frustration over the lack of income, food, and employment that spills over into marital violence, and violence connected with the use of drugs and alcohol. The Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) (2008) study of women, slums and urbanisation reported that the lack of access to safe, alternative housing (e.g. refuges) keep women trapped in violent domestic situations but also their lack of security is aggravated by the failure to provide basic services such as proper streets and street lighting and police authorities who are prepared to engage with crime and violence in the area. As a result of this failure, women living in slums are not adequately protected and are at high risk of experiencing personal violence and disease such as HIV/AIDS. Given the connection between gender, poverty, violence and urbanisation, Kabajuni's (2009) argues that unless such interconnections and women's experiences within slums are addressed in slum improvement programmes, then the Millennium Development Goal 3 on gender equality and the empowerment of women cannot be achieved².

This paper we bring to this discussion a particular focus on gender based violence – the voices and experiences of youth living in three major African cities – Cape Town, Nairobi and Accra. Following Hobsbawm's recommendation, we distinguish between different types of male and female youth violence. Our aim is to encourage debate about the ways in which gender security

can be promoted through education and youth policy, as an essential element of the goal of creating gender equality/justice. Tackling the violence against girls, as our research shows, means addressing the relationship between gender identities and power relations as well as the lack of power these young people experience within marginalised degraded environments. By listening to the voices of both young men and women, we can begin to understand the connections between *poverty, gender and violence* and we can begin to perceive the types and levels of work that schooling needs to do in shaping a secure environment. Gender security implies creating a sustainable environment in which both female and male youth feel safe, and that they can participate actively and with confidence in shaping their lives, helping their families and their communities. The violence that girls experience or that they themselves initiate cannot be addressed entirely as a female issue. The key questions for educationalists therefore: are: *what are the rights to protection from violence and violation through education and how can such rights be delivered for both young women and men?*

In answering this questions, we draw our evidence for this paper on the structural violence which such urban environments represent and which shapes young people's lives, the forms of sexual violence experienced by young women and the political violence which young people hope to challenge from three recent qualitative studies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Three North-South research partnerships have explored the role and impact of violence on the lives and experiences of male and female urban youth (aged between 15 and 25) living in poverty in South Africa, Ghana and Kenya. Gendered violence is described Sharlene Swartz's doctoral (now published) study of the moral formation of male and female township youth in South Africa and in data collected by two youth studies in the DFID funded research programme *Researching Educational Outcomes and Poverty* (<http://recoup.educ.cam.ac.uk>) in Kenya and Ghana. The first is Georgina Oduro's doctoral study of sexuality and protection from HIV/AIDs of Ghanaian male and female school-based and street youth and the second is the *Youth, Gender and Citizenship* (YGC) study which explores the social and human development outcomes of schooling in relation to (a) self-protection and survival (b) sustaining livelihoods (c) empowerment and agency.

Swartz's ethnographic research in the Langa township in Cape Town was conducted with 37 male and female youth (aged 14-20) whilst Oduro's findings relate to interview data collected from a sample of male and female 24 street youth (17 girls and 7 boys aged 14-19 years) in Accra. The slices of data drawn from the YGC study relate to interviews with approximately 40 siblings (one brother and one sister aged between 15 and 26) in poor urban households in Nairobi and Accra. A proportion of the 20 youth in each city were educated only at basic (primary) level, whilst others were secondary school educated or had attended tertiary institutions.

It is important to note that the findings of these three projects do not draw upon the same samples or methods of research and the studies were not specifically focused on the relationship of education to gendered or gender-based violence. Nevertheless the theme of violence emerged in all three youth studies. Secondly, although it is always difficult to tap girls/young women's experiences not least because of the silence around sexuality and sexual violence and about child abuse in the home, these data throw light on the violent or counter-violent strategies which female

and male youth use to ensure their survival in unstable and dangerous urban environments. As such, the vivid accounts of the violence in their lives draws attention to the need to think in new and important ways about how to work with youth to prevent such violence and retrieve their dignity and well being and some prospect of a different life.

STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE AND YOUTH VIOLENCE: SURVIVING IN URBAN HABITATS

The millions of young people living in urban habitats are thought to be ‘in crisis’. Not only has increasing urban migration lead to the development of huge conglomerations, but these sites are positioned at the margins of society – often without any rights to the land, mainly overcrowded, notoriously without potable water, sanitation, sewage, electricity, proper housing, and street lights. The lack of urban planning and governance makes many such slums lawless with ‘no go’ areas for policy authorities, and subject to mass slum evictions. Arguably, globalisation, economic liberalisation of the economy as well as environmental destruction have led to the creation of such stateless citizens the majority of whom are youth. In African cities more than 50% of the urban population are under 19.³ This generation of youth have to survive, often on their own, without adequate adult role models. They suffer high levels of unemployment or casual low paid temporary work in the informal sector. Many are drawn to crime as a way of surviving acute poverty. The schooling advantage of urban youth is likely to have decreased with the liberalisation of the economy under structural adjustment and the reluctance of governments to build infrastructural support into such urban settlements. In these settings, it is widely recognised that youth suffer from isolation, marginalisation, discrimination, rootlessness, vulnerability to crime, violence and sexual victimisation. Most at risk of victimisation amongst those living in urban slums, are girls, street children, school dropouts, and those affected by HIV/AIDS; those most likely to become criminalised and to use violence and crime are young men (UN Strategy paper on Urban Youth in Africa).

Jones and Chant (2009) argue that the presence of such unsustainable degrading environments is a form of structural violence on the lives of youth. The reduction of state welfare support, the privatisation of schooling within such environments have reduced the capacity of the poor to improve their lives and break the intergenerational cycles of disadvantage. In the precarious life in such cities, young people have to navigate the violence imposed on them by the state as well as the violence within such communities where the fight is more to stay alive than it is to achieve schooling. Swartz’s research in the Langa township created by apartheid policies in South Africa throws light on how in the such extreme circumstances young people employ their own moral code into the meanings, rules and social uses of violence.

Violence has long been part of the lives of township youth inhabitants, whether during the running battles of apartheid or crime and alcohol-fuelled clashes of everyday street life (Seekings, 1993). Young people’s explicit accounts of the social use of violence and its complex determinants uncovers their own rules for when violence is considered an appropriate response to daily experiences of confrontation and disturbance. In effect, their voices explode the myths that adolescent’s participation in violent behaviour and the violence perpetrated against them is simply a matter of ethnicity, sexuality or gender. The youth experience the violence done to them by their

structural exclusion in lawless, largely unpoliced no go areas by ‘doing violence’ themselves, but in the context of their own morality. Swartz’s (2009) research challenges notion that young people are lawless by revealing their codes of moral conduct as well as what she calls ‘moral capital’ – their sense of right and wrong.

The personal stories of youth about their daily encounters with varied forms of violence reveals a textured portrait of the phenomenology of male and female violence in such sites. The gendering of violence or the gendering of the cause of violence are shown to be complex elements of social interaction between family life, between youth and between young and the laws of the state. Here we can only describe a few significant accounts which indicate how for young women’s own violent responses are a form of agency, a means of protecting themselves by becoming similar to the boys in the neighbourhood. We can see this gender dynamic vividly in the accounts of Andile and his girlfriend, Andiswa.

Andile – ‘She swear my mother out - I kicked her in the face three times’

Nineteen year-old Andile thoughtfully summarised the meaning of violence for youth in this environment: ‘In *ikasi* [township], violence is a sport’. Andile lived with his unemployed mother and three siblings in a backyard shack owned by their extended family in Langa. Each sibling had their own father and the eldest was awaiting trial for a non-fatal shooting. Andile had only recently met his father, and having been rejected by him, which was the source of much anger and shame in his life. He was a keen soccer player at school but did not fare as well in the classroom – this was his third year in Grade 9. He smoked cigarettes, *dagga* [marijuana], a little Mandrax [methaqualone] and drank copiously on the weekends and on ‘big days’. Over the course of the year Andile related multiple accounts of his aggression which were corroborated by his peers. In response to a question about whether he had ever done anything ‘bad’ in his life, Andile recounted a fight he had with a female classmate at school who swore using his mother as insult. Here the expression of masculinity is complicated by concepts of honour linked to his mother and anger at his absent father:

Me and Nokothula we used to make each other jokes... Then [one day] she swear my mother out. Then I said to her ‘Haai – you mustn't swear my mother out, that’s wrong.’ And she swears my mother out again. *She swears my mother out three times*. Then she smack me. Then I smack her back... she started biting me and... I smack her back.... And then she bite me... She scratch my eyes then I pushed her over [pause]. She was angry with me. Then I hit her with the fist maybe two times. She - then she try to stand up and fight. *Then I kicked her in the face three times*. Then I left her... [The next day] I felt very nervous –*The problem is I like my mother very much. Because I don't have a relationship with my father... My mother, she does everything for me.*

While the defense of their mothers’ honour featured prominently in the lives of other young people, Andile commented that ‘my ego’ was a big motivator when it came to his own use of aggression. He talked about fights with his friends (not strangers) when they disrespected him, on the soccer field, and that, on two occasions, he hit his girlfriend Andiswa – because he suspected that she was ‘cheating’ on him. However, Andile also made a conscious choice not to participate in the Young Chicanos street gang that patrol his part of Langa. When asked about why he had

chosen not to join, he showed self-understanding by explaining that his use of violence is in defence of ‘my pride ... and my mother’ rather than for group status (‘to be famous’).

Andiswa – ‘When you say shit to me, it just unplugs’

Andiswa, who at the time was dating Andile, is a bright, talkative and feisty fifteen year-old young woman. She spoke of her association with violence in multiple manifestations: as a victim of domestic violence with her father and boyfriend, as a perpetrator in a street gang of girls, and in an encounter with her previous boyfriend:

So I was with this guy ...*he treated me like a doormat* and I don’t take that... we got into an argument... [pause] I hit his head in a brick wall and ...his eyes like bobbed around ...and I was scared because I thought he was going to faint... he was bleeding. So I said let me just go home and just leave him... So I ran home – and that’s the last time I saw him. But he’s not dead or anything [laughs] but I never saw him again... I don’t know [why I did it], *just because of the things that have happened in my life* – I feel as if I should be able to protect myself... like it reminds me of my mother being beaten and I couldn’t do anything about it you know. And you know my father was almost like killed also... He was beaten by four men... I think about the things that happened in my family and I couldn’t like protect them – so I hate that. I feel as if I should be able to protect [them] – like even if I’m young. *So when you say shit to me, it just unplugs and whenever I get mad it’s like a switch.*

While Andiswa’s account prominently highlights the disproportionality of violent responses common amongst township youth, it also points to the deeper meaning-making of violence as a response to powerlessness and abjection. Later Andiswa talked about the often brutal beatings she endured from her father showing angry bruises on her arm and welts from a *sjambok* [whip] across her shoulder – a result of having ‘disgraced’ him (by smoking *dagga* and coming home drunk). Like many others⁴, Andiswa did not think it appropriate to defend herself from these beatings from a parent. The same sentiment however, did not apply to boyfriends. When Andile hit her in the face for ‘talking’ to another young man, she was quick to break up with him over it.

Andiswa’s experience of violence also brings into relief the growing phenomenon of ‘girl- gangs’ and ‘girl-fighting’ of which other young women also spoke. Her account of herself as a perpetrator was typical of about a quarter of the young women in Swartz’s research group. Andiswa described her friendship with Lebo, a young woman in her street that eventually ‘got out of hand’. Lebo taught her how to pick up guys and get them to buy you drinks and clothes, and then to physically defend these gains from other girls by picking fights with them thus establishing their own dominance.

There is no space to go into detail but suffice it say that for Andiswa domestic violence and violence around transactional sex all formed part of her experience. Beside the need to establish

her own sense of power, came the reality that with the smoking of dagga (marijuana) she was also 'overcome' with power. In her words 'nothing is impossible'.

'Fighting over a little thing – I took a knife and stabbed him'

Much youth violence crosses gender boundaries –although male on female violence remains ubiquitous. Youth violence is not merely physically located or gender restricted. Almost all of these young people's stories reveal a multi-faceted and complex provenance of violence. Luxolo's story for example demonstrates the complex interfaces between heterosexual masculinity and female sexuality but also the normalisation of violence as a strategy within the community for, paradoxically, ensuring safety. Luxolo is a stocky, tough, nineteen year-old gay young woman with a scarred face who was trying for the fourth time to pass Grade 9. She too understood the role that alcohol and drugs plays in young people's experience with violence, and frequently showed a new scar she got from 'fighting when I was drunk', or being 'beaten up and robbed when I was drunk'. Her experience of violence however extended beyond that of alcohol-fuelled violence. Luxolo drew attention to community violence, with *vigilante justice* being a key vehicle through which violence is normalised. Young people become accustomed to seeing it occur with their apparent sanction.

Luxolo related a harrowing account of vigilante violence related to sexual transgression (this time attempted rape). Buur & Jensen (2004: 145) state that such 'people's courts' and vigilante groups have 'virtuous reasons for embarking on crime control initiatives' and are pivotal to the production of 'moral communities'. Luxolo recalled how one night a young man who lived in her street was caught trying to rape a young girl in a nearby home. The girl's mother started screaming, and neighbours and the street committee members came to investigate. They took the alleged rapist to a nearby park, beat him with a concrete block, and finally tipped a burning brazier over his head. He died. When the police came, nobody could say what had happened. Swartz heard numerous variations of stories of street committees meting out their own form of justice. However perhaps most significant about Luxolo's story was her complete lack of emotion when telling it – to Luxolo this vigilante violence appeared to be normal. She recounted the following incident:

Bad things? Um, I'll say, lying to my mom – bunking out of school, smoking [*dagga*], drinking ... [long pause]. Oh yah! My cousin Thando that I live with ... The other day, *we were fighting over a little thing – he took my food...* and then we fought and fought, I *clapped* him [laughs]. He hit me back and then we fight and *then I took a knife and stabbed him* [laughs].

The normalization of violence in these young people's lives has major implications for educationalists. Luxolo's multiple and sustained contact with violence had started when she ran away from home. Living on the streets she had learnt to use a knife and disguise her sexuality. The problem in her community was that this identity posed a further threat of violence. There were many young men who considered it their job to 'cure'⁵ lesbians by raping them. Her response to this threat to her safety was to hang out with 'tough' young men that eventually led to her involvement in crime and more violence – this time when incidents of 'housebreaking' went wrong, and ended in the violent attack on a Pizza delivery boy who had disturbed them during the

robbery. As spectacular as Luxolo's encounters with violence were, she nevertheless spoke as dispassionately about her involvement in it as a victim and as she did when describing herself as perpetrator – it was merely part of her everyday experience of *ikasi* (the township).

The normalisation of gender violence against girls (and even girlfriends) is exemplified by Siphosile's tale in which he highlighted the importance of sustaining dignity and respect from girls. He was a furtive, angry 17 year old man also from Mandela High School:

When [girls] disrespect me you see... [when] you walk like past a girl, there's this big laugh, they are laughing and I hate that. I just look back and see, okay, who's laughing. Maybe, I just pick a girl here, beat her up... with the fist, a rock, a bottle, anything. (.....)

Swartz's research therefore reveals how this use of violence against women is only one form and use of violence within the multiple contexts in which violence is used by youth. Gender violence, to a lesser or greater extent, forms part of young people's lives at every level of township life – home, school, streets and community. Many other youth referred to growing up 'in a shebeen house', where mothers eke out a living by selling alcohol from their shacks of front rooms resulting in early exposure to alcohol and its related drunken violence. Young people also spoke fluently of the territorial violence that occurs on the streets from a group of girls protecting their sources of drinks and money from other girls in their street, between gangs members in adjacent areas, or between members of different schools (or nearby communities). School is a further site of violence. Many young women complained of being sexually harassed or molested in the girls' toilets at school by both peers and teachers, and corporal punishment remained part of the experience of many youth, despite its legal ban in South African schools. Burton (2008) reports that on a national scale, 15.3% of all learners between grades three and 12 in South Africa had experienced some form of violence while at school where alcohol, drugs and weapons could be found where especially girls were sexually assaulted and both sexes were threatened and robbed.

Revenge and *respect* were important motifs amongst youth in general. Youth spoke frequently of the *rules surrounding revenge*. If someone stabbed you, you (and your friends) hunted them down to retaliate. However, if someone was stabbed in a tavern fight and the assailant was drunk, then no revenge was extracted. What the perpetrator has to do is make amends or pay damages. Revenge is only permissible if an alternative solution cannot be worked out (for example damage payments). Young men⁶ also spoke of *respect* as an enormous motivation for violence. Andile commented that 'our respect are all we have in *ikasi* – we don't have the respect that rich people are having from good jobs and nice cars' – a key explanation for why it needs to be violently defended.

This use of violence to gain respect and revenge contrasts sharply with the sexual violence that is metered out to young women living on the streets of such city slums. In Georgina Oduro's research in Accra, young women use their sexuality to find ways of surviving poverty, of gaining security and paradoxically of protecting themselves from violent gang rape. Sexual violence for men here is less a means of gaining respect than of controlling women. Whilst both male and female street youth experience the danger of living on the street, young women's lives are especially put at risk.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE HOME, ON THE STREET AND IN THE COMMUNITY

In 2009, Kabajuni's report for the UN Division of the Advancement of Women concluded that the global pandemic of HIV/AIDS especially amongst women in urban areas was a matter of considerable concern, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa 'the worst affected region'. Of relevance here is the finding that:

Gender inequalities in part fuel the spread of HIV/AIDS and also constitute an obstacle for women in effective prevention. Urban poverty increases women's vulnerability to risky sexual relationships in exchange for shelter, food and other basic needs. Overcrowding in slums makes efforts towards behaviour change more difficult, and women as well as young girls often become victims of rape which further increases the infection risks. There is a close link between the stigma attached to HIV/AIDS infected people in both rural and urban areas and women's migration into slums. Lack of adequate housing including adequate space and privacy, water and sanitation also increases women's failure to respond to treatment and adhere to prevention measures as well. (p 9)

Complex relationships between sexuality, the survival of the very poor and the formation of gender identities impinge girls' lives in a range of different ways. We are reminded in Oduro's study of the diversity of sexual violence, within different sites and with different consequence. Paradoxically the exercise of female agency to gain control of their lives places young women in danger of sexual violence and the loss of agency and the prospect of a better life. Male sexual violence dominates the accounts of girls living in poverty, although it too can be clad in the discourse of freedom, and even pleasure, and agency.

Oduro's research identifies three types and sites of young people's sexual experiences within the urban context. In relation to *peer sexuality* some girls, irrespective of religion, are actively engaged in the seduction of boys supporting the notion of female dependency on men. In urban contexts where pornography and internet images of sexual freedom are available, youthful sexuality is both about pleasure and danger. The concept of *consent* becomes problematic where girls encourage intimate friendships but where boys take the lead in determining when, where and how sex happens, overriding, on many occasions, the need for sexual consent by their partners. Sexual freedom can become another site of male dominance and in the context of HIV/AIDS, frighteningly dangerous to health. The young men she interviewed reveal their overriding desire for dominance in taking over the reins of seduction leading to sexual intercourse, seeking to affirm masculine strength, physicality and power. Unprotected casual sex often means unprotected sex in order to ensure male virility, and fidelity on the part of the girl rather than the boy.

Inequality of sexual relations are no more explicitly revealed than in *patronage sexuality*. It is now well known that in the context of little or no family support for education, a girl may decide (or be seduced/groomed into the idea) of seeking patronage of older men who can be asked to pay for school fees, or to help find employment or support young children. However, such transactional sex puts young women at risk of violation, pregnancy and hence loss of educational opportunities.

The loss of patronage and lost educational opportunities in themselves can lead to a future in prostitution. The price is a life of increasing insecurity rather than security and empowerment. Sexuality becomes the only qualification that young women in these contexts feel they have that they can exchange for education or a job. Such transactional sex is a major form of violation of personal dignity and well being.

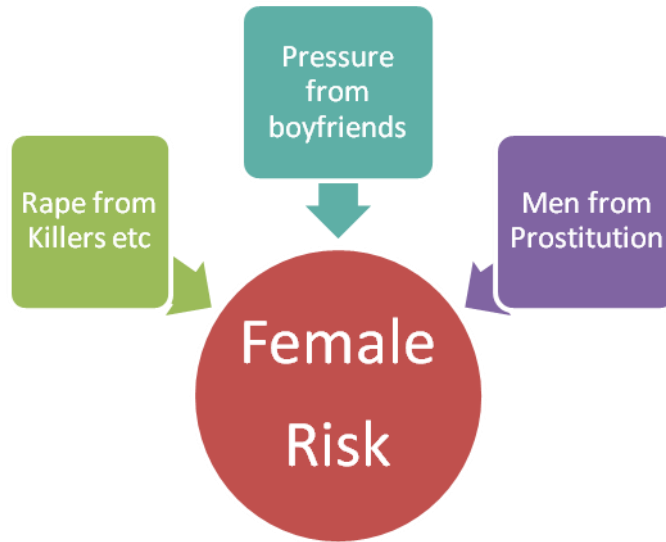
The third type of sexuality Oduro calls *street sexuality*. As we have already seen in the case of township youth, out of school girls, lured by freedom of the city or avoiding family abuse, face extreme violence and violation. The extent of sexual violence experienced by the 24 (17 girls and 7 boys) street youth interviewed by Oduro is appalling in its detail.

Street freedom and female risk

Concepts of healthy sexuality and the conduct of decent sexual practices are not new to Africa. The local traditions and customs in the forms of taboos which exist in most African societies aim to ensure the observance of decent and acceptable sexual conduct - according to Ankomah (1997) child sexual abuse was traditionally unknown in Ghanaian society and culprits were regarded as perverts. Also, women's bodies were considered very special and required great care regarding how it was handled by men. Nnuroh (2006), writing on sexuality among the Nzemas of Ghana, observed that forced sex was regarded as a taboo with heinous consequences. Similarly, the act of sex in public was deemed demeaning and highly unacceptable. However, the experiences of the vulnerable youth in Oduro's study revealed how poverty, exclusion and other factors forced many of them into such unacceptable and dangerous sexual practices. Street experiences of young people were highly embedded in sexual abuse, power relations and gender dynamics. Among the common themes identified by young people were: sexual abuse, sexual exchange for protection and the lack of privacy and decency in their sexual conduct. While both boys and girls experienced these challenges, but girls appeared the most vulnerable as the data below demonstrates.

The Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service reported a total of 1072 cases of defilement⁷ and 249 cases of rape between January 1999 and December, 2002. This figure increased to 267 for rape cases alone in 2005. Reported cases however are just a tip of the iceberg⁸. The dangerous and volatile context of street life mean that girls find themselves at the mercy of male dominance and control. The girls seem placed in a highly gendered situation encountering risk from these three powerful sources (their regular boyfriends/minders, the so-called 'killers' on the street and men from prostitution) which is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: The three streams of men and risks encountered by street girls



The line between public sex (prostitution/multiple relationships) and private sex (sex with boyfriend or regular partner) is highly blurred. Oduro's research indicates the prevalence of sexual abuse practiced on girls living on the streets. Lack of shelter and accommodation resulting in the sleeping in open places exposed the girls in particular to gender-based sexual violence in the form of frequent individual and gang rape – and the consequent need to seek male protection:

- Lizzie: The truth is rape is so common here so it is not safe to stay here with no boyfriend. If you are even sent on an errand by some of the big girls, the boys can ambush and rape you. Especially, if they think you are proving too difficult and resisting their sexual advances. They rape you to shame and quieten you.
- Int: So who are those who do the raping? The matured or younger boys?
- Lizzie: They are normally the older boys. There is a group of boys known as 'killers'. They are horrible, they go and 'light'⁹ and rape girls in turns. There are a few occasions that some of the younger boys also do it.

Like Lizzie, Blessing also argued, '*obia yebi, nkokoraa mpo ka ho*', translated as 'everybody rapes here, both young and old'. The connection between street life and drugs has been well documented and the young people mentioned how rapists sometimes used drugs for their activities. There was evidence of gang rapes as well – Musa and Beebe, two 16 year olds described these vividly:

Madam, actually the girls suffer too much. I don't even understand why they are still here. There is a group there known as 'killers' and if you are not lucky and the killers are going on their night rounds and you are a girl and happen to

be sleeping alone. [shaking the head], you are dead. They can rape you in turns, maybe about 5 men and I think that is why all the girls struggle to find a boy who will sleep by her side at night (Musa, 16 yrs boy).

Hmm! Hope you've heard about 'the killers'. If you are not lucky and they get you, 'O lala' [a kind of desperate expression]. They can arrange for about 20 men to rape you in turns. Yesterday, they had Miss X and raped her. She returned with all her eyes red, she's been crying... As for me, I have reported him (killer) to the police woman that I work for and she got him arrested. He went to prison for 2 months and came back worse off than he went. I think he is mad. He is always looking for people to rape. Miss X told me, she is going to report him to the police but I told her not to waste her time because it won't yield any results (Beebe, 16 yrs girl).

Attitudes such as exhibited by some of the girls in this study contribute to the problem of under-reporting of sexual violence in most societies as girls tend to be blamed for courting the rape. Concurring with Boakye-Boaten's (2006) case study of 11 Ghanaian street youths, Oduro found the stigma associated with sexual abuse discouraged some victims from talking about their experiences. There was also a power dimension because a victim of street rape was normally perceived by her peers as being weak: 'the truth is, most girls feel shy to tell others that she has been raped so she keep quiet and suffer in silence' (Happy, 17 years, street boy). The youth further explained that being associated with rape may affect their prospects of getting a regular lover or even losing an existing one hence the silence. This position was shared by 14-year-old Cilla as: 'although it was not the fault of girls who were raped, some boys leave their girls when they are raped with the excuse that, I don't want to be identified as the boy whose girl was raped'.

There were attempts by some girls to protect themselves against rapists by wearing very tight pair of trousers when sleeping: 'our biggest problem is sleeping at night. Some of us tremble when night is approaching because of the frequency of rape. In trying to protect ourselves, we wear very tight trousers which are not easy to remove' (Beebe). Another girl explained;

it is better to sleep with your trousers or shorts on. If you wear a skirt or dress, you make it too easy for them. '*Enie, mbema no omo be paapaa wo. Wo be sori no na omo aye wo paasaa*', [then the men will have easy access to you and tear you up. By the time you wake up] then it's too late' (Golda, 15 years, street girl).

Both girls, however, said wearing tight trousers was not an assured security against rape. Golda further remarked:

but even with the trousers, they try to cut the under with blade and rape you through the hole. There was an instance when they nearly cut someone's vagina while trying to cut her jean trousers. The blade cut her skin and she screamed and the people ran away (Golda, 15 year old).

As a result girls in the street hardly sleep deeply during the night. There were comments like; ‘here you have to learn not to be a deep sleeper’, ‘can you imagine sleeping so deeply on the street with all the mosquitoes, insects and noise around? Yet, some girls sleep so heavily and the boys get them’. A number of street girls entered into sexual relationships with boys as a form of protection from such violations.

Sexual Exchange: The Security Option

The insecurities experienced by the youth during the night force many of them to arrange for their own networks of protection. While the boys do that by bonding with senior and hardened boys to protect them, the girls entered into sexual relationships with some of the strong boys who slept by them at night to drive off potential rapists. The fear of insecurity at night culminated in many girls engaging in sexual exchanges. Most of the street girls said they engaged the services of boy minders who demanded sexual favours in exchange for protection.

It is true that you feel a bit secure with a boyfriend around you, because he will sleep by you at night. But sometimes, even when your boy is with you and the ‘killers’ come around; they can beat you and your boyfriend, especially if you are not able to give them money. They beat the boy and rape you. After all they are older and stronger than your boy (Love, 18 years, street girl).

On the whole the girls felt it was more stable emotionally for a girl to know that she has a boyfriend or a minder who will provide security for her against the humiliating experiences of rape, particularly gang rape. However, for some, there were times when stronger boys overpowered their boyfriends or minders and raped them while their boyfriends watched helplessly as shown in this extract.

Hmm! It’s not easy. There is this other place called the ‘spoon’, if you dare sleep there, even if you are sleeping with your boyfriend, they can beat him and rape you under his eyes, *filifili* [expression, indicating right under his eyes] (Happy, 17 years, street boy).

Out of desperation, some girls said they took the risk of openly embarrassing suspected rapists as reported here by Cilla:

You see, if there is a guy worrying you with proposals here and there. You just disgrace him in public so he stops harassing you. When he tries to get closer to you, you just shout, ‘oh stop worrying me, if you want sex and I won’t allow you, is it by force?’ All the others will laugh at him; he will feel so ashamed and stop worrying you. Others might however plan to gang rape you for embarrassing them, so you have to be very careful after that (Cilla, 14 years, street girl).

Some girls also reported arming themselves with knives for the purpose of defence in case of sexual violence. This was shared in one of the group discussions as shown here:

Int: So what are some of the strategies you use in protecting your selves here?

Rita: As for me, I keep knife on me. If you try, I stab you and free myself.

Int: Really?

Rukuya: Yes, because we are on the street a lot of things happen to us. So we the girls had a meeting and planned to keep knives¹⁰ on us to defend ourselves.

Bernice: '*Me die, metu me nan awo wo bema*', [as for me I will hit the penis with my leg].

Mercy: I had this experience with a man who was pressurising me. We were in the room alone and I realised that he wanted to rape me, so I looked around and there was this sharp pen lying there, I picked it and hit his erected penis, I think the pain was so sharp and I managed to run away. I was really lucky.

The Dilemma of Privacy

Contrary to a general perception among some Ghanaians that the open life style of street youth makes them insensitive to shameful behaviour, the young people in this study expressed concern about the lack of privacy in their sexual experiences. The girls in particular found the practice of engaging in sex in open places such as lorry stations and parks very disturbing and humiliating. Some perceived it as disgraceful and dehumanising since such practices, according to them, are associated with animals and not human beings.

Sometimes the boys force us. '*Se mbema dea, se omo feelings baa, ho se obi dahobi*'. [as for boys when they are aroused, they don't mind that there are people around]. They will just jump over you for sex especially when you are sleeping by them at night. But the thing is we don't have our separate rooms and it is not always that the light is off. It can be very embarrassing (Tina, 14 years).

Lizzie confirmed the lack of privacy that characterise their sexual practices as, 'even if the girl tell the boy that she is shy because other people are around and the light is on, the boy does not mind her and goes ahead'.

Madam you see, at *aplodo* (street), we don't have our own rooms or any privacy, both girls and boys sleep together. So it is common to see the boy and girl lie side by side like they are chatting. He then penetrates the girl from the side or through the back. As for that place, we do all sorts of things (Danee, 17 years, street boy).

The behaviour of these boys reflects a predatory masculinity and uncontrollable sexuality. It is clear that the lack of shelter and practice of boys and girls sleeping together leads to unregulated sexual practices on the streets.

Prostitution and risk

In their day to day experiences, street youth resort to prostitution in order to survive. Though prostitution is illegal in Ghana, it emerged as a strong theme for managing poverty and ensuring survival on the street, a fact that is well documented. Some youth expressed strong dislike for the practice but felt compelled to do it:

Hmm madam, it is not our wish ... If anyone will go into prostitution, it is because of poverty. You need to eat and cannot steal. You see your friends dressed and as a teenager you also wish to look fine so you end up doing it (Beebe, street girl).

The truth is, it's difficult being on the street. Sometimes you know very well that, the life you are living is not good and people of your age shouldn't be living like that. But what else can you do, you have no choice and you are compelled to do the easiest thing by selling your body for money (some silence) but it's difficult. Just imagine sleeping with any body at all, even if you don't like the person, but you need his money (Francisca, 17 years, street girl).

It also emerged that some girls felt forced into prostitution rather than trading or carrying loads by their female friends. Accordingly, new arrivals initially refuse the practice. The old ones therefore tolerate them for about a week, feed and groom them and start making comments like; 'I can't sell my body to feed you', 'you are also a girl and have the V [vagina], so use it for your survival', 'if you are not willing to do it, you better go home or you will starve to death'. Old and experienced girls therefore take pains to consciously teach new arrivals about the acts of enticing men and the facts of the trade as exemplified below in the boys discussion.

Whilst the girls learnt the details of the sex trade and how to perfect in it, it emerged that some boys also encouraged their girlfriends to get involved for the survival of them both. This assertion was confirmed by some of the boys but with doubts as to the genuineness of the love that such boys have for their girls. This was articulated by Blessing as follows:

Yes, it is true. Some boys beg their girls to go and do *ashawo* (prostitute). They are not even ashamed that their girls do such things. But me, I think those boys don't love the girls. If you love your girl, you will not allow someone else to enter her 'bible' [vagina]. ... Sometimes they say things like, ehm, it's not my body and she is not my mother or sister (Blessing, 15 years, street boy).

This scenario reflects gender power relations where some boys see the bodies of girls as sexual objects. Raping girls, encouraging them into prostitution and detaching their emotions from their sexual practices as reflected in Blessings assertion where some boys argue that ‘its not my body or is she my mother or sister’ speaks of nothing but disrespect and humiliation as well as power and control. The young men see women as objects of consumption, violation and conquest. Their attitudes could be partly attributed to the effects of pornography. Most of the youth in Oduro’s study of school youth and street youth consume pornographic material from magazines and/or the internet. However, while the school youth had community and adult support as well as institutions like schools and religion to neutralise some of the negative effects of pornography, the street youth lacked this. As Smith (1976 cited in Scully and Marolla 1995, p.68) observes, ‘the popularity of violent pornography suggests that a wide variety of men in this culture have learned to be aroused by sex fused with violence. Oduro argues that pornography could have contributed to the actualisation of some of the sexual fantasies and adventures of the street youth in this study.

Generally, while street girls reported using condoms at the ‘square’ for prostitution, there was no evidence that safe sex was practiced between regular lovers reflecting in the frequent pregnancies and numerous teenage mothers on the street even though they associated HIV/AIDS with much fear and constructed it in very deadly terms. Apparently, both boys and girls associated the use of condoms with prostitution and therefore did not see the need for its use in regular relationships. Statements such as ‘from what I hear those who go to the ‘square¹¹’ use condoms but not lovers’ (Cilla); ‘ If it is my boyfriend no condoms, but those days that I went to the square, I was using condoms’ (Love); ‘I know, the girls even prefer raw games (sex without condoms) than us boys. They will only use condoms when they are going for prostitution at the square but if it is sex with a lover, then no condoms’ (Danee, 17 years, street boy). Beebe’s argument below sums up the young people’s views against condoms in regular sex:

Madam, if I am your girlfriend, why do we have to use condom? But I know that those who go to that place at night for men use it. Even if you the girl are afraid of pregnancy and you ask the boy to use rubber, he will tell you that, you don’t love him or trust him. He will also say, it is not sweet with rubber so he prefers it raw (Beebe, 16 years, street girl).

It is obvious that the dangers of street life and associated risk are enormous for the life and health of the youth. Anarfi (1999) identified the street as a high-risk environment from his study. In his study of STD’s and HIV/AIDS among 91 street youth through an STD clinic, he noted that, conditions such as ‘vaginal discharge, genital ulcer, pain at ulcer, lower abdominal pain, dysuria, *pruritus vulvae*, pain during sexual intercourse, swollen testis, fever, diarrhoea and urethral discharge’ were commonly reported among street youth after initial unsuccessful attempts at self- medication (ibid. p.86).¹² Anarfi further discovered three HIV/AIDS cases among his number of study participants.

Bhana’s (2007) study of childhood sexuality and rights in the context of HIV/AIDS among 7 and 8 year-old South Africans confirmed that disease, poverty and hunger were cofactors to HIV/AIDS infection and all these factors were present in the lives of the street youth.

Evidence further suggests that girls are more likely than boys to develop STDS because of their increased involvement in commercial sex as well as the nature of the female anatomy. Unfortunately, they (street girls) have been found to rarely identify it when they acquire STDs because of their low levels of education. This confirms the enormous health risks posed by street youth to themselves and the general population.

ENDING VIOLENCE: THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD LISTEN TO US!

The YGC project in Nairobi and Accra focused on how young people living in urban poverty constructed their rights as citizens and how they identified what needed to change to improve their lives. Key to this discussion was the need for governments to listen to them. In Kibera, the site of considerable election violence in 2007, youth showed themselves to be deeply concerned about the violence in their community. Young women were of the view that politics not only entailed corruption but also violence, including the raping of women. 21-year-old Hana when asked if she was interested in political life commented: ‘Ai, no, I am not interested in politics’:

You know politics is a dirty game ...Like the other day women went up there at X [a politician’s] rally. They were given money, After that being given that money, they were raped. So why should I wake up early in the morning, clean my house and cup to take tea, to go for only one hundred shillings only to come back with injuries.

Asman described the sense of betrayal that governments had not delivered his rights and that violence was not just to be found amongst youth such as himself but also associated with political parties:

Asman: Yeah, there are things that bother me. Just the other day you saw violence every day, tear gas, gang shots many things came up. Neighbours fighting, that’s politics. (...)

Int: And you have already violated?

Asman: You have already violated [the law], pouring of blood, if it’s killing you have killed, you have done many things, you see? So they will not care about us, so we will have to care about ourselves for them to know our rights. They should understand us, politics nowadays has become a business. If you want me to go to Parliament, I must have money and if I don’t have money I will not get there, I will not succeed.

Poverty, social exclusion and the perceived corruption of the government militates against any chance of social improvement of young people’s lives. In the words of Mukhebi ‘ When they [politicians] fulfil their promises they give us morale to vote but when they don’t fulfil, it brings it down’ . The concept of political involvement that emerged in discussions with these youth revealed their forms of social participation, often of a less conventional type such as engagement in small scale clubs focusing on local issues in their community. The aim was to

ensure a peace co-existence of different ethnic groups, sub tribes, to respect others' values, to seek agreement and stop the fighting.

There is also evidence in the YGC study that young people in Nairobi and Accra wish to find ways of ensuring that politicians' listen to their concerns and address the poverty, the violence and the conflicts which shape their lives. Asman for example, stressed the importance of listening: 'the government don't care for our young people, it is the problem'. If listened to youth, there would more schooling and more employment, as a result less theft, less muggings in order to steal. In Kibera, the young people pointed out that honouring their rights of citizenship in a responsible way required taking pride in their community and responsibility in ensuring that their community was habitable for everybody. One way was to engage in activities that keep their environment clean and productive. Hence, activities like garbage collection, engaging in income generation activities. Further, they expressed their responsibility in ensuring that they protect the rights of vulnerable groups like children by reporting rights violations to the police. Both female and male youth raised concerns about the lack of proper security where young men talked about getting mugged and young women feared being raped as they went about their business. 17 year old Catherine asked the government to 'make me safe' adding... [politicians] should look into my safety issue'.

A central element in any government reform for their community was free education: 'there is nothing like free. There is no free education'. Stanley: 'here in Kibera we don't have any secondary school. None'. Youth were confident that their lives could be improved through the provision by the government of school fees and bursaries to go to university but also stopping violence against children in schools, improving school hygiene, and increasing the number of teachers employed by the government. As Wambui pointed out stop 'Beating the children, children should be warned first before they are beaten. They should NOT be beaten without a genuine reason. (...)'. Similarly youth in Accra talked about the violence in school.

In both Nairobi and Accra, young people described the benefits of schooling in relation to conflict reduction. The young men particularly spoke about needing to ensure peaceful co-existence as an outcome of school not least by listening, by self discipline and keeping control, not forcing principles on other people. Key to that improved communication skill was interaction with the opposite sex. Mixed secondary schooling clearly had an effect of encouraging young men to see girls as their 'sisters' and for girls to redefine boys as their 'brothers'. Not only could schooling provide knowledge about the dangers of pregnancy and of HIV/AIDS but also of choice of husband in marriage, the need to be a good father or mother, to protect their children and family from drunkenness and to offer respect to their partners. This personal moral agenda offered mainly through secondary schooling offered the possibility of reducing sexual violence and violation of girls - gender socialization in mixed classrooms could according to these youth teach them that women have talents, that they can help men. As Tony and Obura from Kibera commented:

[secondary schooling] has helped me because we were in a place where we dewelled with the girls, played and so on, so if not for the existence of school you would be seeing girls and have crazy thoughts [of a sexual nature].

They (the teachers) did at some point..... how maybe I interact with the other; the other side of the opposite sex. It [schooling] made me to develop a deeper understanding of the opposite sex.. It also enable me to know the wrong of the two of us – of the opposite sex. Maybe it... opened my mind may be to understand who a woman is and a man is. Maybe in terms of productivity, sexual productivity and something like that ..

Schooling clearly played a major part in terms of redefining sexual relations. It helped young women in Accra know about self-protection (even if as we have seen this might not necessarily be translated into practice). The Ghanaian girls reported that they were beginning to ‘keep themselves as girls’ – keeping a public image of a hygienic and healthier body and life style. This raised their self- esteem although many were found to leave school because of pregnancy. Nevertheless there was high level of sexual activity amongst young girls and even prostitution. Schooling of itself was not sufficient to counter the dangers within these community.

CONCLUSION

This paper raises a number of important issues not all of which can be addressed sufficiently here. As the COHRE report (2008) concluded urbanisation is itself ‘neither a panacea nor a malevolence is here to stay’ (4).

For the first time in human history, the majority of people... are no longer living in rural areas but rather in cities. The trends show no sign of abating, and the world of the future will likely be one with exploding urban populations and the rise of more and more ‘mega-cities’. (p. 4)

A major concern therefore for the international community is to consider how best to address gender and equality and girls’ schooling within such urban environments. Violence as we have seen is gender based but in a complex way. Various forms of violence have been normalised and employed, as we have seen, as responses to the structural violence of marginalisation and social exclusion. In such poverty contexts young men and women take up violence as a means of gaining respect, of seeking revenge, of feeling empowered in the context of powerless and statelessness. Arguably the forms of youth violence increases in contexts where governments have failed to provide the rights of citizens for a secure life through at the very least, good housing, education and employment. Politicians too may exploit rather than reduce ethnic and community violence amongst youth.

Urban youth, particularly slum dwellers are now understood to be in crisis, associated with rising crime and increasing victimisation and exploitation. These images however fail to address the subtle forms of negotiation and navigation¹³ that youth employ to survive in contexts where there is much reduced family support, family breakdown, high levels of unemployment and few educational opportunities to help them improve their lives. Youth violence becomes the means of self-protection since social institutions fail them. The

evidence from our studies suggest that schools can be safe havens and sites of learning about protection but that often they allow violence within their walls. Young people out of school are most at risk, whilst secondary educated youth are the most likely to have learnt to avoid violence where they can.

Our various research project highlight the need to hear the voices of different groups of youth – differently positioned within this one habitat. Within the urban slums young women enter into potentially dangerous sexual relations with young or older men, where they have little control and great dependency. The greatest danger to them is living on the streets where they are outside the safety nets of the state and society. Male sexual violence against young women is a complex phenomenon of protection, abuse and violation. For those young women living in acute poverty without adequate education to give them financial independence in a world in which there is no security, the danger to their lives is extreme. Effective educational provision, legal protection urban planning which is focused on women's safety, and other remedies (such as shelters) are needed urgently. Evidence from Oduro's research suggests that this protection is welcomed by street youth but it is mainly provided by NGOs rather than government.

Another key argument put forward here is that schooling for girls is essential but that it must create the conditions for a different set of gender relations in which young women's experiences can be discussed, that their experiences not just in families and schools but of men are understood and that they are supported in attempting to redefine sexual relations in ways that give them dignity and agency. Their dependence on men through marriage, patronage or protection makes them extremely vulnerable. The concept of sexual and reproductive citizenship (Richardson 2000) has much to offer the debate about the sexual and reproductive rights of young women to choose when, with whom and where to have sexual relations, whom to marry when to have children and how many.

Secondly, that young men need to recognise the ways in which masculinity and violence come together. The UN report on *Male Roles, Masculinities and Violence* (Breines, Connell and Eide 2000) opened the debate however the voices of young men living in such poor environments are only beginning to be heard. The development of peace education, anti-violence education and also the promotion of concepts such as affective equality where men recognise the contribution, talents and value of care, of a caring form of fatherhood and of male emotional development within the family and community.

In sum, if the voices of urban youth teaches us anything it is that the task for educationists is now one of working with the experiences and values of young people who can identify what is needed to challenge the violence inflicted on them by the poverty in which they find themselves and the denial of their human rights, and the violence they themselves inflict on themselves and on others. Such violation and violence however must be contextualised with the habitats in which they live for it is these habitats which shape their lives.

REFERENCES

- Anarfi, J.K (1997) 'Vulnerability to sexually transmitted disease: street children in Accra' *Health Transition Review*, Supplement to Vol. 7. pp 281-306
- Ankomah, A. (1997) 'The International Encyclopedia of Sexuality: Ghana' in R.T. Francoeur, (ed) in *the International Encyclopedia of Sexuality. Vol. 1 Argentina to Greece*.
- Bhana, D (2007): Childhood sexuality and rights in the context of HIV/AIDS in *Culture, Health and Sexuality*. 9 (3) pp. 309-324
- Boakye-Boaten, A (2006): *An examination of the phenomenon of street children in selected communities in Accra (Ghana)*. Unpublished PhD thesis submitted to the Department of Educational Studies and the College of Education (Ohio University).
- Breines, I., Connell, R. and Eide, I (2000) *Male Roles, Masculinities and Violence: a culture of peace perspective*, Paris, UNESCO publishing.
- Burton, R. (2008). *Snapshot Results of the Cjcp National Schools Violence Study* (Research Bulletin No. 2). Cape Town: Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention.
- Buur, L., & Jensen, S. (2004) 'Vigilantism and the Policing of Everyday Life in South Africa', *African Studies*, 63(2), 139-152.
- The Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) (2008) *Women, Slums and Urbanisation: examining the causes and consequences*. www.cohre.org accessed 25.3.10.
- Davis, M. (2007) *Planet of the Slums*, London, Verso
- De Waal, A. (2002) 'HIV/AIDS and Young Africans' in De Waal, A and Argenti, N (eds) 2002. *Young Africa: Realising the Rights of Children and Youth*. Trenton N.J. and Asmara, Eritrea:Justice Africa-Africa World Press inc.
- Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service (2005): *Official Statistics from 1999-2005*, Accra-Ghana
- Hobsbawm, E. (1998). *Uncommon People: Resistance, Rebellion and Jazz*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
- Jones, G. A. and Chant, S. (2009) 'Globalising initiatives for gender equality and poverty reduction: exploring 'failure' with reference to education and work among urban youth in The Gambia and Ghana, *Geoforum*, 40, 184-196
- Kabajuni's (2009) *Urbanisation and gender: attention to gender equality in efforts to improve the lives of slum dwellers*, UN Division for the Advancement of Women, EGM/BPFA MDG/2009/EP.8

- Kiwala, L. Masaud, A. and Njenga, C. (2009) 'Climate change is not gender neutral' *Urban World*, 27-30
- Langevang, T. (2008) 'Claiming place: the production of young men's street meeting places in Accra, Ghana' Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography. .
- Mufweba, Y. (2003, 7 November) 'Corrective Rape Makes You an African Woman' *Saturday Star*.
- Nnuroh, D. F. (2006): Marital Morality and Sexual Vulnerability in Ellembele Nzema Society in C. Oppong, M.A.P.A. Oppong and I.K. Odotei (eds) (2006) *Sex and Gender in an Era of AIDS: Ghana at the turn of the millennium.*, Legon Accra-Ghana, Sub-Saharan publishers
- Oppong, C, Oppong P. A and Odotei, I. K, (2006): *Sex and Gender in an Era of AIDS: Ghana at the turn of the Millennium*. Sub-Saharan publishers, Legon-
- Owusu, G., Agyei-Mensah, S. and Lund, R. (2008) 'Slums of hope and slums of despair: mobility and livelihoods in Nima, Accra, *Norwegian Journal of Geography* 62, 3, 180-190.
- Raffaelli M, Campos R, Merrit AP, Siqueira E, Antunes C.M, Parker R, Greco M, Greco D and Halsey N (1993) 'Sexual practices and attitudes of street youth in Belo Horizonte, Brazil', *Social Science and Medicine*, Vol. 37 (5) pp.661-670
- Reddy, V., Potgieter, C.-A., & Mkhize, N. (2007)'Cloud over the Rainbow Nation', *HSRC Review*, 5(1), 9-10.
- Richardson, D (2000): Constructing sexual citizenship: theorizing sexual rights in *Critical Social Policy*. Vol. 20 (1) pp. 105-135
- Seekings, J. (1993). *Heroes or Villains? : Youth Politics in the 1980s*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press (for Joint Enrichment Project and Community Agency for Social Enquiry).
- Scully, D. and Marolla, J. (1995): "Riding the Bull at Gilley's": Convicted Rapists Describe the Rewards of Rape in *Rape and Society: Readings on the Problem of Sexual Assault* (eds) Patricia Searles and Ronald Berger Westview Press; USA pp. 58-73
- Shanahan, F. P (2001): The Alternative Africa: Street Children in Ghana. Conference on Exploring the realities of street children in Africa held at the University of Zimbabwe. Accessed from <http://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cyc0201-shanahan2.html> accessed on 22/07/2009.
- Swartz, S. (2009) *The Moral Ecology of South Africa's Township Youth*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan.
- UN (2007) *Strategy Paper on Urban Youth in Africa*. Available at <http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/Publications.aspx?page=ByTheme&categoryID=299> Accessed 26.3.10

UN Habitat (2008-2013) *Gender Equality Action Plan: Gender Equality for a Better Urban Future*. www.unhabitat.org accessed 25.3.10.

WHO (2004): Gender, Women and Health: Sexual Violence retrieved from http://www.who.int/gender/violence/sexual_violence/en/index.html on 24/03/2010

¹ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against women No. 19 Violence against women, A/47/38 11 Jan. 1992 UN General Assembly Resolution 48/104 Available online <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>

² See M. Jaechef and M. van Geldermalsen *Gender Equality and Urban Development. Global Urban Development* 2,1, March <http://www.globalurban.org/GUDMag06Vol2Iss1/Jaechel%20&%20van%20Geldermalsen.htm>

³ See UN (2007) and UN Habitat (2008-13).

⁴ Thulani's mother had broken his nose on one occasion and when asked why he hadn't defended himself he replied: 'Because I can't, I can't, she's my mother. So I can't beat my mother'. Similarly, Xolani came to an interview on one occasion with a badly bruised neck. His father had beaten him with a cricket bat because he had 'talked back' to his father at a braai they were having - he told his father they must wait for someone who had paid for meat but who wasn't there yet. Xolani did not raise an arm or a fist to his father to stop him. He endured his punishment because he said his father had 'a right' to beat him.

⁵ This practice has come to be known as 'corrective rape' and is known to occur in South African townships (Mufweba, 2003; V. Reddy, Potgieter, & Mkhize, 2007).

⁶ Nearly half of young people included a lack of respect (or *dissing*) as an item under the category 'wrong' – with twice as many young men doing so as young women.

⁷ Defilement is explained in the constitution of Ghana (1992) as a criminal act that involves having sex with a girl who is 17 years or below with or without her consent, rape on the other hand refers to the criminal act of sexually assaulting a female who is 18 years or above without her consent.

⁸ As reported by WHO (2004) and a number of studies in different countries, rape cases are seldom reported for numerous reasons including shame, stigma, protecting family name among other things. Raffaelli et al (1993) combining qualitative and quantitative methods in the study of early and diverse sexual experiences of street children in Brazil discovered the prevalence of sexual abuse among this group. Similarly, 2007 in an ethnographic study of youth sexuality among street boys in Dessie, Ethiopia discovered that sexual abuse abounded in this marginalised group.

⁹ Smoke marijuana, what is popularly known as 'wee' in Ghana

¹⁰ It however emerged that, none of these youth had stabbed someone before though they plan to should it become necessary.

¹¹ 'Square' is a renowned venue for prostitution in the study site

¹² See De Waal, 2002.

¹³ See Langevang (2008), Owusu, Agyei-Mensah, and Lund (2008)