Young People and Learning Processes in School and Everyday Life 4

Ylva Odenbring
Thomas Johansson *Editors*

Violence, Victimisation and Young People

Education and Safe Learning Environments

Springer

Young People and Learning Processes in School and Everyday Life

Volume 4

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ISSN 2522-5642 ISSN 2522-5650 (electronic)
Young People and Learning Processes in School and Everyday Life
ISBN 978-3-030-75318-4 ISBN 978-3-030-75319-1 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75319-1

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Ylva Odenbring and Thomas Johansson

Uncertain Times: Youth, Violence and Precariousness

Youth and youth culture are sometimes seen as *seismographs* of social and cultural changes, alerting us to new subjectivities and societal transformations (Johansson & Herz, 2019). In this sense, when we study young people, we are also studying society, and societal change. The transitional period between childhood and adulthood has gradually become extended, and today we also often talk about *young adults* or *emerging adulthood*. In some contexts, young people stay in school much longer and become parents later in life. There is great variation in how young people relate to these changes, to life and to emerging adulthood. In this book, we will combine insights from the discussion on emerging adulthood, youth studies, theories of violence, and theories of gender and intersectionality. Combining conceptual work on gendered identities and sexuality with ideas of stratification, inequality, and the transformation of the meaning of social positions, we will approach the main theme of this book: *young people, violence, harassments and precariousness*.

Our ambition in publishing the current edited collection is to approach the contemporary landscape of violence and harassment by presenting a number of highly relevant international studies of everyday violence, precariousness, gender and safe/unsafe learning environments. The scholars contributing to this collection have been asked to write their chapters so as to connect to these themes. This collection aims to take an international approach to issues of violence and harassment in young people's lives by critically exploring and discussing empirical data from different local and national contexts. We will, however, not – in any systematic way – compare different national and local contexts. Most of the studies included in this

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Y. Odenbring, T. Johansson (eds.), *Violence, Victimisation and Young People*, Young People and Learning Processes in School and Everyday Life 4,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75319-1_1

volume are based upon qualitative research, and we lack sufficient data to enable us to generalize and compare different national differences and similarities. Still, we hope that this anthology and the different contributions can contribute to an interest in more systematic comparisons and international analysis of violence and harassments in and out of school. Consequently, the chapters in this collection are intended to address to a wider international audience and to be of interest to educators as well as policymakers around the world.

Student Victimization, Education and Learning Environments

School is a place where young people spend much of their time and one of the places where they are at great risk of being exposed to harassment and violations (Gottfredson & DiPietro, 2011). When addressing questions on violence, what often comes to mind is physical violence. American studies on school violence often focus on school shootings and extreme physical violence. In European studies on school violence, there is often a spectrum of forms of violence, ranging from physical violence to bullying and harassment.

Since the mid-1970s the Swedish psychologist Olweus (1978) have had a great influence on our understanding of conflicts, violence and abuse in schools (see also, Pikas, 2002; Wilton et al., 2000). The heritage of Olweus and his colleagues is still strong, and hegemonic in bullying studies. In these theories of conflicts, abuse and violence a psychological perspective dominates. There is often also a clear relation between victims and perpetrators. The perpetrator often has an aggressive and abusive personality, and the victim an anxious and dependent personality. When these personalities encounter each other in school, the conditions for bullying are at hand. Today the international research on bullying is massive and growing (Hammarén et al., 2015). In this research violence and abusive behavior is often – but not always – framed on an individualistic level, disconnected from social contexts, power relations and social inequity. In this book, we have instead chosen to frame and analyze harassments, abusive behavior and conflicts in relation to power structures and social position. This does not mean that we neglect earlier research on bullying, and the great contribution of this field of research, of course.

Looking more closely at contemporary studies on violence in schools, we can see that such violence tends to cluster in specific peer groups and around certain variables, where variables such as gender, sexuality and ethnicity stand out as predictors of victimization (Nekvasil & Cornell, 2012). Considering the variable of gender, female students generally report greater exposure to sexual harassment than male students do (Odenbring & Johansson, 2019b). Contemporary research has also shown that gendered acts of harassment often intersect with ethnicity, social class and sexuality (Odenbring & Johansson, 2019b; Rahimi & Liston, 2011).

The importance of gender is also particularly evident with regard to masculinity. Notions of masculinity and of being a victim may be conflicting as regards identities and may affect how male students handle situations of threat, violence and

harassment (Åkerström et al., 2011). The pressure to avoid being labelled as non-masculine and a 'fag' plays an important role here (Pascoe, 2013; Plummer, 2001). At many times, this creates a pressure for young men to 'join the game', and to participate in rough interactions with their friends. Making fun of each other becomes a normality, even though it is not appreciated equally by all participants. As a result, students often have difficulties deciding what should be seen and defined as violence or harassment.

Studies worldwide have demonstrated that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer students often face different forms of bullying in everyday life at school (Odenbring, 2019; Pascoe, 2013). Research also suggests that communities with conservative values and traditional masculine and feminine ideals often create a hostile school climate for these students (Bishop & Casida, 2011; Msibi, 2012). Compared to their heterosexual counterparts, sexual minority students have more mental health problems, higher rates of depression and increased risk of failing academically (Bishop & Casida, 2011; Martin-Storey & Crosnoe, 2012).

Taking a closer look at research on young people with a minority background, particularly boys with a minority background growing up in poor neighborhoods, they are more likely to be exposed to violence than are young people with majority background (Ellis et al., 2018). In school as well as in society at large, research shows that young minority boys are often categorized and positioned as violent, and sometimes even as dangerous (Haywood & Mac an Ghaill, 2013). Contemporary research also suggests that many young people with a minority background, regardless of gender, often experience everyday systematic racism in school and the surrounding community (Kohli, & Solórzano, 2012; Odenbring & Johansson, 2019a).[1]

There is a growing concern in many countries around the world that children and young people are at risk when they are at school. In the Nordic countries, for example, the tendency to treat unruly behavior, bullying and violence as crimes is quite a new phenomenon (Lunneblad, 2019; Lunneblad et al., 2017). This increased regulation by law has been described as a *process of juridification*. There is also a growing tendency to treat violence and unruly behavior in schools as personal and psychological problems. Instead of addressing these issues at the institutional and structural level, there is instead a focus on individually oriented solutions and psychiatric diagnosis (Odenbring et al., 2017).

The tendency to treat bullying, harassments, abusive behavior and violence as crimes is a complex matter. On the one hand, there is a lack of sound evidence that a more legal and repressive approach reduces the extent of violence in schools (Hammarén et al., 2015; Sharif, 2004). On the other hand, a by prosecuting degrading treatment and harassments the legal discourse may facilitate an increasing focus on children's and young people's vulnerability and put greater emphasize on schools creating safe learning environments.

[1] We are well aware of that the term 'minority background' is widely discussed among scholars. In this section, we have chosen to use the same term as the researchers who conducted these studies. However, in the different chapters the use of concepts such as minority, immigrants, ethnicity, 'race', will be discussed in relation to different national and local contexts.

Theories of Violence

There are many different ways of conceptualizing violence. In this volume we are focusing on different forms of structural and cultural violence. We will use Galtung's distinction between different levels of violence as a point of departure, but another ambition has been to get closer to the everyday life of young people own perspectives, and their experiences of violence, abusive behavior and harassments. The different studies will, thus, provide the reader with more detailed and precise information on how violence is enacted and played out in the everyday life of young people.

Johan Galtung (1990) distinguishes between direct, structural and cultural violence. *Direct violence* includes physical and psychological violence. It stretches from overt physical violence to different forms of harassment and hate speech. *Structural violence* is embedded in different power relations and societal hierarchies, for example, patriarchy and men's violence towards women and other men. *Cultural and symbolic violence* concern different forms of legitimation of violence, for example, when racist words and expressions are tolerated and even defended.

A great deal of the violence occurring in schools also takes the form of verbal harassment. These verbal assaults often include sexist and/or racist content. In *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*, Judith Butler (1997) explores and problematizes hate speech. These kinds of verbal assaults can result in *linguistic injuries*. In this sense, verbal/psychological violence is also a severe violent act. Calling people names and using derogatory labels constitute a common form of violence. However, Butler also wants to nuance and elaborate on the relation between speech and acts. She argues that name-calling can be the starting point for counter-mobilization and resistance. Butler states: "To insist on the gap between speech and conduct, however, is to lend support for the role of nonjuridical forms of opposition, ways of restaging and resignifying speech in contexts that exceed those determined by the courts" (Butler, 1997, p. 23). This skeptical position implies that we must be careful not to predetermine what should be seen as violent acts. There is instead a need to investigate and bring forward the complex and often contradictory aspects of school violence. In addition, there is a need for a critical discussion on the ongoing juridification of school violence. Instead of dialogues and pedagogical interventions, what we observe is an increasing tendency to treat interpersonal conflicts and verbal assaults as crimes, leading to different kinds of actions and interventions.

What we are approaching in the different chapters and studies in this volume, is an ongoing, but not always explicit and obvious, verbal and sometimes also physical enactment of different forms of violence. This form of *low-intense violence* can be defined as an intrinsic part of the normative regulations present in schools. In this sense, low-intense violence is interwoven with gendered structures and hierarchies, thus becoming naturalized and normalized. Low-intense violence is also ritualized and enacted in jokes, play, social interaction and basically everyday life and

encounters at school. This also makes it difficult and challenging to study and make visible everyday school violence.

Structure of the Book

In this book, a number of international scholars from Australia, Finland, Iceland, the United Kingdom and Sweden contribute chapters exploring different aspects of violence and harassment in schools and in young people's everyday lives. This collection focuses on and aims to examine young people, violence and issues of victimization in different educational context as well as in the everyday lives of young people in certain parts of the world. The collection includes 13 chapters, organized and presented under three main parts: *Power relations, homosociality and violence, Sexualized violence and schooling* and *Everyday racism, segregation and schooling*.

The first part on the themes of power relations, homosociality and violence focuses on masculinity, boyhood, different forms of homosocial relations among boys and well-being. In particular, we dig deeper into the relation between homosociality, gendered expectations and harassment.

This collection starts with Chap. 2, with research conducted by Elina Lahelma. Chapter 2 draws on results and interpretations from a previous study on the situation of sexual and gender-based harassment in Finnish schools in the mid-1990s. Although sexual and gender-based harassment were already mentioned in the Act of Gender Equality, in the 1990s the terms were hardly familiar even to teachers and were not discussed at school. Lahelma revisits her earlier analysis of the experiences of girls attending lower secondary school. She also presents some newer Finnish and international research in the field and refers to other chapters in this collection. In the final part of Chap. 2, Lahelma combines earlier conclusions with new findings and reflects on what has changed and what has remained the same in young people's experiences of and reflections on sexual and gender-based harassment in schools as well as in teachers' responses.

The violence that 'doesn't count' at school is explored by Victoria Rawlings in Chap. 3, Victoria Rawlings reviews data from students and teachers concerning acts of violence at school that target individuals' gender or sexuality, utilizing the work of Judith Butler – *The Force of Nonviolence* – to examine and interpret their accounts. In doing so, Rawlings argues that ubiquitous definitions of 'bullying' that emerge from the state and operate in schools and other institutions actively resist recognition of this type of violence, regardless of how it is manifested. By examining the ways in which students and teachers experience and define violence while being constrained by hegemonic policy narratives, Rawlings argues that, as it stands, bullying policy entrenches violence against minority groups in existing structural lines of oppression and subjugation. In doing so, bullying policy significantly tests the bonds between students and teachers, undermining their fundamental relationships. This analysis illustrates that a more nuanced, comprehensive and socially just

imagining of violence is needed to empathically and deliberately move towards nonviolence in schools.

In Chap. 4, David Plummer investigates the passage from childhood to manhood. This passage has long been recognized as the site for social engineering to turn boys into men – a period when 'real men' are made. While traditional societies typically orchestrated this transition through rituals entailing mentoring of young males by older men, modern society has largely handed responsibility for much of this passage over to the modern education system. For a number of reasons, a key difference in the modern transition is the reduced importance of adult males in the process. However, the passage itself remains as important as ever, and boys often find themselves resorting to alternative ways to collectively navigate this complex, high-pressure time. These arrangements can be both positive and negative. On the one hand, greater latitude is possible as boys re-work traditional masculinities into new forms. However, driven by masculine obligations and taboos, boys can also act out masculinity in extreme ways and punish transgressions severely, often using homophobia as the gender weapon of choice. At their most extreme, peer group politics can spill onto the streets and form gangs or gang-like groups with similar codes of conduct, but differing greatly in how extreme they are.

Research on joking cultures, masculinity and homosocial relations among teenage boys in lower secondary school is undertaken by Thomas Johansson and Ylva Odenbring in Chap. 5. The chapter draws on a meta-analysis of data from two different research projects and includes interviews with teenage students conducted in two lower secondary schools located in different rural areas in Sweden. The results in this chapter reveal that homosocial bonding and 'having fun together' can serve as a kind of glue in boys' social relationships at school. Yet, there are also situations when the fun-making actually crosses a boundary and turns into violence. According to Johansson and Odenbring, using jokes or fighting for 'fun' as a way to conceal different forms of harassment can be interpreted as part of the construction of a highly contradictory homosociality. Also, the tendency among the boys to trivialize different forms of everyday violence makes it difficult for most boys to actually discern when they have crossed the thin line between fun and harassment.

In Chap. 6, Chris Haywood and Ella Bending explore what happens when young men are hurting. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with 12 young men, this chapter explores their everyday experiences of partner-initiated relationship dissolution. More specifically, Haywood and Bending explore how educational contexts impact how young men manage feelings, such as loss, anxiety and anger, that emerge as a result of relationship breakup. While much work on men and violence provides an insight into how masculinity is made and constructed, this chapter explores the ways in which masculinity is fractured, displaced and lost. Furthermore, it examines young men's strategies for restoring and compensating for their sense of self and the role of educational well-being services in supporting them.

The collection then moves on to the second main part, *Sexualized violence and schooling,* in which sexual harassment and violence directed at sexual minority students are addressed. In this section, sexting, online sexual harassment, online victimization and homophobia are in particular focus.

This part starts with Chap. 7, presenting the research carried out by Carolina Lunde and Malin Joleby. Lunde and Joleby investigate young people's experiences of sexting and online sexual victimization. Lunde and Joleby look at the ways in which the Internet and smartphones are used for sexual purposes. Research focusing on adolescents' experiences of sexting, i.e., the creation, sharing, and forwarding of sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude images or video clips, is discussed. This research indicates that a substantial minority of young adolescents engage in sexting, and many report receiving sexts. Building on both quantitative and qualitative work, it is evident that experiences of sexting are complex, involving both positive and negative elements. It is also evident that sexting is surrounded by gendered norms, sexual double standards, and power issues. The chapter is also dedicated to research on online sexual abuse, outlining studies that have explored risk factors for, and consequences of, online sexual abuse. Perpetrator strategies when approaching young people online are discussed. One important lesson is that the adult world's lack of insight into adolescents' online world means that young people are left on their own to deal with online sexual encounters. The chapter ends with practical guidelines concerning how to address issues of sexuality, sexual interaction, and sexual abuse in the online setting. In Chap. 8, Kristina Hunehäll Berndtsson and Ylva Odenbring investigate how the dick pic has become a growing phenomenon among teenage students. The study draws on interviews with students in year nine in a lower secondary school (year 7–9) located in an affluent area in Sweden. The students' experiences of sexual harassment in the school are examined in relation to the school's context, based on the perception that school violence is characterized by both school culture and the local context. The results reveal that receiving dick pics is an everyday occurrence for girls. The most common way of handling the issue is to block the sender, but when the sender is a schoolmate, the girls in the study marked this by ignoring and not talking to the perpetrator. The students expressed unawareness that sending unsolicited pictures is a criminal act. This finding indicates the importance of preventing sexual harassment in school.

In Chap. 9, Jessica Ringrose, Kaitlynn Mendes, Sophie Whitehead, and Amelia Jenkinson explore how schooling cultures reproduce gender and sexual inequality, particularly focusing on how policies and practices legitimate and sanction what we will term 'rape culture'. Rape culture is a logic that normalizes practices of sexual shaming and blaming of the victims of abuse instead of focusing on tackling sexually aggressive and predatory forms of masculinity. Drawing on their research project entitled 'Documenting Digital Feminist Activism: Mapping feminist responses to new media misogyny and rape culture', in which teen feminists in the UK were interviewed, the authors explore girls' experiences of rape culture and how girls are tackling rape culture through their activism both at school and online. Drawing on the girls' experiences, the authors show that schools not only fail to support young people's civic voices, but that many actually actively dissuade activism that is viewed as disruptive to authority and school rules. This research shows that while some pupils possess the personal and social resilience and digital literacy skills necessary to cope with these challenges of speaking out against sexism and rape culture, many do not and that there is an urgent need for pedagogical interventions.

Responding to this gap, this chapter concludes by outlining a collaborative project aimed at developing new pedagogical resources on "Digital Defence & Activism Lessons" for UK schools using the sexuality education charity Sexplain. In Chap. 10, Jukka Lethonen analyzes the responses and stories of non-heterosexual and trans youth, based on data from a survey produced by the Finnish lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex human rights organization Seta and the Youth Research Network. The survey data used in this chapter consist of 1861 responses, out of which 994 were non-heterosexual women, 380 non-heterosexual men, 404 trans-masculine respondents and 83 transfeminine respondents. Lethonen argues that young people leave out of focus a part of violence that is linked to and/or based on heteronormative practices. These are also rather psychological and medical concepts, which often focus on individual behavior and emotions, and they do not always take into account larger societal issues and contexts.

In Chap. 11, Jón Ingvar Kjaran and Brynja Elísabeth Halldórsdóttir Gudjonsson discuss the concept of epistemic violence and how it can be applied when evaluating how LGBTQ students are still excluded from the curriculum, educational policy, and educational spaces in Icelandic schools. Kjaran and Halldórsdóttir draw on interviews with 10 students who identity as LGBT/queer and analysis of various policy documents. Theoretically, this chapter draws on queer theory, providing a theoretical framework and perspective for both teachers and researchers, the goal being to bring about change and transform education so that it serves the needs of all students. This is particularly important within educational contexts where the values of the dominant class and culture are often reproduced and forced upon the 'other'. In other words, teachers are agents and often part of the dominant culture, and therefore it is important to include in their education and training critical race awareness with a view to counteracting epistemic violence in education and teaching.

In the third part, *Everyday racism, segregation and schooling*, we look more closely at this theme and what effect it may have on the young people concerned. This section starts with Chap. 12, which is based on research conducted by Ylva Odenbring and Thomas Johansson. In this chapter, Odenbring and Johansson address everyday systemic racism in a Swedish rural lower secondary school, providing new insights into how students with various immigrant backgrounds experience everyday racism in school and being positioned as *the Other*. The results indicate that immigrant students, regardless of gender, were exposed to racist and degrading comments due to their immigrant background or the color of their skin. The boys' narratives also intersect with masculinity. During the interviews, the narratives of the immigrant boys also revealed that everyday racism was expressed through physical violence and that sometimes they also had to fight back. The micro-aggressions expressed by the racist comments as well as the physical violence aimed to immigrant students had a great impact on their well-being at school.

In Chap. 13, Marcus Herz and Philip Lalander investigate unaccompanied minors' experiences of schooling in Sweden. Herz and Lalander use ethnographic data on experience of school among young "unaccompanied minors" who arrived in Sweden between 2012 and 2016. For most of them, going to school was considered

an opportunity and sometimes as something that could take the edge off their everyday life, allowing them to think about something else for a change. For those who did not receive a positive decision regarding a residence permit, school became something fragile, associated with feelings of anxiety. Going to school or getting an education had its difficulties, even for those who received a positive decision regarding their ability to stay in Sweden. Many of the young people told of experiences of not being heard, being 'othered', being exposed to administrative and symbolic violence as well as racism.

In the final chapter of this collection, Chap. 14, Thomas Johansson and Ylva Odenbring explore how students in a lower secondary school in a disadvantaged urban neighborhood in Sweden experience and talk about everyday life and violence at school as well as in the local neighborhood. The results reveal that everyday life at school and in the neighborhood is strongly framed by a culture of silence, brotherhood and distrust. The results also demonstrate the existence of a strong local culture and methods of solving different problems at school. Talking with 'strangers' about local problems, is regarded as a form of betrayal. The young boys refer to people who talk too much about different incidents in school or in the local neighborhood as snitches. The authors discuss how this form of local protectionism influence how violence is dealt with in and out of school.

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Part I
Power Relations, Homosociality and Violence

Chapter 2
Revisiting Lower Secondary Schools in the 1990s: Reflections on and Interpretations of Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment

Elina Lahelma

Introduction

Results from national school health surveys suggest that girls' experiences of sexual harassment have increased dramatically between the years 2017 and 2019 (Ikonen & Helakorpi, 2019). The most obvious explanation for the increase, however, is growing awareness among young women after #MeToo, rather than substantial actual changes. In the 1990s, issues related to harassment were not included into main educational documents, and even the terms were fairly unfamiliar to teachers (Lahelma et al., 2000).

My aim in this chapter is to reflect on continuities and changes in sexual and gender-based harassment in schools from the late 1990s to the present day. I will especially explore experiences reported by young people and teachers, and interpretations by researchers regarding the theme in the 1990s. My method for revisiting the 1990s is first to reproduce the main parts of my earlier article *Gendered Conflicts in Secondary School: Fun or enactment of power?* (Lahelma, 2002a), which was published in the journal *Gender and Education*. In order to keep the interpretations authentic, I will, in the section *Looking back to the 1990s,* present the text as I originally wrote it, with some cuts and light editing, but without adding new references. In this article, I analysed the fine line between playing, which is 'just fun' and behaviour that is experienced as harassment.

In the following section, *Revisiting the analysis after 20 years,* I will give an overview of the changes in the political and cultural environment, education and theoretical thinking that are relevant for understanding this theme now. Therefore, I will present some more current Finnish and international research, documents and

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Y. Odenbring, T. Johansson (eds.), *Violence, Victimisation and Young People*, Young People and Learning Processes in School and Everyday Life 4,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75319-1_2

statistics, although other chapters in this book also offer studies that analyse the current situation. Finally, I combine my earlier conclusions with new findings and reflect on what has changed and what has remained the same in young people's experiences of and reflections on sexual and gender-based harassment in schools, and in teachers' responses.

Looking Back to the 1990s

The article that is present in this section draws on an ethnographic project in lower secondary schools entitled *Citizenship, Difference and Marginality in Schools – with Special Reference to Gender* (e.g. Gordon et al., 2000a, 2006). In the study we observed the daily lives of 13–14-year-old students in two schools during a period of one school year. Ethnographic interviews were conducted with 90 young people (first set of interviews). The following year we interviewed 47 teachers and other staff members.

The other set of data used in this article drew from the memories of the same young people a few years later, obtained in the first round of an ethnographically grounded life historical study *Tracing Transitions* (e.g. Gordon & Lahelma, 2003). Sixty-three of them were interviewed (second set of interviews), now 17–19 years of age. Although our focus in the life course interviews was in following them to their future lives, we also asked them to look back and remember their secondary school years. These interviews were mostly conducted in groups of two or three, and hilarious laughs often followed the sharing of enjoyable memories. Happy memories were related in one interview after another to friends, jokes, situations when the daily routines were broken. What was remembered as important and fun in secondary school was often related to informal relationships. But some had memories of feelings of sorrow and anxiety, and they also were regularly related to peers; experiences of bullying and harassment, or problems in personal relations. (Lahelma, 2002b).

In this article I benefited from an innovative analytic tool that was originally defined in the ethnographic project: differentiation between the *official*, the *informal* and the *physical* layers of the school (Gordon et al., 2000a). Using these concepts it was possible to observe various agendas taking place, more or less hidden from the teacher, sometimes invading the official teaching and learning, sometimes remaining apart. Informal invasions to the official school regularly take place using the physical layer. As one of the foci of the study was gender, we have observed a variety of ways in which gender is implicated in official and informal practices, and how the elements of the physical layer of the school, such as the use of time, space, voice, movement and embodiment get gendered meanings.

Gender Play and Play-Acted Fight

In lower secondary schools, 13–15-year-old girls and boys spend most of their time together in the same classrooms, sharing the spatiality and temporality of lessons, as well as most of the voices and smells. Girls and boys are physically close to each other but avoid direct physical contact. Sometimes their paths adjoin during lessons and breaks, and they cooperate in friendly and enjoyable ways in which gender and sexuality might or might not be relevant. Sometimes gendered encounters are strained. The atmosphere in some sudden interactions is difficult to interpret for an observer, and often even for the participating young people themselves. Girls and boys might make gender difference poignantly by sitting in single sex groups. They might emphasise same-gender bonding by physical actions; girls with hugs and combing each other's hairs and boys by friendly pushing each other. They can explicate cross-gender aversions by challenging children or groups of other gender verbally or physically. They might also demonstrate heterosexual interest, curiosity or fears in various ways, like in the following extract from a situation in the corridor when students waited for the teacher:

> A group of boys sit on the high bench, push each other down, laugh. Soon Tiina, Henna, Lea and Marjaana climb to the other end. They also push each other, giggling loudly. They glance at the boys but do not take part in their play-acting. Boys apparently register the girls, blink at them but do not make any movements towards them.

Like Barrie Thorne (1993), we also found situations when girls and boys float to mixed groups in safe ways, and gender seems not to be a relevant divider (Gordon et al., 2000a, b). Friendly, informal, cross gender communication, however, was not very typical among the groups of the 13–14 year old students that we followed (c.f. Prendergast & Forrest, 1997). Some of them seemed to get along with the opposite gender; for example, there was one boy who interacted constantly with a small group of girls and did not have close friends among boys. But for the majority of the students, informal cross-gender interaction among classmates was rare. This seems to be the experience of the young people themselves as well. In the first as well as the second set of interviews both girls and boys generally agreed that friendship relations and informal communication in secondary school are typically segregated by gender (see also Tolonen, 2001; Hey, 1997).

Our field notes from the lessons include constant remarks on situations when small groups of students go on with their own informal tasks in friendly terms (as interpreted) – in spite of the official agenda of the lesson. This seldom takes place in mixed groups. Sometimes it is difficult for an observer to interpret what is going on within the informal agenda. Play-acting was gendered in the following extract from a lesson of home economics. The notes reveal my interpretation that the process started as a joke but was turning towards a conflict, when the teacher finally noticed it and interrupted.

> Sami waves a towel towards Riikka. Matti play-acts kicking her. Teacher: 'Matti, get away!' Sami and Riikka continue, Inka comes along, starts to play-act fight with Sami, Riikka goes away. Sami and Inka start to scuffle with fists, laughing. Then it seems that the fight gets

more serious. The teacher realises it only when it has continued for a while. She comes: 'Heh Sami!' They finish.

In one of the classes gendered disputes continued from one lesson to another. In this class, a group of four active and talkative girls, Henna and Marjaana in the centre, was constantly challenged by some of the active and talkative boys. These girls also used to challenge back, and often they initiated confrontations themselves. Teachers seemed to get annoyed with the recurrent disturbance, and, according to our observations, they were more strict towards the group of girls than towards the boys.

Henna protests why teacher lets Juuso answer after he has shouted [without raising his hand].
Henna shouts, teacher asks her not to shout.
Lasse starts to shout, grumbling 'Henna is wrong!', 'Henna is shouting!'
Marjaana shouts, teacher says laughing: 'Do not scream!'
In the following Juuso screams 'because they [girls] also scream'.
Laughing, Lasse acts as if he would throw something.
Henna: 'Teacher, come now and take this ink paperball from Lasse.'
Teacher: 'Henna, do you want to change place' [so that Lasse cannot tease]
Henna changes place (...)
Soon Henna shouts: 'Teacher, he is trying to throw again!'
Henna and Lasse argue across the room, Lasse play-acts throwing.

Instead of being separate from the official teaching and learning, informal relationships invaded constantly during this lively lesson, and the physical layer of the school was also evoked. Henna wanted to achieve in the official as well as in the informal school and protested because Juuso was allowed to answer. The teacher did not notice. The comments of Juuso and Lasse concerning Henna and Marjaana may have been initiated by the teacher's remarks on the girls 'screaming' and 'shouting'. Juuso and Lasse confronted the active girls by using voice (commenting loudly, ridiculing) and embodiment (pretending to throw something); and thus limited Henna's use of space and voice. The teacher, who had a good sense of humour and was very much liked by all students, tried to keep the situation from escalating, using Henna's flexibility.

In the first interview Henna, aged 13, mentioned that she is irritated by some of the boys who 'always interfere with other people's business'. She continued: 'It's as if you weren't allowed to say anything at all. You should just be quiet and not be yourself.' Henna was right; at least some of the boys really thought that Henna should have been quiet. Paavo and Otto, two quiet boys that I interviewed together in the second set, remembered that Henna disturbed them, because 'she was talking incessantly' and 'complaining about everything'. A talkative girl can be interpreted as a challenge for (some of the) boys.

When I interviewed Henna and Marjaana during the second set of interviews, they both reflected that they have positive memories from the secondary school. These memories were about informal relationships. Henna remembered:

Always when I went to school I got cheerful. (…) And when I was sick, then I was like, oh what has happened now. What kind of gossips and everything (…) You belonged to the group and it was kind of a clique.

When asked about her relationship with Lasse, Henna mentioned that, at that age, girls like to tease boys, and that Lasse just treated her like she herself treated him, he 'gave back'. Marjaana, in a group interview with two other girls, laughingly remembered these kinds of 'fights' with Lasse and the other boys: 'girls defended me, and boys defended Lasse, and it was just a game, it really was nothing serious (…) we were friends anyway'. There might be a sense of nostalgia, like it often is in memories, but it also seems that the strong support that these girls received from each other helped them to interpret such situations not as harassing or disturbing, but as situations that cheered the boring lessons (Gordon et al., 2000a, b; Hey, 1997).

When It Is Not Fun Any More

In the article 'Lads and laughter' Mary Kehily and Anoop Nayak (1997) show that joking in informal interactions in school is not necessarily fun. The second set of interviews suggests that, unlike Henna and Marjaana's interpretation concerning their constant and visible disputes with Lasse, some of the girls had experienced situations that they regarded as no longer fun, and their memories were painful. Our field notes and first set of interviews do not include equally much data from such situations; they remained hidden from us as researchers as well.

In another class that we followed, all girls and some of the boys were very quiet and a group of boys occupied much of the voice, time and space. Hannele was a quiet girl and did not have close friends in the class, and in lesson notes she was not often recounted as doing, moving or talking informally. The analytic discussions in our research group and diaries suggest that we were aware that sometimes Hannele was harassed. She did not seem to answer back, as, for example, the following extract demonstrates:

> Manu is crawling under the table. Looks at me, smiles. I understand that he is crawling and planning to poke Hannele to buttocks. I am annoyed. So he does. Hannele is startled. Does not turn.

In the first interview Hannele argued that there is no bullying in her class, but in the second interview, at the age of 18, she reported that one of her male class mates had harassed her in secondary school:

> Hannele: 'I don't know whether he meant it as a joke, or whether he was serious. Well, I think he was joking, but sometimes it really disturbed, because it was practically every day.'
> Elina: 'You mean the entire lower secondary school?'
> Hannele: 'Well, maybe not the entire secondary school, but kind of every now and then.'
> Elina: 'Do you want to say who he was?'
> Hannele. 'No!'
> Elina: 'Okay, you need not tell. What did you think about it? What kind of thoughts you had, how did you react, did you have, kind of, any means to answer to it?'
> Hannele: 'Well, if I was quiet, then he didn't bother to continue, and finished, so that's it. Then, later on, I was kind of, I don't care about the damned bloke, I can't stand him either.

I cannot say whether the incident with Manu above was an example of this teasing or whether he referred to some other boy. Most of the incidents did not turn to visible or audible conflicts, presumably because Hannele did not react. This continuous teasing seems to have remained hidden from the teachers. Taina, who participated in the interview together with Hannele, commented that she had not been aware of the teasing either. Hannele did not tell anyone—which also is typical when sexual harassment takes place in schools (Larkin, 1994). Even in this interview, a few years later, whilst speaking rather openly about her own feelings, Hannele did not want to reveal the name of the boy either to me or to Taina. However, she had grown up to be a rather independent young woman who knew what she wanted and suggested that she would not let the boys rule any more, and the one who had harassed her 'would hear'.

Even when harassment or teasing does not take place, constant 'fooling around' by some of the boys upset some of the girls (and also some boys). They realised that it limited their possibilities to study, and to use space and voice. Students used to prefer teachers who keep order in the classroom (Gordon et al., 2000a; Lahelma, 2000). Annikki, at the age of 13, argued:

> Well, in general it's just boys who spoil everything. Everything is ruined when they start to fool around over there … It depends on the teacher who lets them fool around…. then I told her [the teacher] that you should shout louder, you must hit your fist on the table!

In the follow-up interview, Annikki, however, does not have bad memories about the boys. She said that they 'always created something really stupid during the days which helped us to survive the lessons'. But her memories were rather anguished, nevertheless:

> I don't have really nice memories. There were some, well I don't know, it was kind of, I get a bit anguished when I try to think about it, a bit. There was bullying … at least I have no friends left from secondary school.

As the interview continued she told about a male classmate who harassed her constantly: "He came very close to me and laughed in a mocking way, you know". She was, however, uncertain, whether to call it bullying or sexual harassment, because it was not physical. And she had, by now, put it aside from her memory.

Above I have recounted memories of female students who have reflected on conflicts with their male peers. Some of the boys, as well, were targets of bullying (Tolonen, 1998; Lahelma, 1999), but did not mention having been harassed by girls, in either ethnographic or follow-up interviews. One of the boys who was, according to our field notes, constantly teased by both girls and boys refused to be interviewed. Harri was another boy who had a reputation of being regarded as 'strange' in his class, and some of the girls used to ridicule him. The following extract from my lesson notes describes a small informal incident:

> Ida: 'Harri, try to catch it!' Harri comes nearer, Ida play-acts throwing a die. Salli to Ida: 'Don't tease him!' Ida gives the die to Harri. Harri seems to be embarrassed, returns to his place, glancing at me. I got a feeling that he wanted to check whether I had noticed his embarrassment.

I suggest that the shamefulness of this situation for Harri was in Salli's comment that revealed his vulnerability in relation to the girls' joking. Being teased by girls seems to be an exceptionally humiliating situation for a boy and questions his masculinity. 'Doing masculinity' appears to involve the ability to deal with and engage in joking relations (Phoenix, 1997; see also, Prendergast & Forrest, 1997; Duncan, 1999). To be a target for joking of 'mere' girls is most degrading.

Sexual name-calling is another issue in which the line between joking and harassment is not easy to see. In our ethnographic interviews, students repeatedly suggested that calling others names is just for fun, or in the heat of the moment—it is not seriously meant and should not be taken to be so. However, some others suggested situations when this *is* meant to hurt; and sometimes situations which are meant as jokes are not experienced as such (Gordon et al., 2000a). In the second set of interviews, the young women recognised the following meanings of calling a girl a 'whore': it does not mean anything but is just a saying that one can even use for a friend as a joke; it is used when one is angry at somebody, and it means the same as stupid; or it is used for those girls who have sexual relationships with many boys. For example, Marika remembered how she had started to date a boy who was few years older soon after coming to a new secondary school. She had been afraid that she would be called a whore immediately. Riina and Marianne related that in lower secondary school such naming would not have been taken seriously, but now, when one is older, it really would be humiliating. It is in the 'play' of meaning in which power is carried.

Being called 'homo/faggot/pouf' has similar effect amongst boys as 'slag/whore' when used against girls. 'Homo' can be a joke or a general insult, but it can also be directed to one boy specifically; it can be an insult in which the boys' masculinity is questioned (Lehtonen, 2002). Some of the young women in the second set of interviews suggested that 'homo' is used more often as a general insult, whilst 'whore' is more often used as an insult that has to do with a specific girl's sexuality. Neil Duncan (1999) suggests, drawing from his study, that there is a difference between *calling* and *labelling*. Maybe the different interpretations of young people in our interviews can be analysed from this perspective: calling is ad hoc, and not regarded equally severely as more recurrent labelling.

Pedagogical Challenges for Teachers

Teachers are aware of the constant presence of gendered processes and sexuality in school, but these are rarely discussed in the context of teaching or learning or in teacher education; sexuality seems to be almost a taboo. Relations and enactments of power that are involved are seldom questioned (see also Holland et al., 1998). Sex-based harassment is not easily regarded as a gender issue by teachers either, but sometimes taken-for-granted, a part of normal relationships, an 'adolescent mating dance' (Kenway & Willis, 1998, 108; Mac an Ghaill, 1994). Teachers in our research schools sometimes interpreted disputes between girls and boys as evidence of

heterosexual attraction. For example, when discussing about Henna's and Lasse's disputes, one of them suggested that Henna fancies Lasse – which was not Henna's interpretation. During a lesson when some boys were all the time commenting on the doings of some girls, the teacher commented, jokingly: 'This is how the strong Finnish women are growing: they survive being teased!' (Lahelma & Öhrn, 2003). Gendered conflicts are often regarded as self-evident in secondary schools, and some boys' harassing behaviour taken for granted because of the 'difficult' age (Aapola, 1997).

Situations when some of the are harassed are not easy, and sometimes teachers find it difficult to alter their agenda. Subject teachers are 'always in a hurry to cover the syllabus and to get on', as one teacher argued in an interview. She regretted that even when there are important themes to discuss, she feels that there is not enough time. Sexual harassment was not included in the curricula of sex education and there was not a slot in the official school where it was mandatory for teachers to take it into the agenda. Our notes show that students are regularly taught good manners, but the principle that they must not address their fellow students in humiliating, sexist or harassing way was not included in this teaching (Lahelma, 1999).

When the young women and men looked back to their years in secondary school in our interviews, many of them commented that teachers did not often react to sexist or racist insults or address situations when somebody was harassed. For example, Henna told that she was ashamed when she remembered her own behaviour towards a fellow pupil. She suggested that secondary school teachers should have talked about these issues.

Revisiting the Analysis After 20 Years

In this section I will, using more recent research, discuss the old story from the perspective of current situation and new interpretations.

Progress and Stagnation in Educational Politics and School Practices

After the article was written, feminist politics and policies have paid increasing attention to sexual harassment and violence against women. The level of gendered violence in Finland has always been high, often noticed by international organisations such as the UN. This problem was addressed, for example, in the first Government report on gender equality (MSH, 2010), but the follow-up report (MSH, 2016) did not reveal major changes in this respect. The global #MeToo campaign in 2018 was eye-opening in Finland as elsewhere. For example, a group of Finnish film directors made a film titled 'Force of Habit' (2019) which presented

several everyday incidents in which women are sexually harassed or intimidated. Most of the stories focused on young women's experiences that women of any age can easily recognise from their own lives.

As to educational politics in Finland, we have witnessed reforms in relation to equality. New legislation obliges all educational institutions to provide an equality plan with the aim of advancing gender equality and non-discrimination, and tackling problems based on gender and sexuality. Moreover, equality is regularly noted and gender diversity is mentioned, for example, in the new national curriculum framework for comprehensive schools (NBE, 2014). Sexual harassment is addressed in this document: 'Students are supported in the sense of community, which does not accept any kind of bullying, sexual harassment, racism or other kinds of discrimination' (NBE, 2014, 280). The National Board of Education has also provided a guide for teachers on gender equality (Jääskeläinen et al., 2016) and in this guide, definitions of sexual harassment and good measures to tackle it are presented (ibid., 13–14). As a quick reaction to #MeToo, the National Board of Education provided a guide for teachers for combatting sexual harassment (NBE, 2018).

Even if these reforms are noteworthy, there is little actual change. If actors in schools are not committed to advancing gender equality, formal plans are written but not realised in everyday practices (Ikävalko, 2016). There are still teachers and teacher students who repeat stereotyped attitudes to gender (Naskali & Kari, 2020), and the atmosphere in educational institutions is often negative, even hostile towards knowledge based on feminist research (Ikävalko & Kantola, 2017).. After several gender projects, gender awareness, including knowledge regarding harassment, is still lacking in most teacher education institutions (e.g. Lahelma & Tainio, 2019).

New Research Widens the Scope

In the title of this chapter I use the term *sexual and gender-based harassment*, in order to avoid the biological (and dichotomic) connotations of the term sex and to emphasise that, along with sexual harassment, it is important to reflect on other kinds of harassment that are connected to gender. There are several terms to conceptualise the issue but I have predominantly remained in the terminology that was used in the original article and the texts that I have referred to. The term *violence* is often used, as in the title of this book but I did not come across this term in research on harassment in the 1990s. Jane Kenway and Sue Willis (1998) used the word *sex-based harassment* for sexual and sexist harassment. The latter includes insulting references to girls as a whole or to a certain group of girls, name-calling or subtle physical intimidation such as blocking the way or invading personal space; this happened, for example to Annikki in my article. Harassment is sex-based, that is, it is directed at girls largely because they are girls, as in the extract above in which the space and voice of Henna was challenged.

In my article, main focus was on the experiences of (presumably) heterosexual girls. Recent research addresses heterosexual gender norms such as (hetero)sexual

harassment, homophobic harassment, and harassment based on gender non-conformity (Meyer, 2008; Odenbring, 2019), for example violence towards trans and intersex youth, as in the chapter of Lehtonen in this book. Current analyses on sexual and gender-based harassment are often intersectional (Robinson, 2005). Contemporary research has also indicated that gendered acts of harassment intersect with minority background, social class and sexuality (Meyer, 2008; Odenbring and Johansson, Chap. 12 this book). Aaltonen (2006, 2017) suggests that in her study girls' accounts of harassers were racialised and pathologised in ways that separate the phenomenon from young, Finnish, normative masculinity. In the study by Hinkkanen, categories of gender, age and ethnicity were used by young women to describe and explain both the perpetrators and the targets of harassment (Hinkkanen, 2018). There is research on boys as perpetrators, for example of Robinson (2005) and Jackson and Sundaram (2018), also in relation to care (Manninen et al., 2011). Theoretical perspectives for understanding the complexities of gender, sexuality and violence have also widened through affective methodologies and posthuman approaches, for example in the study by Huuki and Renold (2016) on young children's playground play.

Whilst several register questionnaires in Finland, for example, have suggested that young people, especially girls, experience sexual or gender-based harassment regularly, they also suggest that most of the cases do not take place inside schools (Ikonen & Helakorpi, 2019). The spaces and places of the school have become more blurred, however, due to the presence of mobile phones (Paakkari & Rautio, 2019). This means new possibilities for sexual and gender-based harassment which is even more difficult for teachers to see (Rivers, 2013; Boyd, 2014). The fact that cyber-based harassment as well as reading harassing texts can take place inside or outside schools, and during or after of school hours, as Hunehäll Berndtson and Odenbring (Chap. 8, this book) show, is basically ignored by the adults. Livingstone et al. (2014) suggest that there is no easy line to draw between online and offline social relations, nor between cyberbullying and sexual harassment, nor indeed between empowering or entertaining content and that which is experienced as threatening or upsetting.

Above is just a very limited overview of some themes in contemporary research; more thorough analyses of violence and harassment in schools will be presented in other chapters of this book.

Sustainable Patterns in Analysis

The main result in my earlier article was the analysis of the continuum between play and harassing behaviour, which was highlighted using the physical and informal layers of the school (Gordon et al., 2000a). Larkin (1994) has argued that girls and women do not recognize harassment that does not assume extreme physical forms, although they might experience it as most unwelcome; this was also reflected by Annikki in my study. One of the central findings in the studies on gendered and

sex-based harassment is still the difficulty of seeing the fine line, as is argued in a recent study by Odenbring and Johansson (2021). In the study by Aaltonen (2006), students were able to construe the borderline between pleasant and unpleasant, tolerable and intolerable attention as clear in principle, but they also suggested that in practice this borderline is ambivalent, negotiable and contextual.

In the 1990s it was evident that sex-based harassment in schools was not seen as such even by the young people themselves. In the early study that draws from interviews with high school girls, June Larkin (1994) discussed the ways in which the harassing behaviour of boys at school was normalised. The girls in her study identified three factors that contributed to it: the frequency of the behaviour; the way it was interpreted by others, particularly the male harassers; and the fact that the topic of sexual harassment was seldom, if ever, discussed at school. Recent studies do not provide evidence of any change in these factors. Drawing from interviews, Hinkkanen (2018) suggests that harassment was understood through different discourses that gave it different meanings: on the one hand, harassment was interpreted as distressing and, on the other hand, as ordinary. Many situations, such as name-calling in schools were often interpreted not as harassment, but as common humour (ibid., see also Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Huuki et al., 2010). Harassment is involved in the everyday life of schools in a way that makes it difficult to recognise, a 'Force of Habit' (2019), referring to the film made after #metoo.

Another theme in the article related to the power relations involved. Kenway and Willis (ibid.) have argued that sex-based harassment acts as a form of social control, and hence has material effects on all girls and women, including those who have not experienced it personally. Girls are vulnerable because they can be insulted at any moment through sexist comments, and at any moment a situation that has started as play-acting and joking can turn into harassment in their experience. To react powerfully and negatively against what is 'just joking' is to show oneself to be humourless (Larkin, 1994; Phoenix, 1997). In the study by Odenbring and Johansson (2019), some girls' narratives were framed as tough-girl femininity: they had to show a tough façade against acts of harassment as well as to other students at the school. When the name-calling became personal, the girls stuck together against the harassing boys and fought back verbally (Odenbring & Johansson, 2019), as did some of the girls in my study. The expectation of girls to be tough and 'grin and bear it' (Aaltonen, 2017) is related to the myth of the strong Finnish woman, as explicitly stated in the example above (Lahelma & Öhrn, 2003). Hannele, too, in my study had learned to harden herself, but only after lower secondary school experiences.

Some of the young boys' vulnerabilities, on the other hand, are evident in their fears of being called 'homo' or not being able to learn to 'take' bullying from their peers (Phoenix, 1997), especially from girls, like Harri in my article. This kind of gender-based harassment constructs differences between boys, between masculinities, in which heterosexual masculinity is on top. Sexist comments and other forms of sexual harassment, then, constitute a way of maintaining and policing gender boundaries (e.g. Connell, 1995; Larkin, 1994). Robinson (2005) has analysed how sexual harassment is integral to the construction of hegemonic heterosexual masculine identities, and how it intersects with other sites of power such as 'race' and

class. Jackson and Sundaram (2018) suggest that 'lad culture' is particularly associated with groups of men in social contexts and involves excessive alcohol consumption, rowdy behaviour, sexism, homophobia, sexual harassment and violence.

How to Challenge Harassment in Schools?

Currently there is, for example in the Nordic countries, legislation that should prevent gender-based harassment in schools. This is important, but not enough. It is evident that challenging gender-based harassment is not easy for teachers, even if they are provided with some guiding texts, as in Finland (NBE, 2018). Meyer (2008) identified in her study the following external barriers to teachers' activity in relation to intervening in harassment: lack of institutional support from administrators; lack of formal education on the issue; inconsistent response from colleagues; fear of parent backlash; and negative community response. An interesting study in Sweden focused on a high school lawsuit, which a young woman lost (Gillander Gådin & Stein, 2019). The authors showed how gender-based or sexual harassment in school was perceived as ordinary, normal and expected at the organisational level.

For decades, (some) boys' failing in academic terms has been emphasised in educational discourses (e.g. Lahelma, 2014). In this situation the impact of informal hierarchies, based on hegemonic masculinities, may be forgotten by teachers and other professionals. When trying to get underachieving boys interested in something, they do not necessarily combat harassing behaviour and might even support rude and sexist speech, as is shown in our study in comprehensive schools (e.g. Lahelma, 2009) and in vocational education (e.g. Pietilä et al., 2020).

In practice, if teachers ignore negative comments and behaviour, this communicates to students that such behaviour is acceptable. But reacting after something has happened is not enough. Harassment is part of the everyday life of schools and not necessarily unique to certain situations; this was apparent in the cases of Hannele and Annikki. Odenbring and Johansson (2019) suggest that in light of the #MeToo movement, it is important to take girls' experiences seriously and to help the students who engage in sexual harassment understand the impact of their behaviour and their negative consequences for the people who are exposed to this form of abuse. Whilst this is important, it is not enough either. If teachers rely on opportunities for reflective discussion developed on the basis of negative comments or behaviour by students, then these questions are discussed in the context of problems, and specific students may be the main focus. Often they are underachieving working-class boys (Robinson, 2005; Jackson & Sundaram, 2018). Moreover, as I have suggested through the above examples, harassing situations tend to take place when teachers do not see them, and even when the incidents are visible, it is not easy to see the boundaries. Aaltonen (2017) suggests that most, if not all, young people encounter sex-based situations in which boundaries have to be drawn, whether or not one uses the label of harassment.

It is important to see the school culture as a whole and students as active agents. One example is a research-activist project, #MeToo Postscriptum (Pihkala & Huuki 2019) aimed at addressing sexual harassment in pre-teen peer cultures. After the students talked with the researchers at workshops, they were invited to send an anonymised Valentine's card to a politician of their choice in which they reflected on some unpleasant sexual experience in one sentence. The workshops enabled young children to address and communicate parts of their lives that are often sidelined in educational settings, or are addressed exclusively within a normative regulatory framework. The intervention enabled the children to become part of a wider change (ibid., 255).

The conclusions of several studies in the 1990s already suggested the importance of a whole-school policy in challenging bullying, racism, or gender-based harassment (Duncan, 1999). Some of the teachers in my earlier study also emphasised this: 'If we decide that we don't have harassment in this school, and if the staff is committed to it, then it will stop' (Lahelma, 2004). Today schools have responsibility for providing equality plans. They should be used for this aim: students and teachers should together address how to recognise harassing behaviour, where to report it and how to prevent it. This is the big challenge for schools and teacher education today.

Conclusions

The contribution of this chapter is to present some historical background to the current research on gendered violence and harassment in educational institutions. The focus of the analysis is the fine line between gendered play and harassment in schools. My aim was to reflect on continuities and changes from the 1990s, when the term sexual harassment was hardly known, to the present time, after #metoo. My method was to present my earlier article (Lahelma, 2002a) and to discuss its findings in relation to current research. The article draws on ethnographic data from lower secondary schools in Helsinki in the 1990s and life history interviews with the same young people a few years later. Through repeating the main part of the article as it was originally written, with only minor changes, I wanted to present my initial interpretations. The second part of the chapter discusses the changes and continuities in the theme. However, more comprehensive observations on the current situation will be presented from several perspectives in the other chapters of this book.

The main conclusion in this chapter is that the overall patterns have not changed significantly, and that the stories that I described in the earlier article could take place today. The complexity of harassment – or violence – is evident in the varying interpretations of the incidents by the young women, the perpetrators, the teachers, and the researchers. Moreover, an action can be perceived as a joke while it is happening, but as humiliating later on. Despite overall patterns not having changed very much, it is possible that cyber-based harassment is a new challenge.

In the 1990s, the term sexual harassment was not commonly recognised in schools, not even by researchers such as myself with colleagues with whom I went to schools with the aim of analysing gendered processes. In the interviews with teachers and in the first set of student interviews, harassment was seldom discussed; the theme was not on our agenda. On reflection, it is now possible to understand that it was difficult even for us, feminist researchers, to address sexual and gender-based harassment. However, using the informal and physical aspects of school as analytic tools, I found patterns in the data about everyday life of the schools that started to 'tickle my brain' (Lahelma et al., 2014). I was more aware when I returned to the experiences of the young people in the second set of interviews. The questions that I reflected on in the article are still relevant after #metoo: what is harassment or violence in schools, and who has the power to define it?

Acknowledgements I want to express my gratitude to Falmer & Press Ltd. and the editorial board of the Gender and Education journal for the permission to republish parts of my earlier article in this chapter. I also want to thank Jukka Lehtonen for valuable comments on my manuscript.

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Chapter 3
Gender and Sexuality Policing: The Violence That 'Doesn't Count'

Victoria Rawlings

Introduction

> To understand structural or systemic violence, one needs to move beyond positive accounts that limit our understanding of how violence works. And one needs to find frameworks that are more encompassing than those that rely on two figures, one striking and the other struck. (Butler, 2020, p. 2)

In the opening pages of Judith Butler's *The Force of Nonviolence,* she offers us much to think about in terms of discursive constructions of 'violence', with a particular focus on the ways that the state defines 'violence', and those that are labelled as 'violent', as well as the repercussions of these attributions. Her thesis begins by articulating that states and institutions actively seek to name certain practices as violence for political and strategic purposes. For example, "demonstrations, encampments, assemblies, boy-cotts, and strikes are all subject to being called 'violent' even when they do not seek recourse to physical fighting, or to… forms of systemic or structural violence" (2020, p. 3). While these opening arguments from Butler are easily understood as being applicable to global events such state retaliations upon the Black Lives Matter and Hong Kong democracy movements, they also provide us with a way to critically examine local and institutional iterations of meaning around violence- especially those that are informed by the state. As violence is determined and prosecuted by the state in governance of institutions and organisations as well as in major legal and policing operations, the definition of violence, of who is violent, and of who is oppressed, each produce subjective positions and attendant possibilities for action. This chapter seeks to demonstrate the ways that existing 'frameworks' that define violence – and more specifically

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Y. Odenbring, T. Johansson (eds.), *Violence, Victimisation and Young People*, Young People and Learning Processes in School and Everyday Life 4,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75319-1_3

'bullying' – in schools have direct implications for those that are connected to them: students, teachers and the immediate and future communities that they reside within. Through using data from these groups, the chapter will argue that a more encompassing framework, that pushes beyond the notion of "two figures, one striking and the other struck" (Butler, 2020, p. 2) is desperately needed in schooling communities, lest violence continues to be defined in a way that oppresses marginalised students and erodes possibilities for their peace and freedom, while simultaneously eroding the bonds between teachers and students.

Educational Research, 'Bullying' and 'Violence'

A central argument offered by Butler, and often missed in broader public and political discourse, is that violence is not a static or definitive object. Instead, "'violence' and 'nonviolence' are used variably and perversely" (p. 6) and that the definition of violence "is subject to instrumental definitions that serve political interests and sometimes state violence itself" (p. 7). In the poststructuralist tradition, she illustrates that violence cannot be easily or discretely defined, and that it is constructed in a variety of ways by different agents for different strategic purposes. A key agent in this process is the state. How the state defines violence in any one moment also determines who is violent at that time: perhaps protesters acting against police brutality become defined as rioters or thugs, in order for the State to enact further violence against them. In this case, the violence becomes sanctioned, and sits more easily in hegemonic discourses of national security and citizen safety.

While school environments may seem distinctly different from these topical and global examples, the concept of violence defining those who are violent, and those who are not, and which violences are violence, and which are not, applies in their contexts with enormous relevance. Let's consider for a moment the way that school violence as a term has been continually resisted in government policy for decades. Rather than applying words like 'violence', 'sexual harassment' or 'sexual assault', we instead see the widespread use of the term 'bullying'. As Stein (2005) argues, 'bullying' is a more palatable term that obscures violent and illegal incidents and deflects schools' responsibility and potential liability. First coined in the 1970s by Norwegian scholar Dan Olweus (1978, 1993), the term is used globally in education systems that are developed, funded and regulated by the state. Critically, the almost universal term has embedded a fixed definition, one that resists Butler's scepticism that violence can be ubiquitously and equitably defined. When deployed, 'bullying' deploys inextricable, specific, and discrete criteria for any incident to be labelled as such, and thus garner the requirement for authoritative intervention (Walton, 2011). These criteria are that a person "is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students. It is a negative action when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another… [and there is] an imbalance in strength (an asymmetric power relationship)" (Olweus, 1997, p. 496), in other words, where the student exposed to the negative

actions is "helpless" or "weaker" (Olweus, 1997, p. 496) than those performing them.

Since its publication, this definition has colonised educational, psychological and social science research with extraordinary breadth. In the past 50 years, countless articles have been written about how bullying, as defined by Olweus, might be best identified and curtailed, and in doing so affirming that 'bullying', and therefore school violence, can only exist within these particular boundaries. As Duncan and Rivers (2013, p. 255) notes, with very few exceptions these studies examine "the nature, frequency and distribution of bullying behaviours among young people". Many of these, especially those from educational psychology, argue that bullying behaviours and identities can be revealed by locating particular combinations of variables. Utilising quantitative methods, these studies often aim to determine whether some students are 'bullies' or 'victims'- arguing that these identities are inherent, but behaviours may be managed or modified. These approaches form from what I and others have termed the essentialist discourse of bullying- which places "more emphasis on the behavioural characteristics of those involved" (Horton, 2011, p. 268) rather than how particular situations and context specific cultures result in violence (Rawlings, 2017).

In response to these shortfalls, more recent poststructural works have begun unpicking these claims and arguments and questioning the value of applying 'bullying' in context-free and definitive ways (see, for example: Adriany, 2019; Horton, 2011; Kofoed & Staksrud, 2019; Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019; Odenbring & Johansson, 2019; Sundaram, 2014; Walton, 2011). This emerging field of scholarship contributes to findings that affirm Butler's arguments of violence; 'bullying' as a school-based term is constructed and deployed in strategic ways, with outcomes that construct subjects and their actions with performative and subjective effects.

This is particularly the point made by researchers that have investigated intersections of violence with gender, sexuality, race and disability. Structural oppression is relationally enacted by individuals through violence- and part of this oppression can be determinations of what violence 'counts', and what does not. As Butler (2020, p. 6) argues, there are "schemes by which state violence justifies itself" and maintaining a state's monopoly on violence depends upon a naming practice. Hegemonic bullying policies operationalise this naming, and in doing so, preclude what can be defined as violence, and what can escape this recognition. As such these policies have the capability of entrenching violence, enabling broader systems of patriarchy, white supremacy, or other structures of oppression to be enacted unnoticed or undisrupted in negotiations of relational power and privilege. For example, Elizabethe Payne and Melissa Smith argue that standard definitions of bullying fail to give attention "to the persistent patterns of peer targeting" (Payne & Smith, 2016, p. 128) that are faced by those that do not ascribe to dominant, idealised gender norms. Their research around the experiences of sexuality and gender diverse students at school suggests that 'bullying' as defined by state policy fails to capture the violence that these students repeatedly encounter, and that the concept of 'gender policing' provides a greater recognition of how various "cultural expectations for 'normal' masculine and feminine expression" (p. 129) are socially enforced- ranging

from microaggressions to overt verbal and physical violence. This affirms previous contributions from Ollis (2013) who indicates that gender is likely to be an underlying aspect of any violent incident in schools, but is often not recognised as a defining feature of violence by school staff or policy.

Prominent scholars Jessica Ringrose and Emma Renold have also undertaken poststructural and feminist examinations of school violence and 'bullying' – asking the critical question about what 'counts' as violence. In their seminal work on normative cruelties, Ringrose and Renold identified that gender informs how 'bullies', 'victims' and violence itself is constructed in complex discursive configurations (Ringrose & Renold, 2010). This work, and others' (Dytham, 2018; Eriksen, 2018; Pascoe, 2007; Rawlings, 2017, 2019) indicates that in schooling environments moments of violence are dependent on the discursive constructions around them. As peers, teachers, school leaders and broader community members are faced with moments of violence, their behavioural and linguistic constructions of violence- often most visible through their short- and medium-term reactions to violent moments- classify, define and (re)produce what violence is acceptable. These are, however, mediated by the resources that are available to them- and in schools this is at least partially determined by state policies that determine institutional and therefore interpersonal interventions.

In this chapter, I seek to reapply Butler's recognition of the complex applications of 'violence' to moments of school violence. Through looking at data from teachers and students, I will illustrate some of the dissonant constructions that they bring to the notion of 'bullying' and 'violence', and how these definitions clash and compete. I will argue that gender and sexuality play key and inextricable roles in constructing violence and whether it is named as such by school policy, thus negating possibilities for intervention. In doing so, I will illustrate how only some violence 'counts' in these contemporary school environments- and that violence which escapes these definitions can be repeated in cumulative and relationally destructive ways. To do this, I draw on data that I have expanded upon in detail in a previous monograph (Rawlings, 2017). The study focused on how students and teachers in two co-educational government schools understood, experienced and constructed 'bullying' and violence, especially in relation to their local contexts of gender and sexuality. Based on an in-depth case study of two schools, the data comes from focus groups of students and teachers, as well as interviews with school leaders (principals and deputy principals). At each school, two focus groups with head teachers (leaders of their faculty) were undertaken, as well one focus group with girls (aged 14–16), one with boys (aged 14–16), and one interview with the school principal (Grove) or two deputy principals (Wilson). Both schools were in regional/rural settings in Australia, and – like any school – had complex and unique contexts of class and race and other resources that informed their school cultures. In this chapter I revisit some of this data from 'Wilson' and 'Grove' High Schools while considering Butler's recent work.

The Naming Practice of Violence: Encountering State Definitions of 'Bullying' at School

Violence is constructed and named by different actors at different times, for different reasons and with different outcomes. In the data below, state policies that are utilised to qualify violence and ostensibly to protect students are invoked by arbiters of violence (often teachers, but also in less institutionally endorsed ways, by students) with varying effects. These policies are often seen as related to 'bullying', and not distinctly related to gender, sexuality or other identity markers- as the following data will illustrate. I've chosen to commence this review of data with the voice of Richard, the principal at Grove High School, who gave the below response when I asked him about how he might respond to an incident of homophobic violence at his school. I have included his extended response here, where he specifically talks about whether, in a scenario like this, he considers possible community backlash from parents in the town- a town he identified as educationally and socioeconomically disadvantaged:

> Richard: One of the best words of advice I got was off a principal a couple of schools back who always said 'policy will protect'. So with sticky situations like that one, it's a case of 'this is what I'm instructed to do' and I take emotion out of the situation. 'This is what I'm instructed to do and this is what I'm doing'; so a parent could be going out of the tree: 'I don't care what that fucken poofta rararara', all this sort of stuff, and you're not buying into that, you know, you're not arguing against their point of view, you're not saying well 'look you're in the 1950's, come on', you're not challenging them or anything, you're just stating quite calmly and simply that, you know, 'I work with the NSW Department of Education, this is the policy that I work under, and this is the consequence that I must put into place. If by any means, you know, if you've got any issues with that, you can refer it up to the next person in charge, and you can refer it on and make an issue with it. But I just have to do what I have to do', and most parents at that stage will recognise that I'm not involved, I'm doing what I have to do, so they'll still go out grumbling but it's not, you know, it extinguishes the situation for me.

I begin with this piece of data because there has been somewhat a lack of discussion in recent years about the many pressures that teachers feel when responding to violence between students. I invite readers to consider, however briefly, the scope of Richard's work as principal of a large high school, and the multitude of tasks that he must address in his everyday practice. Richard's response demonstrates his awareness of the implications of decisions about violence-decisions that have been politicised and previously received extensive media coverage. He speaks of needing to stick to the policy, which will 'protect' him when dealing with violence. We can infer from this that Richard feels at some risk when encountering 'sticky situations' (like homophobia) at school, and that resting on institutional directives gives him some comfort and guidance. This is unlikely to be an experience that is solely Richard's. In the Australian context, how schools respond to homophobia, or more specifically the inclusion of diverse sexualities, has been under intense scrutiny over the past several years- especially in relation to the "visceral hostility" towards the Safe Schools (Thompson, 2019) and Crossroads

programs (Baker, 2018). While common refrains of 'things getting better' around the inclusion of diverse gender and sexualities at school remain, the volume of public dialogue around these identities and their place within schools dramatically increased between 2015 and 2020. When media 'flare ups' occur, teachers become increasingly aware of how their decisions are interpreted and reacted to by their immediate communities and more broadly. In Richard's case, we see that he relies on official policy to ground his actions through these moments, enabling an anchor point that can provide clarity and certainty.

In this sense, therefore, we cannot argue that bullying policies are entirely 'bad'. To do so would miss these benefits and nuances. It's clear that such institutional guides can benefit actors within schools by providing a clear mandate for what to do when violence happens. Teachers, on the whole, did not enter the profession with a wish to further violence on students- and their actions reference that they are seeking to make sense of violence and respond in responsible and positive ways. Policies can provide teachers with confidence and support in a field where they face intense scrutiny. However, the nature of these policies also has distinct effects. 'Anti-bullying' policies are configured by the state with particular constraints and produced outcomes. This is because policies hold discrete definitions for what constitutes violence, and enacted violence is not necessarily captured by these static and fixed criteria. Teachers and school leadership often face great diversity in behaviours, and numerous instances of violence in any school day. One Deputy Principal from Wilson High School, Tony, who oversaw student discipline relating to violence, elaborated on this:

> Tony: It's difficult cos I, you know… with fifty odd staff out there, they're required to report bullying to us, but what they perceive as bullying is very different as well, and that inconsistency about what people perceive as bullying is very difficult. So, some teachers may deal with it in the classroom, and not feel the need to pass it on. Some will want to pass on every little bit of information that they think is bullying and so can become quite difficult about where we go with it.

Within Tony's school, he faced multiple navigations of what 'bullying' was and was not. Despite clear guidelines within state policy (intention, repetition, imbalance of power), teachers demonstrated uncertainty about what and when to report. His contribution illustrates that not all moments of violence are equal- and treating them as such would be operationally and ethically impossible. This individual negotiation of what to escalate and how to respond ensures that individual judgements about what is named as violence (or in this case, 'bullying') become crucial to critically investigate. In other words- some violence warrants reporting, recording, and responding to- and others does not. As such, teachers are required to make judgements about what violence is acceptable or not. They will determine what can be 'let go'; what can be dealt with in their classroom interactions with students; what needs to be escalated to a senior staff member; or beyond.

As I asked teachers about how they might determine what would be considered more serious- they consistently returned to the word 'bullying', and how it could be defined and applied to a variety of scenarios. As mentioned in the literature review, Australian (and in this case, the state of NSW) policy clearly defines school bullying

utilising Olweusian standards: intention, repetition and imbalance of power. This was emphasised by one Deputy Principal, who focused on repetition- or whether something happened 'constantly':

> David: …bullying will actually become when it's something that is constant, when that person continues to do that. That's when it's bullying.

Another teacher at Wilson reflected on the feature of an 'imbalance of power':

> John: Bullying to me is like someone's in a position of power and they want to exert their power onto this poor soul.

This was a theme also taken up by Richard, the Principal at Grove High:

> Richard: but bullying and harassment is basically somebody exerting some sort of power over somebody else, in a way that that other person isn't comfortable with or doesn't understand… bullying can be continual as well… so it's that sort of imbalance of power that doesn't have a justification

Dylan, a teacher at Grove, suggested that:

> Dylan: Bullying is long term, persistent, repetitive

The allure of such a clear definition of 'bullying' in a sea of diverse, dynamic and potentially incomprehensible violent incidents is clear. Through referring to it, and implementing it, teachers may determine that they are responding equitably and consistently to all students – as well as feeling supported or 'protected' by the broader educational institution – courtesy of the state. However, the definition's lack of inclusion of any intersectional factors equates in a significant problem – that difference that is routinely targeted and exploited by multiple actors (for example in the form of race, gender, disability or sexuality) is not acknowledged as being repeated. As such, greater cultures of exclusion, oppression or violence that are experienced by minorities are often missed. One demonstration of this came from Sarah, a science teacher at Wilson High, as I asked her group about how they might respond to gendered violence at school:

> Vic: How do you all feel about responding to bullying of that type? Gender based or homophobic? I mean, is it easy for you to recognise it?
> Sarah: I don't know that I distinguish between any type of bullying. I think I just step in as soon as I realise that something's there- I can't say that I analyse it and say 'this is this type of bullying', I just try and deal with the situation no matter what type of bullying it is
> Grace: Yeah, treat it the same way
> John: Yeah, good point

It's clear here that Sarah (and by extension, Grace and John) are concerned with addressing violence in schools – and that their position is steadfastly against violence of 'any type'. However, their approach is rooted in applying the definition of bullying consistently to the point that they do not wish to 'distinguish between any type' of violence in terms of its motivation or content. This again fits strongly within the state policy around bullying that makes no mention of identity characteristics, of structural power differences, or of repetition by cultural or social forces. It's clear here then, that violence that relates to social inequities does not register as different

to any other 'kind' of bullying, regardless of whether this violence is cumulative from the broader social contexts of those affected.

Determining 'What Counts'

If bullying definitions that are widely relied upon by teachers for reasons of equity, consistency and protection do not specifically contain recognitions of student identities, there are significant implications. For example, the notion of repetition is produced solely as an individual act – if one person or group repetitively targets another specific person. This would miss, however, if an individual experiences constant low-level violence from a number of actors around the school- a reality often experienced by minority groups in school populations. Norms around race, gender, sexuality, disability and class are all actively produced within and outside of school environments. The patriarchy and white supremacy, for example, do not wait at the school gate. Students in this research were particularly aware of dynamic cultures of inclusion, subordination and exclusion, and how violence operated to crystallise these boundaries. For example, when I asked the boys at Grove if they could tell me about any gendered violence that took place at their school, Max was very certain in commencing the conversation:

Max: Well first of all, I'd like to say if you were gay at this school you would be put through the shredder, absolutely.
Andrew: Well there is one in…
Sam: Ohhh… Jesse Martin?
Rob: Yeah, he's got a boyfriend, his boyfriend came to school the other day
Liam: Oh- what, who is he?
Rob: Um, Steven Johns I think, he's 22
Liam: Whoa!
Rob: And they were kissing each other on valentine's day? Everyone was just calling him gay
Max: Yeah… see… He doesn't really go to this school does he? He just like, hangs around?
Rob: He comes and goes
Max: Like if he was here full time, he would be put through the grinder… he'd probably have to leave.

This exchange attempted to locate and place tangible queerness in the school and make sense of how it could function in this particular space. Several other anecdotes told by the boys, constructed their school as an unwelcoming and unsafe environment for those with diverse sexualities, that you would "have to leave" if you were openly not heterosexual. The girls at Wilson had a slightly different exchange, with a similar theme:

Linda: Like, if my friend told me she was a lesbian I'd be shocked, but
Kathryn: You'd still support her
Jennifer: You'd get over it though cos they're the same person
Linda: Yeah, but if a guy did, like in my year, I'd be like, oh I dunno – that'd be weird. I would be like 'oh'.

Jennifer: Yeah and they'd cop so much crap, like, 'oh I'm not standing next to him in the change room, like he's looking at me, he's gay'. No wonder why people don't talk about it.

While here the girls speak about gender differences in homophobia, and their own constructions of sexuality in friends, they continue the theme that it was not a safe environment for peers to come out – especially not boys at their school. The girls constructed this gender disparity as being partially due to the patriarchy that operated in the school- the boys saw that sexual encounters between girls were desirable, and that this made it acceptable for them in a matrix of heterosexual masculinity (for more on this, see Rawlings, 2017). In comparison, teachers at both Wilson and Grove tended to produce a different line about if and how homophobia manifested in their schools.

Tony: I'm struggling to think of any [instances of homophobia].
David: Yeah, and that's um, yeah. It's something that you may sort of sometimes look to see whether it's actually existing if you know what I mean,
Tony: Yeah
David: like sometimes you'll actually look to see some particular student who may be, have a particular sexual orientation and almost wonder whether they're actually going to be bullied because of that reason, but again because it's just nowhere near as open here as what would be at a city school, maybe a coastal school that um yeah, it's just not as pronounced.

Jeremy: I don't think it's a problem at all, and I think it's more manageable than… um… any other type of bullying that goes on

Peter: I haven't seen any problems in my classes… it's never raised, it's never been an issue in all my years teaching.
Vic: And sorry, Pete, which subject is that?
Peter: In Science. But I've never heard kids talking in the background talking or…

Vic: So overall, what do you think the current climate in your school is in terms of gender-based or homophobic bullying and harassment?
David: Well it's not high profile. It's certainly not… We don't, well certainly from my point of view, and we do deal with a lot of bullying incidences, you may sort of notice it because of in the way which kids are sort of interacting with each other, and to what level you aren't going to be able to determine. So I'd certainly sort of say that I'm sure it's stuff that's actually happening but it's not something which becomes a high priority for us. And nobody will report, you know, that type of thing.

While there is much to unpack from each of these accounts, I want to pay specific attention to the dissonance between these accounts, and the notion of silence. Returning to the student accounts for a moment, we can see that they have a clear sense that their contexts were homophobic – that you would not want to disclose a non-heterosexual sexuality if you were at school because "you would be put through the shredder, absolutely", and would "cop so much crap" that it was "no wonder why people don't talk about it". In other accounts, students indicated that many of those that did eventually come out as non-heterosexual would do so once they had "left town" and "moved to Sydney", because "that's Sydney", and constructed as safer to live out diverse sexualities. At the same time, teachers constructed homophobia extraordinarily differently – that it was not "a problem at all"; "never an issue";

"not high profile" and "not as pronounced" (perceptibly as other motivations for bullying).

This dissonance (which has also been reported elsewhere- for example, Odenbring, 2019) speaks to some lack of connection between the interpretation, knowledge or constructions of these groups. I would like to argue that the 'terms of reference' for violence or 'bullying' are at odds here, using both the closing line from Jennifer, "No wonder why people don't talk about it", and some of the evidence from teachers too. Let's take David, for example, the Deputy Principal at Wilson who often dealt with issues of bullying. He notes "we do deal with a lot of bullying incidences", but that "it's [homophobia] not high profile", and therefore not "a high priority". These contributions suggest that while David is across much of the violence that happens in the school, he does not necessarily assign these incidents with motivations or meanings of homophobia. This is not to say that gender policing or homophobia are not operating, but instead that these incidents are not recognisable or attributable to David as homophobic or policing of any other kind of systemic oppression. For David, it is the features of incidents within the state policy that are important- those that are outlined officially as 'counting' as bullying- intention, repetition and imbalance of power. Simultaneously, however, he does recognise that "I'm sure it's stuff that's actually happening". He knows that homophobia operates, and that it is potentially damaging- but still locates it as not "a high priority". This attribution of status cannot happen without a backdrop of official policy, without the knowledge enforcement that that policy produces. The policy itself ensures that only some violence 'counts' and is assigned as violence- and homophobia does not meet this threshold.

Both David and Jennifer affirm this through their concluding comments-; "nobody will report, you know, that type of thing" and "No wonder why people don't talk about it". This violence is unspoken, unreported, and disregarded as violence at all. In a policy that does not enable flexible, nuanced interpretations about what violence is, there is little room to consider the ways that identities are minimised and policed culturally, collectively and cumulatively. This restrictive view of violence understands the 'blow' as its defining physical moment, that violence "is something that happens between two parties in a heated encounter" (Butler, 2020, p. 2). While multiple people above may recognise that homophobia operates in the school environment, there is no foothold for them to address this as a school community while this definitional fixity and policy power persists. In turn, dialogue between the groups about what violence is becomes constrained or prohibited. The violence that the students observe, contribute to or experience does not 'count' in these frames, and therefore remains in their domain, but impossible to communicate across discursive boundaries.

Nonviolence

Much previous literature, policy and practice in the area of school bullying has been entangled in a navigation of what 'counts' as bullying. As these enactments take place in school and in research, broader considerations of how violence manifests, beyond discrete definitions of what it looks like, become increasingly important. As Butler reminds us, there is no requirement to dispute the violence of the physical blow, but "sometimes the physical strike to the head or the body is an expression of systemic violence, at which point one has to be able to understand the relationship of act to structure, or system" (Butler, 2020, p. 2).

State definitions of violence that feed into common sense dialogues of what 'counts' as bullying, have an erasing force on those that are often most subject to structural oppression. The Olweusian definitions of bullying that rely strictly on intention, repetition and power imbalance are almost ubiquitously taken up in educational institutions globally. While in this chapter we can see that these definitions grant schools a certain sure-footedness when considering 'sticky situations' or responses to violence more broadly, they are at best unresponsive to the realities of subordinated and excluded subjectivities at school, and the cumulative violence that they face from multiple points. By continuing to endorse these policies, states are arguably reinvesting in structures that further oppress the already disenfranchised populations, whether through racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia or other manifestations of oppression. The naming of violence in particular ways erases possibilities for observing, recognising and redressing violence.

A final relevant theme that Butler raises is the prospect of nonviolence – and I wish to turn to this to end this chapter. I want to return, for a moment, to the teachers whose voices constituted this chapter, and the many others that have not yet been heard. There is a propensity for some research to uncritically criticise these people – to suggest that they actively or passively do harm without thought or reflection, or without intention to nourish the lives of learners in their care. I do not believe this to be true. As an educator of future teachers, as the partner of a teacher, as a friend and colleague to many other teachers, as a researcher that listens to teachers, and as a teacher myself, I reflect that teachers overwhelmingly wish to help and support their students. In that sense, there is a relation between teachers and their learners – one that defines them both quite fundamentally. This relation, Butler argues, is a central tenet of nonviolence. If we consider that some actions by teachers (or even students) enact violence against students (or even teachers), we must consider if and how they are relationally connected- that they are implicated in each other's lives. In other words, when someone does violence to another, they also do violence to themselves- because their lives are bound up together. Butler questions if anyone is truly a self-standing 'individual'; arguing that "the most persuasive reasons for a practice of nonviolence directly imply a critique of individualism and require that we rethink the social bonds that constitute us as living creatures" (Butler, 2020, p. 14). Acknowledging this dependency is difficult, but she invites us to pursue and affirm social and ecological interdependence. In schools, for example, we can argue that

students and teachers are fundamentally dependent on one another, rather than individual and isolated actors. If we reconceptualise relations in this way, we can reimagine what a community might look like if there is a collective commitment to nonviolence. This is, however, complicated by state processes that are forcefully enacted in schools- policies, practices and authorities that are determined beyond this interrelationship, and that challenge any community's bonds.

As I dwelled a little on David's comments in the previous section – comments that indicated that he was not able to recognise or assign violence with homophobia, I want to turn to a comment he made as we were concluding our interview. For context, David identified as a white, cisgender and middle-class man- structures that traditionally prohibit or obstruct radical aspects of progressive activism. I asked him about how he would feel personally responding to gendered violence, and I include his response at some length:

> David: I'd sort of… I'd be quite passionate about dealing with those particular situations. I think the ones which we deal with at the moment tend to be the teasing, tend to be you know, kid like behaviours. The ones that you're referring to are the ones that are entrenched in society, and particularly they are minority, well not that women are minority groups, but they are people who are in positions of less power, and in many ways those are the people who we need to be actually helping. So in terms of dealing with those… and because it can be so secretive, it can be so isolating for people who are victims of that particular bullying, then certainly from my point of view it would be ones that you'd actually feel quite passionate about trying to deal with and actually helping particularly the victims there, in those sort of situations, cause they are. And I think it's actually one of those things which is pervasive in our society, people in positions of power, particularly men in positions of power, use that power over females and it becomes accepted. So dealing with that at school, at least making people aware of it, and dealing with it, is something that I certainly think would be something that you would not treat quietly.

While David speaks predominantly here about gendered violence from men against women, we can look quite clearly at his passionate commitment to antiviolence at a systemic and structural level. He recognises that violence can be "entrenched in society" and that minority groups "are the people who we need to be actually helping". We can also see that he recognises that sometimes these forms of violence are hidden from him, and while he indicates that this could be due to the hope for secrecy from the person being targeted, perhaps we can also ascribe that this might be hidden due to the definitions of violence that the school applies and ascribes to that tend to erase acknowledgment of these violences. What is not missing, however, is David's fundamental hopes for the students under his care. His powerful conclusion that dealing with gendered violence, with violence against minority groups "would be something that you would not treat quietly" speaks to his willingness to change, transform and undo structures that subordinate and exclude particular identities from his school. This suggests to us that school personnel are not unwilling, nor unable to be open to new knowledges and practices around reimagining and reassigning 'violence'. They are, however, still required to assess and respond to 'bullying' under clearly defined and fixed terms- terms that distance them from recognising deeper, cumulative and cultural policing of 'difference'.

From this we might argue that the state policy enacted by David and other teachers is not only doing violence through its failure to recognise student

experiences of violence, but also doing violence to those enacting it. As teachers respond to multiple forms of student violence and attempt to help students through these, they may be depleted through the very mechanisms that fail to confront them. This is, of course, dependant on whether teachers are able to assign 'violence' at all to what students are experiencing; if the static bullying definition is complete there is perhaps no propensity for teachers and school leaders to envision events outside of it as violence. These state mechanisms complicate and erode at the connections between students and teachers, and at their very values. As David is currently unable to confront the violence that is done to some, he is in a way doing additional violence to them, and in turn breaking the social bond that he has between himself and those students. In its misrecognition, violence is redone, and redone again, and the ties between those that are fundamentally linked are tested.

Although I have previously focused on the discursive and constructed nature of bullying, and the ways that gender and sexuality inform these constructions, in this chapter I have sought to look more closely at the discourses and systems that constrain teachers when interacting with student violence. Butler's theories enable a recognition of the ways that state assignments of 'violence', and in this case 'bullying', directly produce possibilities for teachers to conceptualise and construct 'bullies', 'victims' and 'bullying'. Future research must continue to critically examine "who is called 'violent' and for what purposes" (Butler, 2020, p. 4). In its current form state bullying policy enacts further violence on already disenfranchised or oppressed groups through its inadequacy to highlight accumulations of violence upon bodies. Through minimising or erasing these othered bodies and interactions, the policy further impacts upon teachers who, as agents of the state, become increasingly disconnected from the students under their care. Some new resources, borne from poststructural investigations of bullying policy, are attempting to redress these fixed definitions. In Scotland, for example, an anti-bullying organisation 'respectme' suggests that neither persistence nor intent should be prerequisites of 'bullying', and that every incident should be looked at in terms of its impact upon a young person (respectme, 2019). An approach such as this would require significant state endorsement – not only a policy change, but a change to the resourcing of schools to increase the capacity of staff to attend to violence between students in more empathic ways. Through changes like these, and further attention in research, disenfranchisement of teachers and students through the dismissal of their experiences might have the potential to be redressed.

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Chapter 4
The Modern Passage from Boyhood to Manhood and Its Relationship to Bullying and Harassment

David Plummer

Gender looms large in school-based harassment and bullying among both boys and girls. This chapter takes a closer look at boys' experiences. Findings from my own research and from the literature are used to provide greater insights into the relationships between manhood and conflict. Grounded in deep social obligations and taboos, gender is positioned as a premiere means of elevating the status of some boys while simultaneously offering a potent weapon against rivals and outcasts. Moreover, gender taboos gain particular prominence when overlaid onto the journey from childhood to manhood. This passage has long been recognized as the site for the social engineering of boys into men – a period when 'real men' are made. While traditional societies typically orchestrated this transition through the ritualized mentoring of young males by older men, modern society has handed much of this responsibility to the modern education system. For a number of reasons, a key difference in the modern transition is a progressive reduction of the role that adult males play in the process. However, the passage to manhood remains as important as ever and in the absence of older mentors, boys are resorting to alternative ways to collectively navigate this complex, high-pressure period. A consequence is that modern passage often has considerable autonomy from the adult world: much of the boys gendered learning plays out in the school ground and on the streets, at arms length from adults and with peer groups themselves adjudicating and policing their own 'in-house' standards of masculinity. Moreover, these peer-based codes of conduct in addition to having considerable autonomy are relayed to younger generations in the school ground, again often at arms length from adults and while there is considerable class and cultural variation, there are also overarching codes that are widely shared. These arrangements can be both positive and negative. On the one

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Y. Odenbring, T. Johansson (eds.), *Violence, Victimisation and Young People*, Young People and Learning Processes in School and Everyday Life 4,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75319-1_4

hand, greater latitude is possible as boys re-work traditional masculinities into new forms. However, driven by masculine obligations and taboos, boys can also act-out masculinity in extreme ways and punish transgressions severely, often using homophobia as the gender weapon-of-choice. At their most extreme, peer groups can spill onto the streets and become gangs.

Traditional Passages to Manhood

The journey from childhood to adulthood has long attracted the interest of educators and social researchers. In his seminal ethnographic work, *The Rites of Passage* (1960), first published in 1908, Arnold Van Gennep documented a wide variety of rituals and ceremonies that accompanied some of life's most important transitions including birth, death, puberty and coming-of-age in a diverse range of cultures. In that work, Van Gennep describes a change in social status or 'passage' as having three main stages, namely, *separation*, *transition* and *re-incorporation*. *Separation* occurs when the participants commence a journey from their original status towards a new one (such as leaving childhood behind); *transition* entails being in an intermediate or 'liminal' state between the starting point and the destination (on the way to being a man; sometimes called adolescence); and *re-incorporation* entails re-joining society with the new status (officially now a man).

In traditional settings, it was usual for boys to be *initiated* into manhood under the mentorship of older males from the same clan. It was also notable that the rites of initiation often involved a *ritualised challenge* which, depending on the culture, could be difficult, painful and sometimes even dangerous. Rites of passage provide a framework for the transition in order to navigate major changes in social status; the rites were often elaborate, carefully orchestrated and rich in symbolism. Van Gennep recognised that these rites related to major life events that most humans experience, however, the rituals and ceremonies that accompanied these events varied considerably, across different cultures, locations and historical periods.

Having wide cultural, historical and contextual variability in relation to events that are near-universal in human experience is an important finding. This variability indicates that the ritual responses are not likely to be 'hard-wired'. Despite the biological foundations of events like birth, death and puberty, these events are accompanied by an elaborate cultural overlay concerning how they are understood and how they play out. In the same way, we can draw a distinction between 'sex' and 'gender', where on the one hand, 'sex' is biologically based, while on the other 'gender' is socially constructed (West & Zimmerman, 1987; Butler, 1999). The importance of such a distinction is that it offers possibilities for understanding how gender conventions might (and do) shift over time. Identifying the socially constructed elements opens the way to developing strategies for change, for example, for improving gender relations and counteracting harmful gender-based practices, such as gender-based violence.

In the case of the passage to manhood, studying this transition gives powerful insights into the progressive construction of manhood as boys approach maturity. Not only is the socially constructed nature of gender identity apparent in its cultural and historical variability but also in the ways that contemporary manhood is transmitted and enforced. The socially constructed nature of becoming a man was captured by Gilmore, when he said:

> *boys have to be encouraged, sometimes actually forced, by social sanctions to undertake efforts toward a culturally defined manhood, which by themselves they might not do.* (Gilmore, 1990, p. 25)

Modern Passages to Manhood

Many of the traditional rites of passage described by Van Gennep, may not seem particularly relevant to modern, globalised societies, where gender roles have undergone major shifts, and continue to do so. However, while modern gender roles and identities differ from those of the past, it is also the case that gender has not simply ceased to exist. Developing a socially acceptable gender-identity – including the expectation that boys should become men – is arguably as important as ever (Plummer, 2020). Thus, while it is not all that uncommon for people to struggle with their gender identity or to want to change to the 'opposite' sex, it is virtually impossible to imagine anyone who does not have a gender identity at all. Indeed, struggling with identity and/or wishing to change underlines how entrenched gender continues to be.

This brings us to contemporary passages to manhood. With globalisation and the steady disappearance of traditional societies, but with the obligations of manhood still weighing heavily on all boys, then how do the passages to manhood occur in a modern world? In the search for answers, let us turn to the research.

My main research has been in two very different settings: Australia and the anglophone countries of the Caribbean (also known as the West Indies). In the *Caribbean Masculinities Project* (see Plummer, 2020), data was collected in seven countries and one territory: Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago and the British Territory of Anguilla. Using purposive sampling, a diverse sample of 138 participants was recruited, which incorporated a range of variables, including:

- race (principally mixed race, African and East Indian descendants);
- socioeconomic background; geographic location (garrison communities, rural and urban, seven countries and one territory);
- religion (Catholic, Protestant, Hindu and Moslem);
- and academic background (early school leavers, school completers and tertiary educated).

Highly detailed face-to-face interviews were conducted with these 138 participants. Further, as well as describing their own experiences, participants also

acted as lay field observers in order to provide data on complex social systems in diverse settings, thus extending the database to many additional participants (such as, in villages, communities, schools and peer groups and so on). To analyse the data, a modified grounded theory approach was taken in order to gain deeper insights into gender dynamics in the Caribbean. For further details of methods and results, please see Plummer (1999, 2020).

In the current paper I will use extracts from the above research together with insights from the work of other prominent Caribbean researchers to develop the arguments and explanations being advanced here. In both the Caribbean and the Australian research, the findings suggest that, with the advent of modern education, much of the work of traditional passage to manhood has been subsumed into schooling. In Van Gennep's terms, modern passage can be re-cast as: *separation* from infancy when the child commences school; *transition* during the school years in a protracted liminal state more-or-less equivalent to adolescence; and *re-incorporation* into the adult world on leaving school and entering the workforce. This passage, too, contains formal and informal ritualised elements such as: separation anxiety, tearful farewells and a fresh start on the *first day at school*; formal hurdles and informal challenges required in order to progress through schooling; and ceremonies such as graduation, which mark 'coming of age' and the completion of passage.

The advent of modern education offered a new arena for boys to prove themselves and thereby to hone and project their developing masculinity, however, over the passage of time further social change has intervened and the role that schools play as a primary arena for hosting the journey to manhood has become increasingly problematic. One such change is a progressive reduction of opportunities for mentoring by adults in the passage to manhood, particularly reducing the role of more senior men (Lewis, 2008). With growing urbanisation, with parent(s) and guardians working, and with congested commuting and long working hours, the traditional systems of boys being mentored by older men in the village and clan have progressively declined. Likewise, fewer men became teachers, and this further reduced the availability of older male role-models able to mentor boys at school and thus the school's utility in navigating the passage to manhood. In some countries, such as Trinidad and Tobago, 'shift schooling' – teaching half of the students in the morning and the other half in the afternoon – was introduced to give young people universal access to education. However, in the context of increasing urbanisation and changing work patterns, this effectively left many young people to 'fend for themselves' for half of each day while parents and guardians were at work.

Social change also resulted in shifts in the ratios of boys to girls attending school and completing higher education. For example, in the Anglophone countries of the West Indies, it was found that the proportion of women completing school and attending university steadily grew. Of course, universal education and greater opportunities for girls is very welcome, however it was also clear that boys' participation was progressively declining to a point well below parity (Figueroa, 2004; Reddock, 2004). During the period from 1948 to 2010, the proportion of male enrolments in the regional keystone university, the University of West Indies, declined year-on-year from a high of 70% in 1948 to 33% in 2010 and women

became the majority of students in all faculties, including in traditionally male disciplines, with the exception of engineering. This decline in boys' education and a parallel decline in males working as teachers was a cause for concern by many commentators (Miller, 1986; Figueroa, 2004). Some criticised what they called the 'feminisation' of education, which they argued was alienating boys and placing them at a serious disadvantage.

Unfortunately, the term 'feminisation' suggests that females were to blame for the problems boys were experiencing and that the system was biased to favour women and girls both as students and teachers. There are, however, alternative explanations. According to my own research (2020), boys are indeed finding classroom education less compelling, but this is because, unlike schooling in the past, the changes outlined above meant that academic pursuits no longer provided an arena where boys could readily differentiate their masculine identity. In other words, rather than the classroom being *feminised*, opportunities for intellectual and academic development had been *equalised*. The school - most notably the classroom and academic achievement – ceased to offer as many opportunities as it did in the past for boys to advance their masculine status because educational opportunity was becoming increasingly gender-neutral. Boys needed to look elsewhere to navigate the journey to manhood.

Here are insights from prominent Jamaican academic, Mark Figueroa:

> *… there is evidence that boys actually actively assert their maleness by resisting school [and that] male-child subculture… exerts considerable peer pressure on boys to be disruptive in school.* (Figueroa, 2004, p. 152)

Interestingly, similar phenomena have been seen in Europe and elsewhere. For example, Elina Lahelma writes of the politically-driven 'boy discourse' in which boys' underperformance in school is presented as 'an argument to counter feminism [where] the interests of the girls are regarded as if they are in opposition to the interests of the boys' (Lahelma, 2014).

Peer Pressure and Horizontal Mentoring

A raft of social changes – globalisation, urbanisation, work and economic pressures, education policy, family structures, and community organisation – have introduced significant challenges for boys and girls when navigating the journey to adulthood. Moreover, the rites and ceremonies which were traditionally used to orchestrate boys' passage to manhood along with the accompanying systems of mentoring by senior men have largely been superseded with many traditions being little more than historical curiosities. Yet the social pressures to become a man still weigh heavily on all boys and the journey continues to be complex, difficult and sometimes hazardous.

The decline of traditional systems for the passage to manhood has forced boys to seek alternative ways to navigate the transition. Two elements are particularly relevant here: first, to find alternative mentoring and role models for guidance and

support during the journey; and second, to find ways of internalising the conventions and benchmarks for what manhood is.

In the case of finding alternative role models and mentors, DuBois and Karcher (2005) describe a contemporary shift of focus from 'vertical' mentoring of boys by elders in the clan towards 'horizontal' mentoring of boys by other boys. In other words, boys are increasingly relying on peers for guidance and peer groups have gained in influence as a consequence. In effect, the decline in alternatives has created a power vacuum, and boys have turned to each other to fill this vacuum and to navigate the journey collectively. While greater reliance on peer groups may lead to some very good outcomes, a boy's fortunes can depend heavily on the sort of peers he has.

The equalisation of educational opportunity for boys and girls – itself a very good thing - has had an unintended consequence, namely, that intellectual pursuits and academic prowess, being equally available to both sexes, no longer have the same utility for defining, honing and projecting manhood. Indeed, the rising importance of peer groups in the passage to manhood has, in effect, displaced the drama of becoming a man from inside the classroom to outside – to the school ground, streets, malls and cyberspace. Here, for example, are the findings of Bailey and colleagues:

> *Street influences were particularly telling in that transition period to adulthood… Many of the styles on the street were accentuated as the basis for securing what was imagined to be an adult masculine identity. The street was trouble, yet it was where a man was made.* (Bailey et al., 1998, p. 55)

In the face of changing social conventions, it is also understandable that boys might fall back on what they see as stable and tangible characteristics in order to make manhood meaningful. Principal among those characteristics are the physical changes of maturation: physical development and appearance, physical performance and how the physical body is used, both individually and collectively (Butler, 1999; Andreasson & Johansson, 2016; Johansson et al., 2017). Elsewhere I refer to this shift in focus as a 'retreat to the body', where physicality provides important reference points for defining and triangulating the purpose of manhood, especially when other social cues are in flux.

You will recall that, unlike the 'sex' of a person, gender is a set of socially constructed conventions and as such can change. It is perhaps this changeable nature of gender that explains past heavy reliance on ceremonies, rites of passage and mentoring, which can help to preserve social continuity. Changing gender conventions are relevant here given that peer groups are playing an increasingly important role in arbitrating and enforcing those standards and can therefore play an important role in both continuity and change. Of course, parents, teachers and the wider culture are important sources of gender expectations, but peer groups themselves are custodians of gender knowledge and generate and transmit their own notions of manhood too (Mac an Ghaill, 1994, p. 53). Thus, while peer groups are generally restrained by adult supervision in the classroom, they enjoy considerable autonomy, power and influence outside the classroom at distance from adult

scrutiny - in the school ground, change rooms, playing fields, streets, lanes and shopping malls. Indeed, in these settings, a range of gender practices and conventions are passed between successive waves of older to younger boys without the need for direct involvement of adults or of the wider culture. Elsewhere, I refer to this process as 'rolling peer pressure' and argue that it enables the transmission of rich and complex (gendered) cultural forms down successive generations of youth, typically unmediated by, and beyond the awareness of adults (see Plummer, 1999). Indeed, this peer-based youth culture can exist in parallel and can act separately and sometimes even in deliberate opposition to wider society: to the point of contradicting and overriding wider cultural norms (Messerschmidt, 1994).

Policing Manhood

From the analysis so far, two factors have emerged as being important features of contemporary passages to manhood: first is a greater role for peer groups in mediating gender conventions (horizontal mentoring); and second, is a renewed emphasis on physical development as providing a tangible basis for understanding manhood (a retreat to the body). Of course, not only is manhood in a state of transition, but there is also no singular version of masculinity – even though certain stereotypes might be prevalent. On the contrary, peer groups themselves draw identity and cohesion from fashioning their own particular styles of masculinity, albeit, while still somewhat constrained by prevailing gender taboos, which are also changing.

The increased emphasis of physicality as being a more tangible basis for manhood has important binary consequences. On the one side, is a reification of male physicality; on the other, a relative reduction in the importance of intellectual and academic achievement. In the Caribbean research, evidence in support of the deprecation of academic achievement includes: the pronounced decline in school completion and higher educational enrolment by boys; and multi-country explanatory research that revealed that boys who are keen in class, who speak 'proper' English and/or who do well in exams are vulnerable to being targeted with homophobia and misogyny (Plummer, 2020; Reddock, 2004). The data also identified boys who would deliberately try not to score too highly in exams, to restrain their classroom participation and to hide their academic achievement, in order to avoid being targeted. Take for example the account of a young man from Trinidad (from Plummer, 2013):

> *… you never really associate cool with being smart. It was always something physical or some material possession… Expensive sneakers, latest football gears, the latest haircut. For us it was young men who has a beard.*
>
> (Participant TNT09; Country: Trinidad; Male; Age 28; Christian; African descent; at least some university education)

Masculine status is also denominated through physical development (Plummer, 1999, 2020; Andreasson & Johansson, 2016; Johansson et al., 2017). Boys who

were late to develop and who show fewer secondary sexual characteristics (less developed stature, musculature, facial structure, body hair, genital development) were also vulnerable to targeting, often once again with misogynistic and homophobic innuendo and harassment. Status was also extrapolated to how physicality is used: boys who were strong, aggressive, good at sport and showed physical prowess were generally afforded higher status. Those who were gentle, deferential or who preferred non-physical pursuits were vulnerable to homophobic and misogynistic criticism.

> *… you had to play sports, and be into sports… You wouldn't sit down and read a novel openly in school and many you wouldn't study in front of people because it wasn't too cool to be seen studying… definitely peer pressure, although it might not be vocalized in so many words, but it was in the air, it was something nobody had to say, it was just in the air that, 'OK, we have free time you should be more into sweating, build a sweat, build you muscles rather than enjoying a good novel or a good book'. That's just a little too prissy and bright and girly and therefore suspect.*
>
> (Participant TNT09; Country: Trinidad; Male; Age 28; Christian; African descent; at least some university education)

Importantly, in all of the situations described above, the homophobia and misogyny were usually agnostic as to whether the boy was *actually* gay, even though suggestions that he might be gay could be part of the innuendo. Typically, the targeting arose when boys showed characteristics that other boys considered to be *insufficiently masculine*. In other words, the transgression was not predicated on sexual practice nor, strictly speaking, on his femininity: the transgression was considered to indicate a *lack of masculinity* (a betrayal or 'crime' against manhood, see Plummer 2005). Here is an account of an attack in Guyana against a young man who was not stereotypically masculine (from Plummer, 2013):

> *… at that time my hair was not in braids, but it was in the funky dread, so I felt it [the liquid], and right away I leaned, and my mind said to me: this is acid. So, there I am leaning, looking on the ground, looking to see if pieces of flesh would have been dropping there. I was hospitalised… for two months and a week… nursing my acid wounds.*
>
> (Participant GUY13; Country: Guyana; Male; Age 29; Christian; working class; mixed race; at least some secondary school)

Personal reputation is important for boys and exhibiting appropriate levels of manhood is integral to maintaining an intact reputation. But as we noted, gender consists of a complex web of social conventions and reputation is cultivated by projecting an image that conforms to, and celebrates, those conventions, as well as carefully avoiding evidence that could be construed as gender transgression. Adopting a socially endorsed version of manhood and building a reputation is done for the satisfaction of receiving social endorsement. Reputation building should therefore be considered as being akin to a public performance that is designed to sway the opinion of onlookers (Butler, 1999). If so, then it helps to ask who the intended audience is and who sets the standards?

> *… the man had the gun by my head and his hand actually sweating, sweating on me, so like this man he is probably doing this just to prove a point to the whole gang nah, just to show he is capable…*

(Participant JL; aged 22; office assistant; from Plummer & Geofroy, 2010)

Of course, general social approval might be a motivating factor for building a reputation, but with peers and peer groups playing a very immediate and pre-eminent role in many boys' lives during the passage to manhood, then peer group standards and peer approval emerge as especially influential. In fact, peer groups play a central role in setting modern gender benchmarks and in policing them (Martino, 2000; Odenbring, 2019; Plummer, 2001; Pascoe, 2013; Rofes, 1995; Rawlings, 2017).

The following excerpt is an example of peer-group policing from the island country of St Vincent and The Grenadines (from Plummer, 2013) Note here that 'chi-chi man' is a Caribbean term for an effeminate/gay man, so 'burn up chi-chi man' is to set a gay man on fire; 'battiboy' is also a reference to a (usually younger) gay man, so 'shot a battiboy' is to shoot a gay boy:

> *… they will use certain lyrics and you will have to respond by raising your hand. So… they will ask you if you love woman, put yuh two hands in the air and you will have to put up the two hands; if you want to 'burn up chi-chi man', you will put your hand as if it were around a lighter and you are lighting a fire; or they will say 'shot the battiboy' and you will have your hand shaped like a gun and moving it up and down as if you were shooting something in the air. So those were really used as a measuring stick, and if you didn't do it then there will be confrontation and harassment after… so if you didn't burn up chi-chi man: you are gay; if you didn't put up your hands when they said if you love woman: then you are gay; if you didn't light the fire: you are gay…*
>
> (Participant SVG02; Country: Saint Vincent; Male; Age 21; Christian; working/middle class; mixed race; at least some secondary school)

Physical and aggressive expressions of masculinity can be used as leverage in the group pecking order and set the stage for friction between competing peer groups. Homophobia and misogyny are powerful weapons in peer group politics; both are deployed to enforce loyalty and to justify punishment for failure (Andreasson & Johansson, 2016; Johansson et al., 2017). In essence these tactics rely on humiliating the target by casting suspicion on a boy's manhood; a tactic that can be powerful even before a boy reaches puberty, before he forms his sexual identity and even if he is not gay. Homophobic and misogynistic accusations are especially powerful because they have the capacity to inactivate 'circuit-breakers' when tensions arise. That is to say, anyone who chooses to side with the victim and attempts to defend such highly taboo behaviour runs the risk of being targeted too. The dual dynamics of being seen to disavow masculine taboos and to valorise masculine obligations both put pressure on boys to 'act-out' in hyper-masculine ways and this can lead to an escalation of conflict. Acting out in masculine and hyper-masculine ways helps to build a reputation among the audience who matters most – the peer group. Such actions include the public rejection of taboo behaviours such as softness, weakness and lack of courage. These gestures can also demonstrate support for the ideology and solidarity of the group in opposition to others and to consolidate a boy's position in the pecking order. It is not uncommon for modern peer groups to have their own "in-house" initiation rites which test prospective group members by putting a price on membership. These tests can involve ritual humiliation and dangerous

challenges, including committing a serious crime as evidence of masculine bravery, nerve, aggression and loyalty to the group (Messerschmidt, 1994; Plummer & Geofroy, 2010). Failure to measure up to expectations can be viewed as a form of betrayal of peer group solidarity and entail consequences ranging from harassment, to rejection, to assault and at the extreme, death (Martino, 2000; Plummer, 2001, 2005; Rawlings, 2017). Here is an example from Trinidad (from Plummer & Geofroy, 2010):

> *… fights, we were just trying to impress, or it was a "ranking thing" because… you trying to show you is not a softie nah! I can't remember what they were about, but I remember I used to fight a lot. Probably if someone call me a name I mighta cuffed them up. I used to fight to gain respect.*
>
> (Participant JD; Country: Trinidad; Male; Aged 24; Secondary school teacher)

As we noted earlier, the standards of manhood embraced by peer groups can vary markedly from what would be considered acceptable in wider society. Indeed, wider society would and does consider some of the activities that peer groups engage in as being highly antisocial. But to the group members themselves, those same activities are intensely *pro-social*: members are vying for the approval of those most important to them, their peers. Members act out their masculinity for audience approval. Being a group member potentially places boys in opposition to non-members. This oppositional relationship can readily be extended to teachers, parents and those in authority, who themselves can become embroiled in a tug-of-war of defiance and hyper-masculine acting-out (Plummer, 2020). The tug-of-war between parents and peer group is captured nicely in the words of the late great Caribbean academic Barry Chevannes:

> *… it is the peer group that will put the final touches, so to speak, to the construction of his male identity – his anti-homosexual heterosexuality, power and control over women… The peer group virtually replaces mother and father as the controlling agents or, if not entirely a substitute, a countervailing force…* (Chevannes 1999, p. 30)

This chapter was charged with discussing the relationship between the passage to manhood and conflict, bullying and harassment, however, it is important not to paint a bleak overly-simplistic monochrome picture. Peer groups can be extraordinarily productive and provide a vital support system during a complicated transition. Peer groups also generate and perpetuate unique youth sub-cultures, which are influential sources of social innovation including in music, fashion, technology and design. Through the mechanism of 'rolling peer pressure' youth sub-cultures gain considerable autonomy from wider culture because group codes and conventions are passed down and remodelled by successive generations of young people at arms length from adults in locations such as: the school ground, public transport, the internet and the streets. Ironically, through the mechanisms described here, young people can set the tone for important social trends, including shifting gender conventions, particularly because the standards they adopt during their passage to adulthood will soon become the adult standards of future societies. In other words, we see a dual paradox which differs from the conventional 'top down' view of education and community development: first, young people taking over mentoring roles that were

previously performed by older men and shaping the development of other young people themselves; and young people's culture actively fashioning future society rather than society solely fashioning them.

There is also extensive cultural and class variation to some of the general observations outlined above despite there being many shared elements, presumably through colonialism, globalisation, mass media and given that the biology provides some common ground. In both the Caribbean and Australia, I found that while boys had a shared understanding of the basis for manhood, much of the finer detail of embodiment and enactment varied considerably. For example, in the Caribbean boys in poorer communities had much less personal space at home and they spent considerable time growing up on the streets. Thus, their development was more likely to occur with the oversight of peers - subject to their scrutiny, conforming to their expectations and regulated by intense peer group policing. On the other hand, boys from more affluent settings had more private space to escape the scrutiny of peers. Thus, they were more able to 'let their guard down', be more individualistic and find space to study (surreptitiously, if necessarily).

Revisiting Manhood

We are in an era of unprecedented social change. Amid that change, the raft of social conventions that we call gender is changing too, but despite continual change, gender remains as influential as ever.

At the heart of gender is the binary between masculine and feminine. This gender binary structures the entire system, yet as simple as it might appear, the gender binary is the source of extraordinary complexity. One reason for this complexity is that gender is socially constructed. In other words, the elements considered masculine and feminine have essentially arisen historically as the result of social convention. What is considered masculine, feminine *or neither* can, and does, change – albeit, not always without resistance. Earlier we saw evidence of change in the shifting demographics of boys' education in the Caribbean.

From my Caribbean research (summarised in Plummer, 2020), two powerful dynamics structure and restrain change, namely, *gender taboos* and the *mutually exclusive nature of the gender binary* (mutually exclusive, meaning that anything considered feminine in a given context, cannot ordinarily also be considered masculine and vice versa). Gender taboos are powerfully evident throughout society, including in the school ground. For example, while there is considerable latitude in the clothing-styles for boys, there is very limited tolerance of boys wearing attire that, depending on cultural context, can be considered to be 'girls' clothes'. Take for example the following quote from the work of the prominent Canadian/Trinidadian academic, Wesley Crichlow:

> *…a [Trinidadian] male's sexual identity would be interrogated if he wore the wrong clothes or colors, failed to participate in particular sports, or did not protect his female partner or show an interest in events constructed as 'boyish' or 'mannish'.* (Crichlow 2004)

The mutually exclusive nature of gender binaries gives binaries the ability to imply meaning without it needing to be stated. Likewise, taboos specify what is unacceptable and in so doing they simultaneously imply what is acceptable. The meanings *implied* by binaries and taboos operate in a multitude of complex ways and can affect appearance, gestures, speech patterns, dress codes, friendship networks, career choices and much more. In this way, by implication, masculine stereotypes can be widely prevalent and yet never exist in their absolute form and can be highly influential even when they are left unspoken. Likewise, multiple masculinities can co-exist within an 'authorised cultural space' ring-fenced by taboos and binaries. Transgressing the boundaries of this authorised space is risky and should be approached with considerable caution (unless, of course, social change shifts the boundaries first). This authorised space accommodates diverse masculinities, which generally respect gender taboos and are not considered gender transgressive, despite their other differences, and even though they may violate other social taboos (such as violence, aggression, sexual misconduct and so on). On the contrary, deliberately breaching these latter taboos may, on occasion, be used to enhance masculine status. The present research supports Connell's (1995, 2005) influential idea of *hegemonic masculinity* as being, in effect, a virtual concept, not realised anywhere in an absolute form but widely apparent, never-the-less, by virtue of being implied by taboos and mutually exclusive gender binaries, both of which define an 'authorised cultural space' in which diverse masculinities can be performed with little risk to reputation. This idea is reminiscent of Goffman in his book *Stigma* when he says that the identity-values of society:

> *…may be fully entrenched nowhere, and yet they can cast some kind of shadow on the encounters… everywhere in daily living*. (Goffman, 1963, P. 29)

More recently there has been a growth in research (Anderson, 2009; McCormack, 2012) which shows, at least in some contexts, that masculinities can become more inclusive and incorporate characteristics and ideologies that were previously considered to be un-masculine and indeed were once deeply taboo (such as support for displays of affection between men and greater acceptance of homosexuality). Of course, as we have already seen, gender conventions can change: historically, cross-culturally and contextually. Moreover, there is extensive work to show that in many traditional societies, such as those of Papua New Guinea, ritualised homosexuality and masculinity are not at all incompatible – at least not until church missionaries arrived (Herdt, 1993). Perhaps then, it is not so surprising that similar shifts have recently been detected in contemporary Euro-centric cultures and that as gender roles and taboos change, so too does the 'authorised cultural space' in which masculinities operate. However, while researchers have lately noted reductions, others continue to observe severe and growing homophobia and misogyny among boys. In my own research, the findings are mixed and are heavily dependent on context: there are certainly pockets where 'hard' masculinity dominates and where savage harassment and bullying occurs. The presence of adults tends to moderate the severity of such activities whereas in locations at arms length from adults homophobic and misogynistic harassment can escalate. For some boys, the bathrooms, school

ground, and sports field continue to be dangerous places (Odenbring, 2019; Pascoe, 2013; Plummer, 1999, 2020).

Conclusion

Using data from my own work and from other researchers in the Anglophone Caribbean, this paper argues that the shifts in the education of boys is explained at least in part because boys are searching for alternative ways to make the journey to manhood more meaningful. Here then are clues as to how social change interacts with gender: education, which was previously a male domain, is now much more gender neutral – indeed, in many parts of the world, girls are doing better than boys. Thus, instead of defining and honing their masculinity through intellectual prowess under the tutelage of senior mentors, physicality and peer groups have gained in importance during the passage to manhood. This development can underwrite some very positive outcomes including rich developments in youth sub-cultures and new, more inclusive versions of masculinity. However, the reliance on other peers and a growing focus on physicality at the expense of education can also be problematic. Left to their own devices, peer groups can impose dangerous expectations on members and exert savage punishment for betrayal (Plummer, 2005; Plummer & Geofroy, 2010). At their most extreme, peer group politics can spill onto the streets and become violent. Indeed, the difference between a peer group and a gang is often only a matter of degree. There are also social consequences of widening inequality - potentially including violence - if women are becoming better educated than men, and men are increasingly expressing themselves through their physicality.

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Chapter 5
Rumbling and Tumbling in School: Jokes, Masculinity and Homosocial Relations

Thomas Johansson and Ylva Odenbring

This chapter draws on a meta-analysis of data from two different research projects conducted in two lower secondary schools in Sweden. The chapter explores teenage boys' narratives of existing joking cultures and lad cultures in the everyday life of school. Using the concepts of vertical and horizontal homosociality, the study demonstrates that there are aspects of both power and emotional bonding present in the processes of homosociality in boys' peer relations. The results indicate that calling each other names and fighting for 'fun' may be considered harmless and viewed as connecting features of social life in school settings. On the other hand, the results indicates that there sometimes is a very thin line between what is considered fun and what may be regarded as harassment. Not all boys support the joking and lad cultures in their school, and some boys actually indicate that they are against such behaviour and express awareness about the seriousness behind the violent acts. This, we argue, shows the complexity of homosocial relations in school.

Introduction

In the classic ethnographic study *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*, Paul Willis (1977) demonstrated how jokes and acts of harassment were part of young boys' peer culture and social relationships in the everyday life of school. By using jokes, sarcasm and mischief, the boys transformed the legitimate school culture into something reprehensible. Group solidarity and male identity were created at the cost of respect for teachers, female students and students

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Y. Odenbring, T. Johansson (eds.), *Violence, Victimisation and Young People*, Young People and Learning Processes in School and Everyday Life 4,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75319-1_5

with immigrant background. Although there have been some significant changes in the lad culture since Willis conducted his study in the UK during the 1970s, more recent research indicates that some homosocial mechanisms and masculine behaviour still remain in contemporary schools.

Contemporary research on the relation between joking and having fun and harassment in schools shows, on the one hand, how students joke around and use jokes as a source of communication (cf. Lund, 2015; Mills & Carwile, 2009). On the other hand, there are researchers who suggest that 'just having fun' and verbal insults among students have become a part of a masculine, sexist and violent school culture (Lahelma, 2002, Chap. 2 this volume; Pesola McEachern, 2014; Odenbring & Johansson, 2019). Several previous studies have revealed the highly complex and contradictory picture of the relation between teasing, 'having fun' and bullying in schools (Lund, 2015; Mills & Carwile, 2009; Ritchie, 2014). Research stressing the positive, creative and reflexive aspects of joking cultures in schools often argues that joking is an asset and part of creative learning processes (Lund, 2015). Research also suggests that teasing has often been separated from bullying and regarded as a developmentally appropriate and highly acceptable form of interaction (Mills & Carwile, 2009).

Yet, contemporary research also indicates that there is a thin line between what are considered serious insults and acts of playfulness (Varjas et al., 2008). Students do not necessarily regard 'just joking around' and fighting between consenting individuals as bullying (Henriksen & Bengtsson, 2018; Varjas et al., 2008). As long as these behaviours do not turn into physical fights, the situations are often identified and described as playful acts between peers (Marwick & Boyd, 2014; Mills & Carwile, 2009). Everyday violence in school is often trivialized and experienced as 'nothing unusual' by students and becomes an intrinsic part of daily life. At the same time, researchers argue the experiences of accumulated violence may result in young people becoming desensitized to it (Henriksen & Bengtsson, 2018.

Several studies suggest that teasing and mocking are part of the social process of becoming a man (McCann et al., 2010; Sulkowski et al., 2014; Varjas et al., 2008). Being able to joke and laugh about abuse or violence is part of 'toughening up' and becoming a 'hard' man. The boys who fail this 'manhood test' remain in the sphere of being unmanly. In many schools, the students also accept a certain level of homophobic jokes and racist generalizations as part of the existing joking culture (Raby, 2004). These more negative aspects of teasing and joking are connected in particular to masculinity and boys' homosocial relations. Similarly, Pesola McEachern's (2014) study in an all-boys Catholic school shows how boys calling each other 'gay' was synonymous with being labelled feminine. Using degrading words such as 'gay' or 'homo' as well as talking in a degrading way about women was a strong part of the masculine culture at this school. Being subject to homophobic name-calling, some of the boys sought to remove all doubt about their sexuality by emphasizing their heterosexuality and hegemonic masculinity, Pesola McEachern (2014) concludes.

Although we find these prior studies on teasing and jokes in schools interesting, we will argue that there is a need for a more critical and gender-aware investigation

of this area. In this connection the aim of the current chapter is to explore teenage boys' narratives of existing joking cultures and lad cultures in the everyday life of lower secondary school. It is our ambition to highlight different dynamics and aspects involved in jokes and acts of fighting and wrestling among male students and to explore different types of joking cultures and lad cultures in school. The chapter draws on a meta-analysis of data from two different research projects supported by grants from the Swedish Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority (grant number 02794/2017) and the Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare (grant number 2017-00071), conducted in two lower secondary schools, named Station Master School and Amber School respectively, located in different rural areas in Sweden. Methodologically, the chapter draws on interviews with students in the ninth grade, which is the last year of lower secondary school. All interviews were conducted by the second author. In the chapter we use a qualitative approach with a mixture of focus group interviews and individual interviews. Interviews have the advantage of revealing interesting results as well as highlighting students' voices regarding their experiences in school. Initially, the data from the individual projects were conducted and analysed separately. The analytic process of the current chapter is based on a collective process through which we have jointly read through the transcripts and analysed the data. To ensure confidentiality, all names of participants as well as the names of the schools in this chapter have been anonymized (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017).

Homosociality

The concept of *homosociality* is often used to define the construction of social bonds between persons of the same sex. It is defined as a mechanism and social dynamic that explains the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity. The concept is also frequently applied to explain how men, through their friendships and intimate social relations with other men, maintain and defend the gender order and patriarchy (Bird, 1996; Flood, 2008; Lipman-Blumen, 1976; Sedgewick, 1985). This common and somewhat overexploited use of the concept referring to how men uphold patriarchy simplifies and reduces homosociality to showing how men bond, build closed teams, and defend their privileges and positions. Although the concept of homosociality maintains homogeneous gender categorizations, focusing on single-sex groups and often referring to hierarchical gender relations in which men strengthen hegemonic gender ideals, it is also possible to open up the concept and look more closely at the dual aspects of homosociality. This has already been done in research on *fratriarchal spaces*, for example in the military, where men simultaneously uphold close as well as hierarchal and antagonistic relations with their peers (see, for example, Higate, 2012; Remy, 1990). Here we will instead try to develop the concept of homosociality.

By making a distinction between the *vertical* and *horizontal* practice of homosociality, we can develop a more dynamic view of it (Haywood, Johansson, Herz,

Hammarén, & Ottemo). Taking a vertical view of homosociality emphasizes its relation to a hegemonic gender order as well as how homosocial relations uphold and maintain 'traditional' hegemonic male and female social positions. However, the development and conceptualization of bromances and horizontal homosociality – new forms of more inclusive intimacies between men – point to variation and transition, and consequently a reconfiguration of hegemony including tendencies towards an eventual transformation of intimacy and gender and power relations. In the absence of societal policing of gender and sexual orientation, men would be able to have friendships with other men regardless of sexual orientation (Chen, 2012). Sexual orientation would not be the principal basis for friendship. Rigid boundaries between friendships and romantic relationships would not be necessary, and the potential for fluidity in men's relationships would increase. Using the concept of horizontal homosociality, we argue that there is a need to also look at redefinitions of hegemonic masculinity and to bring forward more nuanced pictures of men's and boys' homosocial behaviour.

In the present chapter, we will take a closer look at how young boys approach each other in terms of name-calling and fights for 'fun'. Using the concept of homosociality as a tool to decode and interpret the different practices related to fights for 'fun', we aim to get a better grasp on the thin line between fun and harassment. Homosocial relations are necessary, and they are an intrinsic part of friendship socialization at schools. However, it is also necessary to maintain a focus on power and the possibility that these relations can turn into more vertical and hierarchical power relations and, in addition, into oppressive practices in school settings. Sorting out the vertical from the horizontal aspects of homosociality can be a tricky business. Often these interrelations are tightly interwoven. The ambition here is to use this conceptual tool to discern oppressive practices from teasing and fighting for 'fun' as a social competence and skill.

Jokes, Fights and Male Bonding

Before we present the results of this chapter, we will give a brief background about the two rural schools, Station Master School and Amber School, in which the research projects have been conducted. Station Master School is a public compulsory school located in Granby, a rural village of 1600 inhabitants. The school is the only lower secondary school in the catchment area, and it enrols students from the village of Granby as well as from surrounding villages. The interviews at Station Master School were conducted from November 2017 until May 2018.

Amber School is a public school located in the village of Granberget, which has approximately 3000 inhabitants. The school is the only lower secondary school in Granberget municipality, and its catchment area covers the entire municipality, which includes Granberget village as well as the surrounding smaller villages. The interviews were conducted in February 2019. Similar to other rural areas in Sweden, Granby and Granberget communities have a lower educational level and lower

average incomes compared to the national average (Statistikmyndigheten, 2019). Also, the proportion of inhabitants with immigrant background in both communities is lower than the national average of 20%.

The results will be presented and unpacked according to the two main themes that have been identified in the thematic analysis of the data (cf. Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017): 1) Jokes – just for 'fun' or a serious game? and 2) Physical fights for 'fun'. The main aim of the chapter is not to contextualize the results in relation to the different school contexts, but rather to explore and critically discuss different kinds of verbal jokes and physical acts done for 'fun'. In the concluding section we will discuss and highlight the main results of this chapter, and in the final section of this chapter we will critically discuss joking and lad cultures in school and how this might impact boys' everyday life and well-being in school.

Jokes – Just for 'Fun' or a Serious Game?

The daily teasing that goes on in school settings can be seen as a form of *homosocial relations*. Although constant teasing can be interpreted as harassment, the young boys themselves have a different view on this. They constantly call each other things, using different verbal insults. The students at Amber School referred to a joking culture where the students called each other different forms of degrading words on a daily basis, and this phenomenon was particularly common among the boys, as revealed during one of the focus group interviews.

> Interviewer: Would you say it is part of your school culture, that you joke around and express quite harsh words to each other, but it is only meant as a joke?
> Simon: Yes, particularly in our class. We boys call each other almost anything.
> Interviewer: What do you call each other? Can you give an example?
> Simon: When we play table tennis during the breaks you can hear someone tell someone else, 'you suck', but no one is offended.
> Karl: You just laugh at each other, but you can also say much worse words.
> Interviewer: What kinds of words are those? Is it only boys who express words like that?
> Simon: Girls also use bad words sometimes, but they do it more quietly.
> Interviewer: Is everyone taking part in playing table tennis?
> Simon: It's mostly only us guys.
> Interviewer: What other things do you call each other?
> Karl: People say things like 'fucking idiot', 'I'm going to kill you', but you know it is just a joke and then we start to fight for fun. (Focus group interview, Amber School)

Calling each other things like 'fucking idiot' or saying 'you suck' could be seen as a part of the boys' peer culture at Amber School. The boys express that they know that this is part of the existing joking culture and they also express that this is why they are not offended and just laugh about it. Not showing weakness and vulnerability could here be understood as a way for the boys to construct their masculinity and show the rest of the boys in the peer group that they are strong and manly enough to be able to take the joke (cf. Pascoe, 2005). Another form of joke and verbal insults

that the students referred to was homophobic name-calling. The students referred to this as part of everyday jokes at school.

> Interviewer: What about homophobic name-calling? Do you call each other gay, for example?
> Ossian: Yes, you do that in the boys' group, but no one is offended or feels humiliated, you're just joking around because you are such close friends. When you say it, you don't mean it. But sure, there might be someone who actually is offended. You hear 'gay' a lot in school, I hear it every day.
> Interviewer: What's the feeling when someone says that?
> Ossian: People have called me that, mostly Oskar or another one of my closest friends, so I'm not offended. I'm usually not offended if people call me that or call me something else. (Individual interview, Amber School)

The students refer to the word 'gay' as something they use more or less on a daily basis, indicating this is something they do for 'fun' and part of the boys' peer culture. Similar to the boys' joking culture at Amber School, boys' joking culture at Station Master School was described in terms of various forms of verbal insults and homophobic name-calling. Also, at this school jokes and teasing were recurrent behaviours among the boys.

> Interviewer: What kind of name-calling and bad words do you call each other?
> André: Gay.
> Oskar: Well, a little bit of everything.
> Per: All kinds of name-calling.
> Oskar: It's a little bit of everything, but it's mostly between boys.
> Interviewer: Okay, so are all boys called gay or just certain boys?
> André: It's just for fun.
> Oskar: You know who you can or can't call that.
> Interviewer: But why do you use this kind of name-calling?
> André: It's just like random talk, you know.
> Oskar: In one peer group, you might have your own jargon, you have a certain jargon, and in another group they have another jargon. It all depends on the people in that group and stuff like that. (Focus group interview, Station Master School)

The boys' talk and calling each other 'gay' at Station Master School and Amber School, respectively, could here be understood as a part of the existing hegemony and creating horizontal homosocial bonds (cf. Haywood et al., 2017). Pascoe (2005) argues that 'fag' (in this chapter, 'gay' and 'fag' are used synonymously) is not necessarily attached only to homosexual boys. This form of talk and joking culture also serve as a way for heterosexual boys to discipline themselves and each other. When heterosexual boys call another boy a fag or gay, it is a way to tell him that he is not a 'real man'. Depending on whom the epithet 'fag' is directed to, this may or may not have a sexual meaning, but it always has a gendered meaning. This means that any boy can be subject to being called a 'fag' (or as in this chapter, gay) by other boys, Pascoe stresses. Pascoe argues that this means that 'fag talk' is not static, but rather fluid: 'Becoming a fag has as much to do with failing at the masculine tasks of competence, heterosexual prowess and strength or an anyway revealing weakness or femininity, as it does with a sexual identity' (Pascoe, 2005, p. 330). As for the boys at Station Master School and Amber School, the use of 'gay talk' could be

interpreted as part of disciplining heterosexual boys and maintaining hegemonic masculinity. Our data also reveal that students use sexist language and call each other sexist words when they are angry and upset.

> Axel: When you are angry with someone, you say to that person 'you're a little cunt'.
> Interviewer: Okay do you call both boys and girls that?
> Axel: Yes.
> Interviewer: Hmm, what else do you call each other?
> Axel: Gay.
> Interviewer: Gay, okay?
> Axel: You can say 'you're fucking gay' and stuff like that.
> Interviewer: Is that between boys?
> Axel: Normally yes. /…/ But when you're angry you just shout things at someone.
> Vincent: It could be anyone. (Focus group interview, Station Master School)

The sexist expression 'cunt' has a similar function as the use of calling each other gay, to discipline each other but also to diminish each other. Also, as suggested by previous research, this form of harassment is also aimed at girls and women to harass and degrade them (Lahelma, 2002; Odenbring & Johansson, 2019). Although homophobic name-calling is clearly part of everyday life and is expressed and framed as a joke between boys in both schools, there are also students who are highly aware of the detrimental effects this form of name-calling might have. When these students are interviewed, they not only question this behaviour but they also discuss it critically. One of the students who reflected on and questioned this behaviour was Gabriel at Station Master School.

> Interviewer: You talked about the existing homophobia in school and the name-calling and calling each other gay?
> Gabriel: Mmm, yeah, that it's bad to be a homosexual.
> Interviewer: Okay, how is that expressed?
> Gabriel: How is that expressed?
> Interviewer: Yes, how do students talk about it, why is it considered something bad?
>
> Gabriel: I don't know why, but I think I've seen through this pretty well, they just say things without knowing why they're actually saying it. /…/ Because when you ask them why they said what they said they have no answer. They just say it, without thinking about what they're saying. /…/ I just think they don't understand what they're actually saying. (Individual interview, Station Master School)

The homophobia and homophobic name-calling at Station Master School that Gabriel refers to and reflects upon is framed from a perspective where homosexuality is understood as something bad and subordinate to heterosexuality. Similarly, students at Amber School critically reflected on the existing joking culture and homophobic name-calling. Hugo was one of the students who questioned this behaviour and also raised the underlying seriousness about the degrading name-calling.

> Interviewer: What are your thoughts on jokes? I mean, sometimes there might be a quite thin line between what is considered a joke and what is not in what is said, isn't there?
> Hugo: You definitely know when there is some truth behind some of the jokes.
> Interviewer: Would you say there is a blunt joking culture among the students at this school? Do you have to be able take the joke, [including] homophobic jokes, so to speak?

Hugo: Oh yes, there is quite a lot of homophobia here, that's the case everywhere actually. Sometimes they definitely cross the line. I also say bad things to my friends sometimes, but then you know you actually don't mean it. But, yes, sometimes the joke is too much and they cross the line. (Individual interview, Amber School)

Again, we can see that there is a very thin line between what is and is not considered a joke if the joke can be understood as an actual insult. As suggested by previous researchers, the line between what is considered 'just a joke' and sex-based harassment is often thin or even non-existent because it constitutes a way of maintaining gender hierarchies and building hierarchies between different groups of boys and masculinities (Connell, 1995; Lahelma, 2002, Chap. 2 this volume). The fact that some of the boys actually question the jokes and the joking culture shows the complexity of this behaviour. We argue that this behaviour also has to be understood in the light of how it can be used to humiliate boys who are positioned as subordinated, among them, sexual and racial minorities (cf. Odenbring, 2019a; Odenbring & Johansson, Chap. 12 this volume).

Physical Fights for 'Fun'

Among certain boys in the study, homosocial relations are also expressed through fighting for 'fun'. Sometimes these kinds of activities escalate into quite painful and violent situations. During a focus group interview, boys at Station Master School reflected on a game that they referred to as 'the nipple twist'.

Interviewer: Do you fight for fun? What does that mean?
All: Yes.
Alexander: You hit each other on the nerves [on the muscles], then you're quite exposed.
Interviewer: But that's painful.
Jesper: In the sixth grade, he was completely blue around his nipples.
Alexander: Someone introduced the 'nipple twist' in school and everyone was doing it to me. A couple of guys were holding me down while two to three other guys did the 'nipple twist'. When I was at the gym and went to the sauna afterward I was completely fucking blue!
Interviewer: Yeah, of course.
Alexander: My whole chest.
Interviewer: Of course.
Alexander: I was completely blue on my chest. So, they didn't only hit my nipples.
Interviewer: So, your whole chest was blue?
Alexander: Yes, yes.
Simon: It sounds like we assaulted you.
Alexander: Well, you actually did!
Interviewer: You actually did, yes, but what was the point of this 'nipple twist' thing?
Simon: I don't know, you were pretty retarded back then.
Alexander: When I tried to get back at them, they called for each other to 'hold Alexander' and they did it again.
Interviewer: So, this was a thing between certain boys.
Alexander: It was between all boys. (Focus group interview, Station Master School)

In the extract above, the boys are looking back to when they attended middle school. During this time, one of the boys in particular, Alexander, was exposed to 'the nipple twist'. Alexander is also the only boy who reflects on these incidents as actual assaults. None of the other boys refers to these incidents as physical assaults; instead, the 'nipple twist game' is referred to as something they did when they were younger and did not know better. Now that they are older and in the ninth grade, they do not play the 'nipple twist game' anymore; instead, the boys play a game they refer as to 'the Krona', which is a 'fight for fun game' and involves physical violence.[1]

Interviewer: So, do you still fight for fun in the ninth grade?
Alexander: We played 'the Krona' for a while.
Interviewer: What kind of a game is that?
Alexander: You take one krona [a one-krona coin] and then are you going to hit the other person on their fists.
Jesper: I can show you.
Alexander: No.
Interviewer: Okay, so you have a coin and then you're going to hit his fists with it.
Jesper: And then it starts to bleed.
Alexander: It's not that painful.
Interviewer: Do you still play this game?
Jesper: No, we're not allowed.
Alexander: They forbid it because they said it was dangerous.
Interviewer: Okay, so it's the school professionals who forbid it?
Everyone: Yes.
Jesper: All teachers who caught us doing it took the krona. (Focus group interview, Station Master School)

Apparently, the views of the teachers and those of the students differ considerably. Often this game leads to the ritual bleeding of the victim. When the interviewer asks if they are continuing with this ritual, the students reply that the teachers and other school professionals banned the game. The situation with 'the nipple twist' game, indicates that some students are more exposed to violence than others. For a young boy it might be quite hard to oppose fights for fun and other games, because it is part of the existing 'lad culture' in the boys' group. For the individual boy it might also mean that he in a way feels included in the boys' group. Gabriel at Station Master School defined the existing lad culture at his school as a 'macho culture'. Gabriel also reported that the school climate at Station Master School was very harsh, which means the boys are expected to handle physical pain and not cry; if a boy does cry because he is in pain, the other boys will call him a 'wimp', Gabriel says.

At Amber school there were similar situations in which boys were involved in fights for 'fun'. When talking with the students, it became apparent that they were trying to handle the situation carefully, balancing between their desire to wrestle

[1] The Krona refers to the Swedish currency, Swedish Krona. In this particular case, it is the one-krona coin the boys are referring to.

and have some fun during the breaks and the teachers' attempts to restrict the fighting.

> Karl: We usually try to start something during the breaks, some fights, just for fun, and then when the teacher comes, we just hug each other, like, it's all at that level, because you are not allowed to fight in school, so immediately when the teacher comes, we grab each other, so it should look like we are doing nothing at all.
> Interviewer: Mmm. Have there ever been any problems, injuries?
> Simon: Yes, Mats had to go to the health centre once!
> Karl: We had a ten-minute break, and then we started arguing because we all wanted to sit on a bench.
> Interviewer: Were there people on the bench already?
> Karl: Yes, there were some guys sitting on the bench, and then everyone else wanted to sit there too, and then they started to push each other, to sit on the bench, and then there was chaos all around the place.
> Interviewer: Did anyone have to go to the health centre? What happened?
> Simon: It went well, I think.
> Interviewer: What happened? Did he fall off the bench or what?
> Simon: I cannot remember why he got hurt.
> Karl: It was because he hit something. (Focus group interview, Amber school)

At Amber School, the students talked quite a lot about rumbling and tumbling at the breaks. An incident during which a boy fainted had led to a zero tolerance for this kind of behaviour.

> Ossian: A while ago, two boys were fighting for fun. One of the boys tried to lift the other one up, and then he dropped him to the floor. That boy hit his elbow quite bad, and he fainted. Since that incident happened, the teachers and the headmaster have said that we are not allowed to fight with each other. However, many students are still doing this, of course. It is very difficult to stop people from having fun, and doing things they like. /…/
> Interviewer: It sounds pretty serious; I mean the story you told about the student who fainted. Do you know when it is only a joke or when it is serious and you have to stop?
> Ossian: I'm not sure about how others think and when they realize [it's time] to stop.
> Interviewer: No, I see. What about you guys? Oskar, what is your experience?
> Oskar: I'm not sure when to stop.
> Ossian: I know when I have to draw the line, because when someone is in pain, I have to stop so no one gets hurt.
> Interviewer: How do you know that? Is it when the other person say 'it hurts, please stop'? Do you stop then?
> Ossian: Yes, I do. (Focus group interview, Amber School)

At Amber School, the fighting continued. The boys interviewed indicated that they were quite aware of the restrictions, but their desire to have some fun overrode these norms. The boys also told us that they had considerable difficulty in judging where to draw the line; that is, knowing at what point fun had gradually turned into something more serious, and maybe also deleterious. The fights for fun can be seen as part of a homosocial culture among the boys. Although the boys expressed an awareness that this was part of the boys' culture, there were also boys who expressed that they did not want to get involved in such activities and did their best to avoid them.

> Hilding: When there is a lot of fighting going on in the corridors you do not want them to get you, so you try to avoid it.
> Interviewer: Do you go somewhere else then?

Hilding: You just sit there and try to ignore it and hope for the best.
Interviewer: What is going on in the corridors then?
Hilding: They are fighting for fun, they yell. Wasn't there someone that was fighting for fun that had to go to the hospital?
Hugo: Yes, there was. I actually think they fight for real sometimes. Everything can happen in the corridors, you know.
Interviewer: Is there no one [adult] who knows what is going on in the corridors?
Hugo: I don't know. I was really lucky in the seventh grade once. Some people came up to me and were mocking me when I was at my locker, and then some other people came and saw what happened. I was really lucky because the people who were mocking me left; they might not have left if the other people didn't turn up. There were almost no people in the corridors at that time. (Focus group interview, Amber school)

The interviews also reveal that not all boys find the existing lad culture amusing. Some of the boys actually oppose it and try not to get involved in the fights for 'fun', as expressed in the extract above, where Hugo and Hilding express the seriousness behind the fights for 'fun'. Hugo also expresses vulnerability and actual fear of being beaten by the students who mock other students in the school. Here we can see that the power relations tend to turn into vertical and hierarchical power relations and oppressive practices in the everyday life of school (cf. Haywood et al., 2017).

Lad Cultures in Schools

In the present chapter we have addressed teenage boys' narratives of existing joking and lad cultures in two rural lower secondary schools located in different parts of Sweden. Demographically, the students' community contexts and the schools' catchment areas are quite similar. Both areas consist of a majority white working-class population. Given this, the empirical data from the two schools were considered to be comparable for the purposes of the meta-analysis of this chapter.

An important aim of this study has been to analyse different narratives and to give different boys a voice concerning their views and experiences with joking cultures and lad cultures in the everyday life of school. The picture that emerged from the boys' narratives is far from one-sided; boys have different experiences about the existing schools' cultures and being a young boy in school today. This, we argue, is an important contribution to the research field on young boys and masculinities. We have used the concepts of vertical and horizontal homosociality to interpret and highlight different dynamics and aspects involved in jokes and fighting for 'fun' among male students in the everyday life of school. Using the concepts of vertical and horizontal homosociality, we have tried to demonstrate that there are aspects of both power and emotional bonding present in the processes of homosociality in boys' peer relations. We have analysed our results in relation to how boys make and form homosocial bonds between each other. On the one hand, we have problematized the somewhat positive image of boys making fun of each other in school. Calling each other names and fighting for 'fun' may be considered harmless and

viewed as connecting features of social life in school settings. On the other hand, we have also analysed and discussed that there is sometimes a very thin line between what is considered fun and what may be regarded as harassment.

Homosocial bonding and 'having fun together' can serve as a kind of glue in boys' social relations at school. However, there are also situations when the fun-making actually crosses a boundary and turns into violence. Using jokes or fighting for 'fun' as a way to conceal different forms of harassment, as presented in this chapter, can be interpreted as part of the construction of a highly contradictory homosociality. Clearly the boys themselves tend to interpret teasing, name-calling and fighting for 'fun' as intrinsic parts of friendship and homosocial bonding. At the same time, this kind of behaviour could be interpreted as a way for boys to discipline themselves and others to maintain hegemonic masculinity (cf. Pascoe, 2005). However, the tendency to trivialize different forms of everyday violence makes it difficult for most boys to actually discern when they have crossed the thin line between fun and harassment.

In analysing this phenomenon, it is important to look more closely at the dynamics between horizontal and vertical homosociality. As we have seen, there is a thin line between teasing and having fun on the one hand, and harassment and violence on the other. Our results show that the young boys seem to appreciate and enjoy many parts of the teasing culture and name-calling behaviour at school. As we also have seen, there is sometimes a considerable difference between how adults/teachers and students perceive and interpret what is going on in schools on an everyday basis. This makes the balance between teachers' and other adults' urge to restrict and prohibit certain behaviours and the teenagers' desires and perceptions of the same behaviour quite challenging.

Jokes and 'joking around' sometimes also turn into something very different from having fun together; they can turn into power games as well as violence. Our results indicate that the boys are not expected to show pain or cry, and if they do, they have failed the manhood test and are called 'wimps' by the other boys (Connell, 1995; Lahelma, 2002; McCann et al., 2010). The results also show that some of the boys at both investigated schools question this behaviour. Not all boys want to join the fights for 'fun'. These boys express that they try to avoid getting involved in such fights. The same group of boys also express awareness about the seriousness behind these kinds of violent acts, where some students were badly injured and had to go to the hospital. Also, the jokes and name-calling are reflected upon and questioned. Some of the boys express that there might actually be some truth behind the verbal insults and that people also sometimes tend to cross the line. Here we can see that the power relations move towards vertical power relations and create a school environment that is rather hostile. This, we would argue, shows the complexity of what are considered homosocial relations in school. Our results show that not all boys support the joking and lad cultures in their school, and that some actually indicate that they are against such behaviour.

Young Boys' Well-being in School

We would argue that our results raise several critical questions about being a male student in school, and also about male students' well-being. Contemporary research suggest that young people have a tendency to downplay violence, sexism and racism (Raby, 2004). When young students get used to a certain level of everyday harassment and violence, it leads to desensitization and a skewed notion of where to draw the line between joking and harassment. The complexity of 'just joking' also makes it difficult for teachers to recognize harassment or bullying and to know when to act and support the students who might be involved (Rawlings, 2017). As suggested by Sulkowski et al. (2014), this raises questions concerning the importance of understanding and recognizing different forms of violent acts and gendered norms in school settings. This is especially important for schools' preventive work and school officials' work with these issues in the school milieu.

Connected to this, and also important to highlight here, is what is stated in the Swedish curriculum of the compulsory school, that is, the preschool class, primary and lower secondary school levels (grades 0–9). Among the values that the school should represent and impart are those covering individual freedom and integrity, equal rights, gender equality and solidarity between people (Skolverket, 2018):

> The school should strive to promote equality. In doing so, the school should represent and impart equal rights, opportunities and obligations for all people, regardless of gender. In accordance with fundamental values, the school should also promote interaction between pupils regardless of gender. Through education, the pupils should develop an understanding of how different perceptions of what is female and what is male can affect people's opportunities. The school should thus contribute to pupils developing their ability to critically examine gender patterns and how they can restrict people's life choices and living conditions (Skolverket, 2018, p. 7).

Given the results presented in the current chapter, we have to ask a critical question regarding boys' joking cultures in school: is it just a joke or is it a serious game? To approach this question we need to further develop our conceptual framework on the relation between homosociality, violence and boys' well-being in school. As suggested by previous research, investigating gendered explanations for students' health problems and what aspects of the school environment may cause these problems is an important question for further research (Odenbring, 2019b). Consequently, there is a greater need to analyse the complex relation between vertical and horizontal homosociality, and to avoid stereotypical categorizations of boys' behaviour and notions of boys' school experiences. Giving different boys a voice is therefore crucial, we argue. Future research could include, for instance, interviews of boys from various social backgrounds and to take a closer look at different teenage boys' school cultures, masculinities and well-being in contemporary schools.

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Chapter 6
What Happens When Young Men Hurt? Exploring Young Men's Experiences of Relationship Dissolution in Educational Contexts

Chris Haywood and Ella Bending

Introduction

At present, masculinity has become increasingly mainstreamed into discussions about society, culture and violence. A gendered literacy has emerged that includes terms such as 'toxic masculinity' (Sculos, 2017), 'locker room talk' (Cole et al., 2019), 'mansplaining' (Bridges, 2017) and 'crisis masculinity' (Ryalls, 2013) that reduce complex multi-dimensional and historically layered concerns, to simplistic, self-evident explanations. Education, in particular, has been a significant place in the cultural imaginary where the anxieties and concerns about the causes of violence have been being projected onto boys and young men. And for a good reason. Research on young men, masculinity and schooling tends to frame boys as the key perpetrators of violence towards other boys and girls, (Bhana, 2013; Hughes, 2019; Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019) and teachers and other school staff (Jaureguizar et al., 2013; McMahon et al., 2017). Such research has been vital in exploring the ways in which boys and young men justify and rationalize their everyday ongoing intimidation, harassment and victimization within educational contexts. This chapter aims to add to the debate, not by identifying new or alternative sites for the expression of male violence, but rather by exploring how young men themselves within schools and colleges, experience violence. Such an approach is not new as research on bullying by peers (Cook et al., 2010; Juvonen & Graham, 2014; Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017) and teacher harassment (Longobardi et al., 2018)

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Y. Odenbring, T. Johansson (eds.), *Violence, Victimisation and Young People*, Young People and Learning Processes in School and Everyday Life 4,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75319-1_6

provide ample evidence of how young men not only hurt others but also hurt themselves. As such we aim to extend and develop debates in this area by examining the interplay between schools and colleges and young men's experiences of hurt through emotional violence inflicted on them by young women. More specifically, the chapter explores the experience of hurt in schools and colleges that have occurred as a consequence of young women actively breaking up with young men.

The focus on young men's hurt in this chapter is significant in two ways. First, it is important to recognize that the impact of hurt in adolescence can have longer-term implications for mental health in later years (Kinnunen et al., 2010). Despite it being known that three-quarters of all suicide deaths are committed by men (Lomas et al., 2020), understanding the relationships between support networks and men's health more generally, remains underexplored. Furthermore, Levinson (2020) has pointed out that for some boys, their emotional turmoil remains hidden, driven by expectations that boys should be able to manage their feelings and display emotional resilience. It is also evident that the impact of shaming and embarrassment in younger people are likely to have an impact on broader wellbeing (Randell, 2016). Therefore, understanding how hurt is lived out and experienced in schools and colleges creates more awareness of the emotional wellbeing challenges that young men experience. Second, the chapter is important because it enables a critical reflection on the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underpin approaches to masculinity that are being used to understand violence and hurt. For example, it is argued that one of the reasons for the lack of help-seeking behaviours, is that asking for help is often entangled within traditional forms of masculinity that rely on independence and self-reliance (Kessels & Steinmayr, 2013). In many ways, such a position simplifies and contains men's emotions within a theoretical and conceptual framework that can not accommodate the complexity and broader scope of how young men live through, and in some ways, beyond masculinity (see Haywood, 2018).

In order to develop these two issues, empirical research was carried out with ten young men from the South West of England. They were aged between 22 and 26, and were all white. The young men in this research were recruited via purposive sampling (Patton, 2002) with one of the authors (Bending). The aim was to identify young people who had experienced different kinds of relationship dissolution that were initiated by women. Although the sample might be seen as relatively small, the sample is being used as a basis for exploratory conceptualization rather than in the pursuit of finding that are generalizable (Descartes, 2020). As Crouch and McKenzie (2006) explain: "…it is in the nature of exploratory studies to indicate rather than conclude" (p. 492). It is therefore important that smaller numbers are used as "…it is much more important for the research to be intensive and thus persuasive at the conceptual level, rather that aim to be extensive with intent to be convincing, at least in part, through enumeration" ibid.,, p. 494). The semi-structured interviews were conducted in person, online or through chat. The diversity of methods reflects the different ways in which the young men felt comfortable in recalling events that had been emotionally difficult. The temporal remoteness of the event and the digital remoteness, enabled the young men to discuss a range of areas such as experiences of relationship dissolution, how they managed the impact of that dissolution and the

support structures that were in place. This approach is similar to Neuman (2019) whose aim was to gather experiences from the young men at their time at school, rather than to establish the reality of their education or whether the events took place. The interviews were transcribed and the various themes emerging from the young men's accounts were analyzed. The names of the participants have been anonymized and where necessary, other information that would identify the participants have been removed or changed. Ethical approval for this research was obtained from Newcastle University (Ref: 13785/2018).

The following discussion emerges from the interviews with the young men. First the chapter begins with a short discussion on the gendering of hurt. The chapter then identifies three areas of inquiry, educational contexts and how hurt feels, the importance of the schools and colleges in shaping the experience of hurt and then finally identifying the role of educational context in shaping how young men manage their hurt.

The Gendering of Hurt

One of the starting points for this chapter is to argue that the conventional understandings of masculinity mobilize a particular form of gendering of young men. Often coverage of young men and boys in educational contexts for example primarily understand hurt as a consequence of their gender-driven violence. In such cases, men are active agents in producing hurt, mostly to others and often to themselves. In rarer cases, hurt is often understood as something that men experience (Entrekin, 2009). It is even rarer to find hurt as something that men suffer. Implicitly connected to this that the meanings and feelings that are connected to hurt serve to filter out who can legitimately experience hurt. Clues to this can be found in how hurt is conceptualized. For example, Lemay et al. (2012, p. 982) suggest that hurt is a consequence of a subjective appraisal, where feelings of vulnerability and dependency on someone are interconnected. Importantly, the desire for intimacy "creates dependence and vulnerability because the fulfilment of this desire or need depends on the continued investment and relational valuing of the partner (Kelley et al., 2003; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978)". As a result, hurt is often connected to an appraisal of another person's relational devaluation, or in other words, it is the person hurting that perceives that they are valued less or are less important than they had thought (Leary, 2001). Alongside this, hurt is also seen as something that is a consequence of a relational transgression, a violation of relationship norms. Feeney (2005) suggests that hurt is a consequence not simply of transgression or devaluation but of 'a sense of harm, vulnerability, or wounding.' Importantly as Yebisi and Olukayode (2017, 144) point out: "Victims of harassment often feel hurt, humiliated, and degraded. The more intimate and personal the nature of the harassment, the more injury to emotional wellbeing would be expected...." Hurt is thus connected to processes of devaluation, "where refer to a negative affective experience that occurs most frequently within social relationships in situations in which one typically is or

feels abandoned, ignored, criticized, teased, or betrayed by someone valued (Feeney, 2005; Leary et al., 1998; Vangelisti et al., 2005).

Although the work on defining hurt provides a valuable discussion on how we can understand how it is produced, they provide an important map of how the discussion of hurt is gendered. As Dzitko (2017) suggests, "emotions are collectively encoded and decoded and represented in implicit and explicit cultural practices of recognition, power, hierarchy, and distinction". Contemporary cultural scripts encode and decode such distinctions through the juxtaposition of men's emotions with women's. The experience of hurt is thus constituted through cultural themes that are often deemed 'unmanly' or feminine, with De Visser et al. (2009) noting that behaviours which are not "hegemonically masculine" are immediately encoded as non-masculine, or even feminine (2009, p. 1057). Such cultural scripts operate through the popularized psychological accounts that men and women's' emotions are natural and often underpinned by biological differences that are regularly anchored in the corporeal distribution of hormones. Simply put, women are deemed to be more emotional and nurturing than men primarily because of women's disposition for caring and empathy and men's affinity for control over emotions resulting in stoicism and emotional detachment (Christov-Moore et al., 2014). As Maas (2006, p.52) suggests, men are intimately connected with power and this 'revolves around the ideology of masculinity with the essential fearlessness, toughness and denial of vulnerability (Mejía, 2005)'. As a result, the biological drivers of emotions results in popular educational discourses that seek to mix and match curriculum resources, teaching styles and learning styles in order to allow gendered natures to freely flow. Political concern over the feminization of schools and the lack of male role models is underpinned by an appeal to the need to promote emotional resilience and toughness in order to combat the feminization of boys.

In response, it is argued that a gendering of hurt is not physiologically located but is a consequence of the social and cultural context through which it occurs. It draws upon Hochschild's (1979) claim that feelings are configured through social and cultural conventions, meaning that how feelings are expressed and managed is intricately connected to 'feeling rules'. The experience of hurt is thus constituted through cultural themes that are often deemed 'unmanly' or feminine. As Randall et al. (2016, p. 21) points out "Compared with girls, many boys are pressured to be strong and emotionally more repressed, which may have important implications for their emotional health (Courtenay, 2003; De Visser et al., 2009; Evans et al., 2011)." It became clear from the interviews for this chapter, that schools and colleges become the context for the articulation of 'feeling rules' that both enable and restrict the ways in which emotions become socially navigated. It is recognized that men, in general, do not seek help for physical or emotional support. Rather emotions come to be contrived to fulfil social expectations. In her theorization of 'feeling rules' Hochschild states that feeling rules requires individuals to control the 'publicly observable facial and bodily display' of their emotions (2002, p. 7). According to Hochschild, this intentional emotion management, with the goal of adhering to social norms and expectations, contributes to the maintenance of social order and structure in wider society. 'Feeling rules' not only vary by social context but also

function differently for different groups of people. Research indicates, for example, that boys who are less academically inclined are more likely to engage in anti-social behaviour or act out whilst at school (Zayowski & Gunter, 2012; Longobardi et al., 2018); behavioural traits which are also stereotypically deemed to be masculine (Cook et al., 2010). It might be further surmised, then, that the school or college environments have strong causality towards gendered notions of masculinity. This not only perpetuates the impression that feelings can be configured through cultural conventions, therefore, as tangible effects on academic performance in boys can also begin to be identified.

The Nature of Hurt

Schools and Colleges provide a stage or place for the living out and performance of romantic relationships. As Shouse (2005, p. 4) suggests, "An emotion is the projection/display of a feeling… We broadcast emotion to the world; sometimes that broadcast is an expression of our internal state and other times, it is contrived in order to fulfill social expectations". This means that when young men experience hurt, education contexts become pivotal to shaping how that emotion is experienced. For example, in this study, young men often referred to their hurt being connected to their first 'proper' relationship and the breakdown of their relationships appear to have had a much longer lasting impact on their wellbeing. As Ian explains:

> Ian: I'm sure they would have done everything that they could if I'd asked. But it also didn't help because, being that it was the first time that sort of thing happened, I didn't have a kind of mechanism to process it in place. People set their own ways of doing that. That was what set it up for me. I guess. That was the incident that made me work out how to deal with things. Which is interesting because I dealt with that very badly, but anything subsequent I dealt with pretty well. Any incidents like that, even though this one still fucks with my head, other stuff I feel like I'm pretty good with. I don't think I'm hung up on anything else.
>
> Ella: So this was the big defining moment?
>
> Ian: Yeah. I think so. Before that, I'd never really had to confront anything like that before. I never had to…everything just kind of went along as normal.

When asked why the relationships had affected him so much, Leigh said, "Looking back, I think it was probably the fact it was my first girlfriend and the first time I felt I had really opened up to someone". As Ryan points out: "I remember breaking up with the first girl I ever had recognizably new, 'proper' feelings for at around 13". In some ways, these references to 'proper' and 'real' are juxtaposed to schooling practices that are dependant upon the production and regulation of earlier childlike relationships. As such, by being 'proper' or 'real' these relationships in some ways become a rite of passage from child to adulthood, within an institutional context that pedagogically, morally and legally defines them as children (Foucault, 1978). As a consequence, these young men's investments in their relationships is

connected to the development and navigation of their gender identities within infantilzing context.

One of the characteristics to emerge from the interviews is that these young men reflected on their deep emotional investment in a committed relationships. As Bell et al. (2015) point out in their research, boys in early adolescence appear to be establishing relationships based on intimacy, trust and care (see also Allen 2007). Furthermore, Bell et al. argue that it is possible that there may be a particular form of masculinity developing where relationally orientated values may be pivotal to the how young men's relationships are lived out (see also Giordano et al., 2006). In the research for this chapter, it did appear that young men and boys were developing investments in more relationally focussed commitments and when these relationships were ended, they produced particular experiences of that hurt. Ian provided a complex and heartfelt recounting of a relationship that had a major impact on him both at the time and subsequently. He found out that his girlfriend began seeing her ex-boyfriend throughout their relationship. When Ian discusses his experience of hurt at school, he outlines not only the dissonance between the different interpretations of what the relationship meant to them; their was a sense of devaluation. Rather, it was the nature of the devaluation that appeared to be the most hurtful.

> Ian: ….But, yeah, someone I was involved with and quite heavily invested in turned out to not have the same intentions as I did. Um, they were…they went down the…they led me down the path of, I guess, commitment. If that makes sense. And then it took a while to realize that was a façade. Basically, I was very interested in them and they were acting as if they were very interested in me for a long time.

Furthermore, asked what hurt him the most, Ian points out:

> Ian: I think it was the fact that I looked like a complete mug. It was only afterwards…because I found out about the actual situation in retrospect, I looked back over every single thing. Every significant interaction. Every time we were with people and I was like 'you knew what was going on. You knew what was going on.'

It is evident from Ian's discussion that the hurt of the relationship becomes confounded by deception and dishonesty that not only becomes a public spectacle, but something that is shared with their peer groups. Those working in the field of emotions have suggested that it is difficult to separate hurt from other feelings.

There is much discussion about young men and boys that focuses on them engaging in heterosexual relations primarily for the validation of masculinity. Indeed, Aboim (2016, p. 141) echoes this, highlighting "masculinity as ideologically paradoxical." From this, she asserts that whilst "one of the greatest strengths of masculinity lies in sexuality" this too is "concomitantly the source of one of its most profound vulnerabilities" (Aboim, 2016: 141). Ian's commitment to a relationship where he was emotionally invested, becomes key to his vulnerability. His trust in the relationship led him to never consider that his girlfriend never really stopped seeing her ex-boyfriend. It is this commitment to trust and openness, exposes these young men's vulnerability, and in turn, creates the potential to experience hurt. This is the paradoxical nature of masculinity. As the young men open themselves up and embed

their dependency within a relationship, they are also in many ways threatening their masculine subjectivity. As Leigh recalls:

> Leigh: Looking back, I think it was probably the fact it was my first girlfriend and the first time I felt I had really opened up to someone. As time went on I felt like I was trying harder to make things work and wasn't getting back the same effort. But also the arguments had become quite nasty and made things more stressful

Renold (2003, p. 183) has highlighted how her research with younger boys in primary schools resulted in feelings of powerlessness within heterosexual relationships that were felt as 'fragile, ambiguous and with a mixture of unease and tension'. As children, in Renold's research, boys could insulate their potential emasculation by identifying as children. However, as both Ryan and Ian resist a discursive positioning as children, their experience of break-ups become produced through discourses of adult forms of masculinity. As a result, that insecurity, the experience of vulnerability, itself becomes codified as evidence of the authenticity of the relationship. However, it is that dependency on their feelings for such authenticity that becomes the source for their vulnerability and subsequent hurt. Jefferson (1994, p. 12) succinctly points out that,

> '…the need for and dependence on another is posed most starkly, in direct contraction to the notions of self-sufficiency and independence central to hegemonic masculinity. It is almost as if to succeed in love one has to fail as a man'.

The Place that Hurts

Hughes (2019) highlights how Western education systems are simultaneously an inherently peaceful and violent institutional structure. He argues that although the education system most recognizably the norm across the globe is "based on peaceful, humanitarian values, most educational structures historically have been violent" (2019, 23). This dichotomy is evident too in existing research on violence at schools. Zaykowski and Gunter (2012) illustrate for example that "youth not only are at the greatest risk to become victimized, [but] most incidents occur within or near their schools" (Robers et al., 2010 in 2012, 445). It is typical for schools to be "explicitly adverse to violence and operate in a manner that is a far cry" from a culture of violence (Hughes, 2019, p. 24). The playground itself has been understood as a place not only as a place for gender development but also of gender policing where boys and young men re-iterate and enforce normative heterosexual masculinities (Mayezer, 2017; Hall, 2020). However, in this instance, the playground becomes a place where the usual gendered routines and rituals become undone. Instead of the innocuous 'play' ground, this is a space of danger, emotional violence and pain, a place where the loss of masculinity, for Ryan, is laid bare:

> We had been spending all our free time at school together, we snogged and hugged openly, which was completely new for me. After around 4 months, she dumped me. It was unexpected and in the middle of the playground, I cried and ran off to the toilets.

Central to recounting his hurt, this loss, this experience of hurt, vulnerability and confusion is symbolically captured by his positioning within the 'middle of the playground', a space that both lacks support or a place to hide. This gravity of the loss of masculine status is contained within the powerful metaphor of 'being dumped'; a self that is worthless, disposable and useless. The importance of the spatiality of the School is also outlined by reference to the toilets. Whilst literature on school toilets point to its role in perpetuating bullying (Lundblad et al., 2007); toilets become the place where cultural anxieties become managed. Here the toilet becomes a place where young men find refuge in order to deal with their emotional trauma; a place to hide from very public nature of their relationship dissolution.

The significance of schooling space as important for how young men hurt, is also evident in the ways that schools make young men's hurt visible. Much research has identified how schools are places where masculinities are preformed become navigated, negotiated and regulated to other men and women. In the interviews, schools and colleges are the places where the failure to become masculine become amplified. Ryan follows up his story:

> Ella: Did being at school make a difference to the break-up?
>
> Ryan: Absolutely. People saw me crying in the playground, I remember being extremely embarrassed
>
> Ella: Why was it you think you felt so embarrassed? Was that unusual behaviour for you?
>
> Ryan: Yes, I never cried in front of anyone except my parents
>
> Ella: Did you feel like there were expectations on you and how you should have reacted in that scenario?
>
> Ryan: Uhhh yeah I guess, it's hard to recall perfectly how I felt. I was definitely aware that it wasn't considered masculine to cry, especially in public, but I had also been raised pretty much purely by women so I don't think I've ever really been masculine at all. I have no frame of masculinity reference. I just did what I wanted

It is evident that Ryan invokes particular 'feeling rules' of the school that are connected to the extent to which young men can express their emotions. Crying, in itself, is antithetical to dominant forms of masculinity primarily because it signals a lack of control and self-discipline. As McQueen points out: "Emotional control is part of a successful performance of manliness, which leads to an ability to claim an identity as a member of the privileged gender group, a desire that can be satisfied only by putting on a credible manhood act" (2017, p. 208). Ryan points out that despite being brought up outside of stereotypical notions of masculinity, the expectations within the school context remain enduring. However, another aspect of the 'feeling rules' is that of Ryan's feelings of embarrassment. Embarrassment in this instance is exacerbated by the schooling context as it points to the collapse of another binary that stabilizes masculinity, that of the public and the private. The emphasis by Ryan on the fact that he only cries in front of his parents makes his response to the relationship dissolution being exposed. This exposure of his

vulnerability, points to a dislocation of a school-based public performance of masculinity and the hidden, out of sight self. As such Schools become elided with rationality, a place where emotions should be controlled and managed (Jones, 2013).

As mentioned earlier, it is not sufficient to simply identify how hurt is lived out in schooling contexts, it is also important to explain what is happening. Thinking back to Ryan and his running to the toilets, prompts a number of questions about what happens to young men's identities at this moment, in the space of the injury. Existing research on masculinity and schooling suggests that young men engage in a compensatory masculinity (Tonso, 2009; Sherriff, 2013). This compensatory masculinity is often a response to young men being denied to the resources to perform hegemonic forms of masculinity. In their school environments, the young men being interviewed talked about aspiring to being popular with the boys and girls, othering boys that were heterosexually suspect, ridiculing boys who demonstrated characteristics or practices that were deemed feminine and were able to be physically powerful. Thus the young men talked about adopting a way of being a boy that was physically and emotionally damaging to other boys and girls. Importantly, it is not the rejection of hegemonic masculinity, rather a frustration of not being able to perform it. As a result, those boys who are compensating for hurt that they experience, often results in more aggressive and violent forms of masculinity (Peralta & Cruz, 2005; Higate, 2017; Vito et al., 2018). In other accounts, masculinities become recuperated; they use their hurt and emotional wounds in order to re-gain a form of masculine status (Rome, 2020). In other words, young men rather than expel their hurt, compensate for it through the exaggeration of dominant masculine codes, seek to use their hurt as the basis of their masculinity. In so doing, such men rearticulate codes of resilience, courage, insightfulness and the demonstration of an emotional sutured self. The third response to hurt is a process of restoration, a process where young men actively seek to restore their previous masculine status. However, none of these processes captures the loss of masculinity, its absence in the space between the playground and the toilet. It is at that moment, that we lack an understanding of the space between the outside of a presumed masculine status, where the strategies of the compensatory, recuperation or restoration of masculine status, have yet to be mobilized and their masculine status temporarily lost Conceptually, we are at the point of the unsexed, a 'temporary suspension of gender' (Weston, 2002), not the reworking, or recalibration of masculine status, but what Weston argues is a zero moment, before discursive repertories are mobilized. Looking in from the outside, it is difficult to locate and position these young men's masculinities where masculine status is lost. The space of the school not only operates to reinforce gender regimes, but it is also the space that enables its fragility, its tentative and potential breakdown. Of key importance is recognising that when masculine status is lost and when men are hurt, there is little discussion on how identities reassembled and the forms that they take.

Managing Feelings of Hurt

It is suggested that there is a broader association of vulnerable emotions with a lack of masculinity and the importance of responding to specific events in masculine ways (Berke et al., 2018). Lomas et al. (2020) argue that this association results in a restrictive emotionality that results in a detachment or disconnection from those around them. They argue that adolescence is a particularly difficult time as pressure to enact masculinity appears to be greater and as a result, young men tend to adopt attitudes and practices that are harmful to themselves. Furthermore, research has consistently found that expressing emotion in childhood is key to healthy "socio-emotional development" into adulthood (Chaplin & Aldao, 2013, p. 2) and schools and colleges have been crucial in providing a safe space through which young men are able to disclose their feelings. In some instances, this is the case. Recounting a situation where his friend experienced a traumatic break-up when his partner broke up with him, Jacob explains:

> Ella: Did he seek any help from counsellors or the GP[1] or anything?
>
> Jacob: He… from what I recall. He spoke to the Sixth Form… I can't remember if it was the head of the Sixth Form. Or someone a bit higher up. From my knowledge, he didn't speak to any external help like counsellors.
>
> Ella: Okay. So he did speak to people about it?
>
> Jacob: Yeah. He was quite open with it. Even with teachers and things like that about what was going on which is why I think it was such a noticeable difference in him. Because he wasn't focusing.
>
> Ella: Right, yeah. So he was thinking about it quite a lot I assume?
>
> Jacob: Yeah. And he could have consulted someone, but I don't think off the top of my head he did.
>
> Ella: Okay, thank you for that.

This example demonstrates that schools and colleges can provide a supportive infrastructure that young men feel confident in accessing. At the same time, for some young men, the option of using school or college support services was not taken up. When asked if they considered talking to someone at school about the hurt that they had experienced, the response is unambiguous:

> Ella: Did you consider talking to anyone at college about it? By that I mean, teachers or therapist?
>
> Ian: *interrupts* No. Fuck no. No. Absolutely not.

[1] GP is shorthand for General Practitioner / Medical Doctor

Ella: *laughs* why's that?

Ian: I dunno. I mean, to be fair I didn't talk to anyone while I was at college. It was only about a year and a half I actually spoke to someone about it. Because it was still in the back of my head.

Ella: Oh, really?

Ian: Yeah, it was more so like 'should it still be there?'. Um, no I didn't talk to anyone at college about it. I didn't really see college as that kind of environment. I don't see the teachers there as like… they were there to guide us through college and I know obviously there are people who can help you with that but at the same time, I think there's a certain element of like, figuring it out on your own at college.

Interestingly the interviewee had sought help from a counsellor, but found the educational support inappropriate and explains this lack of access through the lens of a gendered psychology:

Ian:…College is independent. If you have a problem and immediately get someone else to fix it I think it's kinda like…well that's a very manly way of thinking about it…problems and solutions. Rather than open-ended things. But, I don't know. Men tend to think of a problem and then a solution to the problem rather than just a situation.

Later in the interview, he expands on this further:

Ian: And I think that might actually be why I'm probably less likely to go and ask someone at college. Because I was thinking, 'you're not going to be able to give me a solution'. Whereas girls just want to go and get something off their chest. Whereas guys I don't think…If I hadn't come out of that with a solution… **unintelligible** Asking or tutor or something for a solution is unrealistic, and because I didn't think that was ever going to happen, I didn't see it as a valid…I didn't want to go and just talk about it. **unintelligible** If I was going to see someone about that, I don't think I would have deemed it worthwhile if I hadn't come out with an answer.

There is something here about the way in which the participant has expectations about the role of wellbeing support. For example, O'Brien, Hunt, and Hart (2005) found that men would only access help if this is connected to the enhancement of some aspect of their masculinity. Odenbring (2019) highlights how professional support for boys in schools often operates through discourses of deficit masculinities. Whilst the above reason from Ian for the use of resources is different, it points to the ways in which young men view support systems are in themselves gendered. In the above example, the participant wants a solution that is different from what is seen as a 'feminized talking'. The participant sets up a narrative where the College support structures are designed to support young women to talk about their problems and they are unable to provide tangible solutions to problems, the participant refuses to engage with them.

Not only are such rules structured at an institutional level, they are also enforced at a more local collective level where 'feeling rules reflect patterns of social membership' (Hochschild, 6). It is interesting that most of the men that were interviewed did not perceive asking school or college staff as a viable support structure for their feelings of hurt. They did however draw upon their own friendship groups as a form

of support. It is important to recognize that in some cases, young men can experience support from their friends without it challenging or threatening their masculine status.

> Ella: Okay, thank you. Tell me about boys and being emotional. Were there other times, apart from the ones that you have mentioned, where boys displayed or discussed their emotions?
>
> Jacob: Yeah definitely. I think most of the lads I'm close too have all experienced the emotional side to a relationship and they've needed to opened up about it. Can think of few times where mates have come to me or I've gone to them about something and once you started chatting and realized they've been in a similar situation, you can get a bit carried away because of the relief of knowing that guy has been through the same. But I think it's easier with a close mate than anyone else

Later in the interview, he discusses why he feels comfortable talking about emotions to his friends:

> Jacob: Yeah. See, my group of mates is pretty good. I definitely know this isn't typical with all groups of lads and stuff. Some of them keep it, like, schtum. But, we were always really open with each other in terms of, if we were seeing someone, what we felt and stuff like that. I mean like, as I said, I didn't discuss that particular situation with them because that wasn't an ongoing relationship… but when we were seeing people we would talk about how it was going and stuff like that. And we've never been afraid to be soppy or romantic or show that side in front of eachother if that makes sense. But none of us are particularly manly or very, like… I mean I am one of the camper ones from our group for sure. [name] is one the lesser end of that. But, it's never been a problem. It's never been seen as like, 'you shouldn't do this'.
>
> Ella: So why do you feel comfortable to do that in your friend group?
>
> Jacob: I think because none of us have anything to prove about who we were. I guess, we weren't trying to one-up each other all the time. Like, I know some of the guys were …there's a specific group of guys that come to mind that I know from secondary school… they were all trying to one-up each other with cars. They're all at the gym getting bigger…it's kind of like 'manly stuff…men' *flexes muscles ironically and laughs*

Homosociality, in this context for these boys, was not the reinforcement of traditional masculine stereotypes and structures of power. In relation to homosociality, Bird (1996) suggests that it is 'critical to both the conceptualization of masculinity identity and the maintenance of gender norms" (p. 22). However, in the interviews in this research, it became clear that shared intimacy between young men demonstrates a homosociality that refuses a hegemonic distribution of intimacy that consolidates patriarchy and other forms of social and cultural inequalities. This resonates with Haywood et al. (2017), who in their research questioned a causative link between homosociality and men's violence to other men and boys. Rather homosociality, could a space for emotional support, intimacy and care (See also Karioris, 2018). In many ways, this account of their friendship and their ability to emotionally support each other resists a deficit approach to young men and intimacy that suggests masculinity enforces an emotional straitjacket (Pollack, 1998). Furthermore, young men's friendships have carried a number of social fears and

anxieties that have ranged from being seen as responsible for violence, underachievement and broader forms of social and cultural toxicity. Yet it was evident in the discussions that male friendship groups enable young men to be emotionally expressive. This ties in with Karioris' suggestion that we need to understand that young men are positioned within a range of intimacies, offering a much more complex picture of 'messy, and complicated homosocialities that tie them to specific forms of violence while showing a sociality that lies outside of this'. As a result, it could be argued that young men's situated support, points to an inversion of gender, however temporary, of disrupted the symbolic boundaries that underpin emasculation narratives that young men often appear to tell themselves and others (Munsch & Groys, 2018).

Conclusion: Who Can Hurt?

The focus on men hurting in this chapter points to a broader issue about how masculinity and gender is applied when exploring violence in educational contexts. Recent discussions, bolstered by a popular gender literacy outlined at the beginning of this chapter, have helped identify some of the patterns between violence and gender. The risk here is that 'masculinity' and 'boys' become a descriptive and normative term shorthand for violence, inequality and objectification. In contrast, early Feminist educational research on gender and schools highlighted the importance of understanding how masculinities were being made and practiced in educational contexts (Mahony, 1985; Wolpe, 1988; Halson, 1989). They were keen to unpack what masculinity meant and how it was practiced. Such work was pivotal in helping to "…answer questions about the causal antecedents or ontological genesis of social relations, including those relations deemed problematic from a moral-political point of view (those of exclusion, inequality, injustice, harm, or material and symbolic violence)" (Yar, 2012, 113). Therefore it is vital that educational researchers critically reflect on the conceptual and theoretical frameworks being employed when exploring masculinity and to recognise the epistemological limits of such frameworks.

Finally, one of the key themes to emerge from this chapter is that hurt is not simply a psychological characteristic, rather it operates through 'feeling rules' that are contextualised by educational contexts. The implications are that schools, through their institutional structures, such as administration, curriculum, pedagogical practice and wellbeing support, operate to frame what 'feeling rules'. In some ways this chapter challenges conventional popular common sense understandings about hurt, questioning gendered discourses that often given legitimacy to who hurts and who feels hurt. Furthermore, it disrupts narratives that simplistically situate gender through operessors and victims via homosocialuity and hegemony (Haywood et al., 2017). With this in mind, it is hoped that the narratives of the young men above, highlight the complex ways in which feeling hurt is understood. It is important to re-iterate that this work is not intended to downplay or marginalise existing research

and experiences that highlight the overwhelming use of young men's violence against other men and women. Instead, it aims to highlight the gendered anxieties, vulenrabilities and pain that boys in educational context experience.

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Part II
Sexualized Violence and Schooling

Chapter 7
Young people's Experiences of Sexting and Online Sexual Victimization

Carolina Lunde and Malin Joleby

For today's youth, using digital devices for social interaction is part of everyday life. This has also meant that internet and smartphones are used for sexual purposes, which carries both opportunities and risks for young people. In this chapter, we present a narrative overview of empirical work focusing on young people's experiences of sexting and online sexual victimization. An important point of departure is that in order to fully understand young people's online experiences, we need to learn more about the developmental underpinnings that render young people extra vulnerable when they engage in sexual activities through the digital landscape. The main part of the chapter is dedicated to research on online sexual abuse, outlining what is known about risk factors for being abused, different forms of online sexual abuse, and its consequences for victimized children/adolescents. An important lesson is that the adult world's lacking insight into the online world of children and adolescents means that young people are left on their own to deal with online sexual encounters. Practical guidelines for the adult world and educational settings on how to address issues of sexuality, sexual interaction, and online sexual victimization are presented.

> By the age of 11, Amanda was contacted online by an unknown man posing as a young boy. They started chatting and building, in her thoughts, a trusting relationship. The boy showered Amanda with compliments, and eventually she agreed to expose her breasts for him on camera. What Amanda did not know was that he took a screen shot of Amanda topless. The man (later identified as a 36-year-old Dutch man) then used the picture to blackmail her, demanding her to perform a show on web camera. When Amanda refused, he sent the photo of her topless to all of her Facebook friends. This resulted in her being bullied in school, harassed online, and slut-shamed. To escape the harassment, Amanda relocated to a new school, but the man followed her every step and disseminated the pic-

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Y. Odenbring, T. Johansson (eds.), *Violence, Victimisation and Young People*, Young People and Learning Processes in School and Everyday Life 4,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75319-1_7

> ture to her new classmates. Amanda changed school again, but history repeated itself. Everywhere she went, the man followed her digitally.

The story above depicts the tragic faith of a 15-year-old Canadian girl named Amanda Todd (Houlihan & Weinstein, 2014). Eventually, Amanda could not cope with the continuous harassment, and she committed suicide five weeks after posting a video on YouTube detailing her experiences. According to Gavrilovic Nilsson et al. (2019), no one intervened in response to Amanda's disclosure, with five weeks passing between posting the video and taking her own life. And although this sequel of adverse events may be rare, and extreme as it led to suicide, Amanda is not alone. Similar cases have been reported from other countries, including for instance the US, UK, and Sweden. Not surprisingly, these sad cases have received vast media coverage, evoking fear that our young (especially girls) run considerable risk of sexual exploitation online.

But as the social reality of young people has moved increasingly to the online domain, the adult world needs to recognize that the internet has become a frequently used arena also for sexual exploration. Searching for information about sex, watching porn, and exchanging sexual material are some of the activities that young people engage in online. Indeed, online sexual activities carry both opportunities and risks for young people's health and well-being. On the one hand, the internet provides an arena for exploration that could be valuable for young people's sexual development. For example, the online milieu is sometimes perceived as a safe haven where one can take control over self-presentations and experiment under protection of the relative anonymity that the digital arena offers (Gyberg & Lunde, 2015). It has also been pointed out that the internet serves a crucial sex educative role, as young people search for information about sex and the maturing body (Daneback & Löfberg, 2011). On the other hand, there is a number of new risks and challenges arising from young people's online sexual activities. Involuntary exposure to sexual content (e.g., commercial ads) may be unpleasant for younger individuals (Staksrud & Milosevic, 2017), and unwanted sexual requests is sometimes described as bombarding young people online. Concerns have also been raised over an "overly revealing generation", sharing personal information and substantial part of their everyday life through the internet (Gyberg & Lunde, 2015). In addition, a worrisome increase in police reports regarding sexually abusive online encounters have been reported from several sources (see e.g., Bentley, et al., 2019; Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, 2019; Palmer, 2015).

In this narrative overview (Green et al., 2006) based on recent empirical work, we present a broad perspective on young people's experiences of sexting, referring to creating, sharing, and forwarding sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude images via the internet or smartphones (Lenhart, 2009; Ringrose et al., 2013), and online sexual victimization. Here, young people refer to minors (i.e., individuals under the age of 18), but the emphasis will be on preadolescent and adolescent youth as they represent ages when young people typically start experimenting with their sexuality online and offline. Provided the context of this book, the emphasis will also be on adverse sexual online experiences, risk factors, and harmful consequences of these

experiences. However, as adverse experiences online are an exception rather than a rule (Jonsson et al., 2019; Patchin & Hinduja, 2020), we will also highlight how online sexual activities can serve a role for young people's healthy sexual development. Notwithstanding, the point of departure of this chapter is that in order to fully understand young people's online experiences, we need to learn more about the developmental underpinnings that render young people extra vulnerable when they engage in sexual activities through the digital landscape.

Coming to Age in the Digital Landscape

Young people born in the 2000–2010s are different from the generations before them in the sense that they have grown up with the internet being an intertwined aspect of their everyday life (Harris, 2014). Despite some inequalities in access and usage, internet use approaches almost 100% in affluent parts of the world (Smahel, et al., 2020). And as the fixed line desktop computer has been exchanged by personalized digital devices, connected to a plethora of social network services (Bell, 2010), today's young do not distinguish between the offline and online, are "always on" (Harris, 2014), and always connected to their social worlds.

Recent reports show that one of the fastest growing internet user groups is children age 6 to 10 (Livingstone, et al., 2011). In Sweden, yearly reports published by the Swedish media council show that daily internet usage has increased substantially among children age 0–8 (Swedish Media Council, 2019a). These figures are similar in other western societies (Statista, 2020). Among children age 5–8, the digital activity that has increased the most is mobile gaming (Swedish Media Council, 2019a), and at age 9 almost all children have a game or app where they get in touch with other children or adults (ECPAT, 2020). Between year 2010 and 2018, using the internet a couple of days a week or more often rose from 29 to 96% among 8-year-olds (Swedish Media Council, 2019a, 2019b). The smartphone is the preferred means of going online, meaning that there is "anywhere, anytime connectivity" (Smahel et al., 2020) for the majority of children from age 9 and up (Swedish Media Council, 2019a). It is also evident that internet and smartphone use increases even more during the teenage years, with adolescents being less monitored than younger individuals (Swedish Media Council, 2019b). Some gender differences also emerge: More girls than boys report that they use their smartphone each day for communication by texting, taking pictures, and using social media, whereas boys play games to a higher extent. It is also evident that children who may struggle with social relations, for example children with neuropsychiatric disorders such as ADHD or autism spectrum disorders, turn to the internet to a higher extent than do other children (Attention, 2016). Although this rapidly changing arena has raised concern over many issues relating to young people, one of its most obvious setbacks is that it has created new opportunities for people who want to find children to sexually abuse (Joleby, 2020). It is also evident that offenders actively approach children

on the platforms that children use, for example gaming sites and social media platforms, then trying to move the interaction into a more private setting.

One challenge with being young – in general, but also in this new digital landscape – has to do with the sheer fact that the adolescent years represent a period in life with massive biological, cognitive and social changes. Pubertal development, the hormonal process that leads to sexual maturity, usually starting at age 10–12 for girls and at age 12–16 for boys (Andersson, 2011), brings about bodily changes and an increased interest for sexual activities. Thus, one of the core tasks of adolescence is to accept one's body and establish a healthy sexuality (Wrangsjö, 2007). Increased cognitive capacities are also related to the changed nature of sexuality in adolescence, as they allow for hypothetical thinking (What if…?), improved decision-making capabilities (Should I…?), but likewise heightened self-concern (Am I good enough?). However, as the maturation of the brain is a continuing process throughout adolescence, young people are limited well into their mid 20s in their ability to process highly complex cognitions allowing for adequate risk-assessment and impulse control (Halpern-Felsher, 2009). This means that it is difficult for children and adolescents to foresee and adequately assess potential threats online, and the consequences that may follow their actions. Another core developmental task has to do with autonomy, and gradually separating oneself from parental control. In this process, the peer group increases in importance, and fitting in and being accepted by peers emerges as one of the most central concerns, making young people highly attentive to their reputation (Brown & Larson, 2009). Not surprisingly, the fear of stigmatization and exclusion from the peer group is especially strong during this time in life, and it is easy to understand the adverse impact of being threatened by rumor-spreading or the revelation of compromising information. In their striving for autonomy, adolescents also become less supervised and they may be hesitant to disclose information about their whereabouts and activities to adults, especially if the information is perceived as sensitive. This also means that if adolescents would feel the need to tell someone about an adverse online situation, they may be more likely to turn to peers than adults (Kogan, 2004).

Sexting – A Risky Opportunity for Sexual Exploration

> I really want to send nudes to a guy that I know somewhat. But I am scared that they [nudes] will spread. Is it a bad thing to send nudes?

This question was posted on the Swedish Youth Guidance Centre's website ("Är det dåligt att skicka nudes?", n.d.). By only a few sentences, the question illustrates some of the complexities with sexting (or 'sending nudes' to use Swedish adolescents' own words): having a strong desire to sext, but at the same time, being wary of the risks with giving in to the desire. The one asking the question reaches out for guidance to help with his/her decision. Sexting is one of the online sexual activities that young people engage in, or are prompted to do. As it involves visual portrayal

of one's sexual self to others, sexting can be viewed as both mediated sexual interaction and sexual media production (Hasinoff, 2013). The latter ties into the fear that pictures that have been produced for sexual interaction may later be disseminated without one's consent (as illustrated by the question above), but it also ties into the fact that sexting by minors is viewed as production of child pornography in some countries (e.g., the US). Still, adolescent's awareness of the risks associated with sexting (yes, they are aware of the risks!) does not prevent them from exchanging sexually explicit images or videos. A meta-analysis showed that about 15% of adolescents (mean age 15 years) have engaged in sexting by sending explicit pictures or videos of themselves, and about 30% have received sexts from others (Madigan et al., 2018). Prevalence rates are usually attenuated with increasing age and seems to have increased over recent years (Madigan, et al., 2018). The most common sexting partner seems to be a romantic interest, and the least common is someone completely unknown (Burén & Lunde, 2018). Although research indicates that sexting is a positive experience for many young people who engage in it (Van Ouytsel et al., 2017), studies also indicate that there may be gender differences with regards to the quality of sexting experiences. For instance, a study among Swedish high-school students showed that whereas there were no gender differences in terms of the prevalence of sexting, girls who had sexted reported more negative experiences than did boys (Burén & Lunde, 2018). Girls were also more likely to have received sexts from strangers, and to report being under pressure to sext.

Thus, sexting is a neither common nor uncommon phenomenon, most often takes place within established relationships, and as do other sexual experiences, it becomes more common with increasing age. Although many adolescents have positive experiences of sexting, girls clearly seem more exposed to potentially adverse online situations. These result patterns highlight some of the nuances with young people's experiences of sexting, and could be juxtaposed to the long-standing and one-sided "risk-discourse" that has permeated public debate and much of the research to date (Döring, 2014; Lippman & Campbell, 2014). Taken to its extreme, this discourse exaggerates the prevalence of sexting, and seems to aim at encouraging young people to abstain from sharing self-produced sexual material. On the one hand, focusing on the risks and potential harms with sexting is doubtlessly legitimate, as an increased understanding for the circumstances that surround sexting could inform preventive measures. On the other hand, the risk discourse delegitimizes and do not represent young people's own experiences, as young people also tend to emphasize perceived benefits of sexting (e.g., being a fun way to flirt, increase intimacy, and to gain interpersonal sexual experiences) (Cooper et al., 2016).

In turn, a one-sided focus on the risks of sexting carries a number of problems. First, it does not take into account that consensual sexting can be a part of healthy sexual relationships. Second, young people who do engage in sexting may feel ashamed for engaging in a behavior considered risky, and feeling ashamed may in turn deny them a sense of sexual agency. Third, and in line with this, young people with adverse experiences of sexting may be less likely to disclose on these experiences, as they run the risk of being blamed for their behavior. It should also be noted that research shows that sexting is surrounded by stereotypical gender role norms

and sexual double standards, with girls clearly facing more stigma, victim blaming and slut shaming in consequence of sexting (Lippman & Campbell, 2014).

Having that said, sexting can perhaps be viewed as a "risky opportunity" (Livingstone, 2008) for young people's sexual exploration. Although many adolescents enjoy sexting and have positive experiences of it, for others, online sexual activity becomes related to abusive experiences with harmful psychological consequences. Thus, it is important to distinguish between consensual and non-consensual engagement in online sexual activity. The remaining of this chapter will be dedicated to the latter, shedding light on what is known about risk factors for online sexual victimization, different types of sexual victimization, and the harmful consequences that might follow.

Online Sexual Victimization

Online sexual victimization can take many forms, ranging from sexual solicitation to extreme forms of sexual abuse taking place online (e.g., cybersexploitation). Research of young people's experiences of being sexually victimized online is growing, albeit still in its early days (Wittes et al., 2016). As aforementioned, young people are at increased risk for online sexual victimization because they use digital arenas more, and thus they are also more exposed to adverse interactions and encounters (Baumgartner et al., 2010). Young people may also be more open to interact with unknown others, which increases the risk for sexual victimization. Finally, it is well established that girls are more often victimized than boys (Joleby et al., 2020a, b, 2021; Katz et al., 2018; Mitchell et al., 2007), although it should be stressed that the knowledge about male victims of online sexual victimization is extremely limited.

What We Know About Who Is at Risk for Online Sexual Victimization

From previous research, it is evident that young people who are vulnerable offline also tend to be vulnerable online (Englander & McCoy, 2017). For instance, poor psychological health, low self-esteem, social isolation, having a disability, having problems in school or at home, and self-harming (Joleby et al., 2021; Jonsson et al., 2019; Mitchell et al., 2001; Whittle et al., 2013) are known risk factors for both online and offline sexual victimization. Belonging to a sexual minority group has also been related to an increased risk of online victimization, with a six-fold increased risk for boys and a two-fold increased risk for girls compared to heterosexual youth (Priebe & Svedin, 2012).

Apart from these more general vulnerabilities, there are some specific factors that are related to an increased risk of online victimization. First of all, young people who engage in sexting are obviously more at risk of having images or videos portraying themselves falling into the wrong hands. Although adolescents seem to view sexting within a romantic relationship as an acceptable and (more) safe practice (Burén et al., 2020), there are no guarantees since a current or former romantic partner have been the most commonly reported offender forwarding pictures without permission (Patchin & Hinduja, 2020; Yar & Drew, 2019). It has also been pointed out that younger age, being initially pressured to engage in sexting, and sexting to multiple receivers are associated with greater risk of online sexual victimization (Englander & McCoy, 2017). In addition, sexting is intimately related to general online risk behaviors (e.g., disclosing personal information) (Burén & Lunde, 2018), sexual risk behaviors in an offline setting (e.g., unprotected sex and having multiple sex partners), and non-sexual risk behaviors (e.g., substance use, and sensation seeking) (e.g. Jonsson et al., 2015; Livingstone & Görzig, 2014). Taken together, these findings highlight that sexting behavior *can be* a symptom of other vulnerabilities and risk-taking behaviors, especially when sexting is done continuously and cumulatively (Baumgartner et al., 2012). This is also because repeated sexting increases the risk of being exposed to online sexual victimization.

Different Forms of Online Sexual Victimization

One commonly cited type of sexual victimization is *sexual solicitation*, which refers to receiving unwanted requests to engage in sexual activities. Sexual solicitation may take aggressive forms, and adolescents who have been exposed to unwanted request may report strong negative feelings, such as being afraid or upset (Mitchell, et al., 2017). According to the meta-analysis by Madigan et al. (2018), 11.5% of youth aged 12–16.5 years have received requests to engage in unwanted sexual activities or sexual talk online. A Swedish study reported that one in ten of the adolescents who engaged in sexting did so because they felt pressured, persuaded or coerced. Similarly, in a recent study, 10% of adolescent boys and 36% of adolescent girls indicated that they had felt under pressure to send sexting images (Burén & Lunde, 2018). These results are also in line with other studies that consistently show that females are more often requested, coerced or pressured to send sexting images. A qualitative study aiming to further the understanding of the situations that adolescents perceive as pressuring (Lunde & Joleby, 2021) found that the mere request to sext may be perceived as pressuring. The participants also indicated that they may feel obliged to "return the favor" if someone had sent them a picture. Taken together, these findings highlight that there is strong need to support and guide young people in how to ward off unwanted requests online.

Another frequently discussed form of online sexual victimization is when consensual sexting leads to a non-consensual sharing of the intimate image or video

(Walker & Sleath, 2017). The phenomenon is known under the embellished term *revenge porn*, and the motive is often attributed to a wish to publicly humiliate, exert power over, or control the target (McGlynn et al., 2019; Patchin & Hinduja, 2020). Importantly, the term revenge porn has received critique as it does not acknowledge the seriousness of the acts (it is not pornography – it is abuse), and for its victim-blaming connotations (revenge is something that is earned for prior wrongdoing) (e.g. McGlynn & Rackley, 2017).

Similar to other forms of sexual abuse, prevalence rates of revenge porn are very difficult to obtain, but non-consensual forwarding of intimate images seems to be potentially commonplace (prevalence rates ranging from 1.5% to 32% between studies and countries) (Walker & Sleath, 2017) and increasing (Henry et al., 2017). The perpetrator is often a current or previous romantic partner, or an otherwise known person of male gender (e.g. Patchin & Hinduja, 2020; Yar & Drew, 2019). In addition, young people seem to be at higher risk than adults (Walker & Sleath, 2017). There are several 'revenge porn' websites that encourage users to upload intimate images of their ex-partners (Stroud, 2014). The pictures are often accompanied with identifying information about the victim (e.g. Facebook profiles, phone numbers) and the websites allow visitors to leave derogatory comments about the individual in the picture. The creators of the websites earn money either by demanding fees in order to remove uploaded pictures, or by advertising as the sites attract a lot of visitors. In response to the obvious risk of being named and shamed after engaging in sexting, there are plenty of online platforms targeting young people that provide instructions on how to send nudes safely (e.g. Flare, 2020). Guidelines include cropping out the head, tattoos and birthmarks in order to make the picture unidentifiable, and to only engage in sexting with people you know. However, seeing that most offenders were a current or former romantic partner (Yar & Drew, 2019), these preventive measures may not be sufficient. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that young people are not naïve to the potential risks of having an intimate picture forwarded. Quite on the contrary, they believe that the risk of images or videos being non-consensually forwarded is higher than studies have reported it to be (Drouin et al., 2013).

While revenge porn includes the use of explicit material to publicly humiliate the victim, *sextortion* refers to when an offender threatens to expose an intimate image in order to coerce the victim into providing additional pictures, engaging in sexual activity, or agreeing to other demands (Wolak et al., 2017). Thus, sextortion is used to extort something (e.g. photos/videos with sexual content, money, sexual activity) for one's private purposes (Wolak & Finkelhor, 2016). One of the first studies on sextortion among adolescents was published in 2020 (Patchin & Hinduja, 2020), investigating a representative national sample of more than five thousand American 12–17-year-olds. Results showed that 5% had been victims of sextortion, and 3% admitted to threatening others with an intimate image they had received in confidence. In this study, boys were significantly more likely to have been victims of sextortion (5.8%) compared to girls (4.1%), contrasting the pattern in many other studies where females report more victimization (McGlynn & Rackley, 2017; Wolak et al., 2017). However, many scholars describe a gendered nature also in

sextortion, where girls report more negative impact upon dissemination of intimate images, whereas some boys view it as a predominantly affirmative experience (Wood et al., 2015).

Based on the definition of sextortion (i.e. threats to expose an intimate image) (Wolak et al., 2017), it can only be used against individuals for whom a first image or video already exists. Much less is known about how offenders coerce young people who have *not yet* produced any sexual material. A few studies have indicated that offenders tend to use pressuring strategies including bribes, threats to start a rumor or to manipulate pornographic images of the young person, threats about seriously injuring close friends or family, or threats to commit suicide if sexual content is not provided (Joleby et al., 2020a, b, 2021; Wolak & Finkelhor, 2016). By using strategies like these, perpetrators (ages 16–69) managed to incite young people (ages 7–17) to engage in a wide range of online sexual activities, from semi-nude sexual posing, to engaging in (sometimes extremely humiliating) sexual activities via photo, video or live in front of a webcam (Joleby et al., 2021). Importantly, it should be noted that some individuals who are incited to engage in online sexual activities are young children, so much younger that it is not likely that they have acted out of sexual curiosity sparked by puberty. In an analysis of children's self-produced sexual images, ECPAT (a child's right organization) (2020) pointed out that 44% of the children were clearly pre-pubertal. They also noted that the youngest children were more likely to depict an act, rather than posing in front of a mirror (which was more common among older individuals). This could include masturbating with an object or pulling down one's pants, showing the bottom. ECPAT concludes that younger children may act somewhat differently than the older ones, as they follow orders on how to behave, but perhaps without understanding its sexual connotations.

Far from all perpetrators use pressure or threats. Instead, a well-established strategy used by adults in order to prepare young people for sexual abuse is by building a relationship, either romantic or friendly. This preparatory process is often referred to as *grooming*, and has been identified in both offline (Craven et al., 2006) and online (Black et al., 2015; Joleby et al., 2020a; Williams et al., 2013) settings. In online settings, this has been done for instance by using flattery, posing as a friend, expressing love, or pretending to work for a model agency (Joleby et al., 2020a; Wolak & Finkelhor, 2016). Some offenders have taken advantage of the anonymity that internet can offer by lying about their identity (Wolak & Finkelhor, 2016). In some cases, however, no deception is needed since the young person understand the sexual intentions of the offender and are willing to go along with them (Katz et al., 2018; Mitchell, Jones, Finkelhor, & Wolak, 2013). In contrast to the studies on 'revenge porn' which mainly was perpetrated by a former romantic partner, many offenders in sextortion and grooming were unknown to the victim prior to the online contact (71% in Joleby et al., 2021; 41% in Wolak & Finkelhor, 2016).

Consequences of Online Sexual Victimization

A few cases of online sexual victimization has reached the attention of the media, putting the spotlight on the potential severity of its consequences. As depicted in the beginning of this chapter, Amanda Todd's story illustrates the extreme consequences and suffering that online sexual victimization may cause. Yet, there seems to be a common assumption that sexual abuse conducted online is less severe than abuse taking place in an offline setting. Professionals working with abused children and adolescents have reported that online abuse was sometimes viewed as being of less immediate concern, and victimized young people have reported that their online abusive experiences are being minimized (Hamilton-Giachritsis et al., 2017). In contrast, it is a well-established fact that *offline* sexual abuse is associated with an increased risk of a wide range of medical, psychological, behavioral, and sexual disorders (Kendall-Tackett et al., 1993; Maniglio, 2009; Paolucci et al., 2001). The question is whether this is true also for sexual abuse that is conducted through the online arena.

Several features of online abuse are similar to those of offline abuse: there is often a close relationship to the offender, offenders use similar strategies, and victims of both offline and online sexual abuse are stigmatized. Other features separate offline from online abuse, for example, online abuse does not necessarily include any physical meeting with the offender. The victim is also (voluntarily or unvoluntarily) actively engaged in the production of the intimate image, which complicates the lived experience of the guilt question of being subjected to online sexual abuse. Importantly, online abuse is also unique in that it almost always includes the existence of intimate images of some kind. In contrast to offline abuse that is often 'a secret', online abuse can be permanently exposed in the public domain of the internet, being nearly impossible to erase (Martin, 2014). This reality has been argued to complicate the impact of the abuse, due to the fear of the offender still having footage (Hamilton-Giachritsis et al., 2017). Substantial distress is often experienced, as the risk of images being circulated is perceived as never-ending. In line with this, research has shown that non-consensually shared intimate images may cause several negative emotional and mental health effects, including trust issues, posttraumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation (Bates, 2017). Public shame and humiliation, harassment, stalking, job loss, and problems securing new employment have also been reported (the latter among older individuals) (Citron & Franks, 2014).

Victims that have had sexting images non-consensually shared also describe suffering from anxiety when they are out in public, as they fear that someone might recognize them from the pictures (Joleby et al., 2020b; Bates, 2017). One victim reported: 'If somebody looks at you like you look familiar or something like that, you kind of wonder how they know you… You never know who's seen it, which is like the creepiest part of it, like more than anything.' (Bates, 2017). Furthermore, the thoughts about how many people have access to the images can be overwhelming. Victims of online sexual victimization have described that the abuse is

constantly repeating itself every time someone looks at the images. The knowledge that unknown individuals gain sexual gratification to their pictures can also cause a sense of being victimized over and over (Leonard, 2010).

While the fear of having pictures disseminated is justified in many cases, it is not always the goal for the offender. Instead of aiming for public humiliation, some offenders aim at privately receiving sexual gratification by engaging the victim in online sexual activity (Briggs et al., 2011). This can be done either by luring or by pressuring the young person (e.g. Joleby et al., 2020a). This type of victimization has also been related to severe psychological consequences, for instance post-traumatic stress symptoms, psychological suffering, sleep problems, difficulties in school, and internalized self-loathing (Joleby et al., 2021; Jonsson et al., 2019). A young person who has been lured into engaging in sexual activity with an adult might initially experience the situation as voluntary, and only as the young person grows older does he or she recognize the manipulation and the problematic aspects of sexual activity between adults and children. On the contrary, a young person who has been forced to perform sexual acts against his or her own will, sometimes under extremely violating, humiliating, or painful circumstances (Joleby et al., 2020a), might be immediately traumatized by the experience.

Practical Implications for the Adult World and Educational Settings

Thus, being the victim of online sexual victimization may cause harm and suffering for young people, and there is no reason to believe that the impact of sexual victimization is lessened only because it has been carried out online. Complicating the matter further, it is well-established that sexual victimization among young people is largely hidden from the adult world (Priebe & Svedin, 2008). Online child sexual abuse does not seem to be any different in this regard. Many cases of online sexual abuse are brought to the attention of the authorities through a police investigation, rather than by the disclosure of a child (Katz et al., 2018), illustrating the lack of voluntary disclosure to the adult world. In a study on American 10–17 year-olds, only half of the young people that had been subjected to online sexual solicitation told anyone about the abuse, and those who did most often told a friend (49%) (Priebe et al., 2013). The potential gap regarding attitudes about online sexual activities between young people and the adult world compromises communication about these matters, and risk making young people reluctant to reach out for help when what they may regard as innocent sexting suddenly turns ugly (Wittes et al., 2016). For all engaged adults who want to be there for the young people in their lives, these low disclosure rates are worrisome. What can adults do to earn the trust of young people and increase the likelihood of them disclosing online sexual victimization if it happens to them? In order to figure this out, we first have to understand why young people *do not* disclose.

Interestingly, some of the most mentioned reasons for not disclosing unwanted internet experiences was that the incident was not considered serious enough, that negative online sexual encounters happen all the time (Priebe et al., 2013), or a belief that one could handle the situation oneself (Wolak et al., 2017). These findings illustrate the potential gap between young people's and the adult world's view on these encounters. For young people, there does not always seem to be an equal sign between unsolicited sexual contacts and an abusive experience. Several factors can help explain this. First, due to sexual inquiries being so common, many adolescents have developed strategies on how to deal with them, for instance by blocking the requester, confidently speaking up for themselves, or telling a lie to escape the pressure (Lunde & Joleby, 2021). Having a clear strategy to ward off the unwanted request is empowering, and speculatively, clear strategies could help adolescents experience the situation as less intimidating or serious. Second, for many young people, online sexual requests could be welcome. The sexual development adolescents go through includes wishes for sexual and intimate experiences (Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008), and receiving sexual attention online might be exciting. Young people may willingly engage in online sexual activities even with unfamiliar adults. In addition, online offenders may be skilled at grooming their victims. Therefore, many online sexual interactions between young people and adults have been described to fit the model of statutory rape rather than that of a predator praying on naïve children (Wolak et al., 2008). Presumably, this affects the likelihood of disclosing the experience.

Other common explanations as to why young people do not disclose of sexual solicitations was being too scared, too embarrassed, or fearing one might get in trouble or lose one's online privileges (Priebe et al., 2013; Wolak et al., 2017). Importantly, limiting young people's connection to their online worlds, for example by restricting their smartphone use, would equal forbidding them to interact with their social world and would thus be experienced as a punishment rather than an act of protection. If adults communicate that all contact with unknown people are risky, and that sharing photos or engaging in intimate activities online should be avoided, a young person who have done just that and ended up in an abusive situation might be reluctant to ask for help in fear of reprisal. In addition, young people are not naïve, and many are already aware of potential risks (Drouin et al., 2013).

Instead, and based on the above, it becomes evident that adults need to acknowledge the multifaceted aspects of young people's online sexual activities. Educational programs should consider the developmental context of adolescents and acknowledge that online sexual interactions are part of adolescent's everyday life (Razi et al., 2020). This is not to say that all adolescents engage in sexting – and it may also be important to challenge normative beliefs that sexting is something that everyone does. Instead of advocating that young people should avoid *all* sexual contacts online, adults should provide young people with the necessary tools needed to navigate safely online. In line with this, more and more researchers suggest that education should include efforts that teaches young people how to differentiate between sexual exploration and sexual exploitation, between healthy, supportive interactions and negative ones (Katz et al., 2018), the importance of consent, and how to engage in sexual activities safely (Razi et al., 2020) with individuals their

own age. Finally, there may be a persistent and misguided fear of talking 'too much, too soon' with children over sexual matters, but quite the contrary, the evidence suggests that these talks should start early. By the adult world not talking about online sexual activities, we fail young people and deprive them their opportunities to make informed decisions. Therefore, we will end this chapter by recapping on some concrete guidelines, provided by Save the Children (2015), of age-appropriate ways to act and talk with young people about their whereabouts online:

From 2 Years
- Just as you do not leave children unattended in a large city, do not leave them alone online.
- Engage and show interest in the child's online activities, and explore them together.

From 4–5 Years
- Introduce the subject of online risks – e.g. "*There are people online that pretend to be nice but want to harm children.*"
- But try not to frighten them, as fear might trigger curiosity.

From 6–12 Years
- Explain how it can be difficult to tell good people from bad people online.
- Explain that anyone can fake a picture, and not everyone is the person they claim to be. Explain the speed at which pictures can be spread online and that they must not post or send pictures of themselves if it does not feel ok.
- Avoid outright bans. Instead, ask the child to talk with you before continuing to connect with an unknown person online.

From 13–19 Years
- Continue to talk with the child about what they do online.
- Even if it feels uncomfortable, talk about sexual abuse with the child. Remind them of their right to their own bodies and the right to say no.
- Assure the child that it is never too late to tell you about possible abuse, even if they have done something they regret.

Throughout history, young people have been subjected to sexual victimization, and as life is also lived online (Digital Information World, 2020; Statista, 2020), it is inevitable that sexual victimization also occurs through the digital arena. This chapter illuminates that online sexual victimization can take many forms, and be of a complex nature. An intimate picture shared with a loved one can turn into an object for harassment and humiliation, a new online friendship can lead to threats and coercion, and the romantic partner met online can turn out to be someone else, and perhaps much older, than expected. It is imperative to beware of the potential risks of the digital landscape, and to understand why young people might be extra vulnerable for online victimization. At the same time, it is important to bear in mind that the vast majority of young people are never victimized online, and that most of the online interactions are positive and a healthy part of young people's sexual development.

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Chapter 8
Unsolicited Dick Pics: Online Sexual Harassment, Gendered Relations and Schooling

Kristina Hunehäll Berndtsson and Ylva Odenbring

Introduction

Rebecka: Well, there are some people on social media who receive dick pics and things like that.
Cornelia: Emm, one of the boys in our class sends dick pics to girls in the class. It never happened to me though.
Fabian: Really?
Alexander: Yes, there is!
Fabian: Who?
Alexander: I can't tell you right now!
Fabian: Yes, you can!
Alexander: I'll tell you later (Focus group interview with students).

This introductory quote was chosen for its representation of girls' exposure to receiving unsolicited dick pics, but it was also chosen to illustrate how this kind of exposure has an impact on students' everyday life in a particular school setting, which will be focus of the current chapter.

Contemporary research has shown that sharing explicit sexual images, such as the 'dick pic' (DP), has become a growing cultural phenomenon among teens during recent years (Waling & Pym, 2017). DPs are unsolicited nude images usually sent by heterosexual boys/men to girls/women on smartphones or over the Internet (Vitis & Gilmore, 2017). Contemporary research on the phenomenon of DPs has placed them within two distinct framings (Henry & Powell, 2016; Waling & Pym, 2017). The first framing emphasizes and positions DPs as a specific form of online

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Y. Odenbring, T. Johansson (eds.), *Violence, Victimisation and Young People*, Young People and Learning Processes in School and Everyday Life 4,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75319-1_8

sexual harassment. The second framing positions and considers DPs as sexting, i.e., sending, receiving or circulating self-produced nude or semi-nude images or videos over the Internet or on smartphones (Dobson, 2015; Waling & Pym, 2017).

Contemporary research has also shown that sending DPs has become normalized among young people today. One Canadian interview study of 13- to 19-year-old teenagers reveals how, in the teens' responses, boys who send DPs are framed in relation to the axiom 'boys will be boys' (Ricciardelli & Adorjan, 2019). Even though almost all girls in the study had received unwanted DPs (almost at anytime and anywhere) and expressed their displeasure with receiving such pictures, their responses frame DP sending as something some male teens simply do. When discussing the matter with other girls, they dismiss this behaviour through shared laughter. Ricciardelli and Adorjan (2019) discuss how the existing gendered discourses on male teens sending DPs frame the behaviour as random occurrences that are normalized by the teenagers. Empirical studies have also revealed that girls exposed to online sexual harassment express disgust and frustration with these incidents, yet normalization of boys' behaviour also exists (Renold & Ringrose, 2011). This normalization is expressed by some girls who explain and excuse boys' unwanted behaviour as "just mucking around" (Renold & Ringrose, 2011, p. 400). Boys' everyday sexual harassment of girls not only maintains heteronormativity, but also reinforces existing heteronormative conventions (Renold & Ringrose, 2011).

Several studies have demonstrated how teens' sexting behaviour is surrounded by sexual double standards, i.e., different 'rules' for boys and girls (Ricciardelli & Adorjan, 2019; Ringrose et al., 2013). For boys, sharing and rating digital images they have received from girls could gain them status in the male peer group (Ringrose & Harvey, 2015; Ringrose et al., 2013). Girls, on the other hand, run a greater risk than boys do of being stigmatized for their sexting behaviour (Ricciardelli & Adorjan, 2019; Ringrose & Harvey, 2015; Ringrose et al., 2013; Salter, 2016; Temple et al., 2012). Such behaviour might affect the girls' sexual reputation and increase their risk of being exposed to slut shaming, misogynist and sexist comments and ascriptions of sexual promiscuity (Renold & Ringrose, 2011).

Similarly, contemporary research on young people's use of the media app Snapchat has also revealed gendered judgements of certain behaviours (Handyside & Ringrose, 2017). Girls' posts are more likely to be trivialized, and girls are more likely to be judged as 'showing off' in their posts. Handyside and Ringrose's (2017) study also shows the sexual double standards surrounding girls' and boys' posting of selfies. Girls' posts, irrespective of the image, can easily develop into an alternative narrative and be subject to sexual judgments by (male) audiences. Boys' posts, on the other hand, are not subjected to those kinds of moral judgments. For instance, by posting selfies of himself with different girls, a boy can perform sexual popularity. The findings of Handyside and Ringrose's study indicate that young people's use of the media app Snapchat and the surrounding discussions among young people reinforce normalized gender identities for both girls and boys. Yet their results not only illustrate reproduction of heterosexism. Handyside and Ringrose also discovered that the girls in their study created resistance, using humour as a strategy to deal with the moral judgments and painful experiences they had been subjected to.

Although there has been more research on teens' sexting during recent years, we still know little about how teens' sexting and in particular teens' experiences of receiving DPs influence their everyday lives in school. Given this picture, the current chapter will address how students in a lower secondary school understand and experience the phenomenon of DPs on the social media app Snapchat and how this influences their gendered relations in the investigated school. In line with previous research, the current study draws on the understanding and positioning of DPs as a form of online sexual harassment and sexting (cf. Dobson, 2015; Henry & Powell, 2016; Waling & Pym, 2017). Following the Swedish Discrimination Act (SFS 2008:567), sexual harassment is defined as "conduct of a sexual nature that violates someone's dignity" (p. 3).

This chapter draws on interviews with students in year nine conducted in a lower secondary school (year 7–9) located in an affluent area in Sweden. The investigated school, Emerald School, is a small semi-private school enrolling approximately 200 students from preschool class up to year nine. The area can be described as a socially affluent neighbourhood. The average annual income is higher than the national average, as is the overall educational level (Statistics Sweden, 2020). Focus group interviews as well as individual interviews have been conducted. The interviews were conducted by the PhD student working on this research project (author 1) during the period September and October 2018. The data analysis process is collective in nature, in that we have jointly read through the transcripts and analysed the data. To ensure confidentiality, all names of the students and the name of the school are fictive (The Swedish Research Council, 2017). The present work was supported by the Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare (grant number 2017-00071).

Gender, Hegemonic Masculinity and Sexting

Digital images of girls and their bodies are constructed as sexual objects of the male gaze – objects boys should desire – but girls are also subjected to slut shaming and moral judgements. Boys' sexting and digital images, on the other hand, are often the subject of admiration by other boys and constructed as a normalized form of heterosexual masculinity (Ricciardelli & Adorjan, 2019; Ringrose et al., 2013; Renold & Ringrose, 2011). These prevailing sexual double standards and heteronormative conventions, Renold and Ringrose (2011) argue, are constituted within the *heterosexual matrix*. The concept referred to here connects to Butler's (1990) work; it refers to the heteronormative ideal in society and the ideological power system of a heteronormative understanding of sexuality and gender. The heteronormative ideal and other gendered norms are often normalized, which tends to maintain and reproduce gender inequalities (Connell, 2005, Connell & Pearse, 2014).

In society, certain masculine norms and ideals are given hegemonic status. In line with Connell (2005), *hegemonic masculinity* is a masculine ideal to which all individuals, irrespective of gender, have to relate. Hegemonic masculinity is constructed

in relation to and also occupies a superior position over other masculinities as well as femininities. As a result, the superior position of hegemonic masculinity legitimizes the hierarchical structures of existing gender relations. In the present study, hegemonic masculinity will provide a framework for exploring and understanding teens' gender relations and the social processes of sexting, and how these affect students' everyday life in school.

To protect themselves from misogynist comments, slut shaming and a bad sexual reputation, girls have to find strategies to *maintain respectability*. According to Skeggs (2002), respectable femininity is constructed and performed through social and cultural relations and can be understood as a certain kind of cultural capital. Respectability has long been used as a concept to differentiate the middle and working classes (Skeggs, 2004). Respectable femininity is framed in relation to particular characteristics, where girls and women are expected to be caring and have high moral standards (Hussein, 2017). As a result, girls and women are expected to always try to do what is considered 'right' and to behave in a 'ladylike' manner (Allan, 2009; Hussein, 2017; Skeggs, 2002). Drawing from Skeggs and Bourdieu's works, Hussein (2017) conceptualizes respectable femininity as a form of symbolic capital that highlights the embeddedness of gender and social class. Respectable femininity is symbolic capital women seek in order to gain class status, even within the middle classes, Hussein argues. Hussein (2017) explores the maintenance of middle-class status by examining how women negotiate normative conceptions of middle-class respectable femininity. Affluent middle-class women need to navigate in relation to the normative boundaries of middle-class respectability if they are to maintain their class privilege and status. For middle-class women, respectable femininity can in this respect also be seen as a 'burden' (Hussein, 2017). According to Allan (2009), for upper-middle-class girls, 'girl power' is about being powerful in manners that maintain heteronormative upper-middle-class femininity and the 'lady' discourse. Despite 'modern' societal expectations of femininity, the discourse of respectability featured strongly in the upper-middle-class girls' lives, as they are expected to behave like 'proper ladies'.

Refraining from posting anything that could be labelled 'slutty' has become one way for girls today to maintain their respectability and deal with this issue (Ricciardelli & Adorjan, 2019). This behaviour also resonates with broader societal messages targeting girls: It is the girls who have to be careful and be responsible online if they are to avoid misogynist comments. When boys send unsolicited DPs to girls, the impact this behaviour has on girls' wellbeing and the fact that this is a criminal act are still draped in silence, or even ignored, in many countries around the world. As a result, the existing sexual double standards in teens' sexting underpin and emphasize patriarchal assumptions about gender concerning both boys and girls. As regards the interviews analysed in the current chapter, we will address this further by exploring students' views on the phenomenon of DPs and how these influence their gendered relations in everyday life in school.

Emerald School – A School in an Affluent Neighbourhood

The area where the students live is described as a 'small', 'quiet' and 'safe place', 'close to the sea', a place they consider 'beautiful', 'cosy' and 'personal', but at the same time 'boring'. The catchment area around Emerald School could be described as a rather closed community, both geographically and socially. The area is more like a seaside village, whose central life revolves around a harbour. The students also mention that the families in the area have good financial resources; as one of the boys, Carl, expresses it: "I think everyone is pretty well off here. Of course, there may be exceptions, but I still think the majority are very wealthy!" As for the school environment, the students generally describe it as 'calm' and 'safe', both inside the school and out in the schoolyard. They talk about the school itself as 'small' and 'cosy'. The attention students get from the teachers is described as considerable:

Emily: It's a very quiet school! If you look at the number of educators, there are a lot of teachers here. And you get the impression that you're seen by all teachers. You get a lot of attention from all educators in all subjects. So it's very nice!
Interviewer: It feels like a very personal school then?
Emily: YES, it is! It is very personal!

The students also emphasize the importance of appearances as well as of how they speak and behave at school. As one of the girls, Louise, points out: "Well you have to act *in this way*, and not *in that way*, because then you're different and everyone will notice you". If a person stands out in any respect, he/she is considered deviant and becomes the focus of negative attention. The students' behaviour at Emerald School could be understood in light of what is considered respectable in the local context of Emerald School. The students are expected to be responsible for both their daily appearance and their future lives. In this regard, nothing seems more important than getting the best marks.

Expectations to perform and assume responsibility for schoolwork are of central importance to students at Emerald School. The students are expected to succeed academically in the future, and the pressure to only get A's and be the best is also reinforced by the students when they comment on each other's marks. Students also comment when a fellow student has not performed well orally during lessons. Yet these abusive comments do not typically occur directly between students in the classroom; instead, such discussions take place on the class chat on the Internet, as expressed by Emily: "You didn't say anything in class today". /.../ "Why were you so quiet today? You can't act like that!" They also comment when a student has said something wrong during the lessons. The students talk about being regularly subjected to abuse on social media, and as it turned out, also about being exposed to sexual harassment – more specifically DPs. Sexual harassment in the form of DPs is the main focus of the present chapter and will be discussed in the following sections.

Dick Pics – An Everyday Phenomenon

Violence and harassment at Emerald School rarely occur openly. Bianca describes the school environment by saying: "It's *very quiet here*! Compared to other schools". Physical violence hardly occurs at all, and the acts of harassment that do occur take place on the Internet and on social media, where school officials cannot see them. Students' experiences of sexual harassment in school can take many forms, according to Conroy (2013), who points out that one form is exposure to sexual pictures or photographs. In their study, Ricciardelli and Adorjan (2019) emphasize that sexting, particularly DPs sent non-consensually to female teens, is clearly a normalized practice among youth. In accordance with previous research, the students themselves addressed this specific problem of sexual harassment directly during the focus group interviews. During one of the focus group interviews, the students discussed sexual harassment and receiving unsolicited pictures on Snapchat, more or less on a daily basis.

Charlotte: Well, I have experienced *this a lot*!
Interviewer: Do you mean receiving pictures?
Charlotte: It happens almost every day. I have to spend a lot of time blocking them, because it's a lot of people! My block list on Snapchat is very long!
Interviewer: What kinds of pictures do they send?
Charlotte: Dick pics! /.../
Charlotte: The first time I received dick pics I was *really shocked* and could not touch my phone for an hour or so. Maybe I'm exaggerating now, but it was really like that. And it was in the year 6, so I didn't know how to react, you know, shit, this was completely new for me. /.../
Charlotte: Yes, in year 6 and in year 7 it increased. And now it's super common! Super common! And you can receive them anytime! Morning, evening, in the middle of the school day, you receive them any time during the day!

The unsolicited pictures are reported to appear unexpectedly. Some of the girls received DPs as early as the year 6, and as they got older the problem increased. One common strategy the girls use to handle the unsolicited pictures is to block the person who sent the pictures.

Interviewer: It's a common phenomenon this thing, receiving dick pics?
Charlotte: Yeah it is. But it's not for me anymore, because I've blocked basically everyone. I only write with people I know on Snapchat. I can write to more people on Instagram, because it never happens there. It's on Snapchat you receive those pictures. I've cleared everything; if I hadn't done that, it would be very common for me to receive those pictures as well. Daily basically!

The students report that receiving DPs is a very common phenomenon. Receiving DPs is also experienced and described as unpleasant and a very unsettling experience. One of the girls at the school puts it like this:

Charlotte: It's so unnecessary and disgusting! You just have to delete it! I think it's super weird! I don't get it! No, I think it's super strange that someone would do that! I don't understand! I've never ever sent any pictures like that and think it's super weird! And I think it's like very unpleasant you know! /.../ I know that pictures like that are spread on the Internet. /.../ I'm not going to be the person who's done that. Ever! /.../ Because just receiving those pictures is disgusting! And I'm like, DISGUSTING! BLOCK! So, no I think it's super weird!

Sexual harassment is a form of gender-based violence (Gillander Gådin & Stein, 2017). As suggested by Renold and Ringrose (2011), everyday sexual harassment of girls not only maintains heteronormativity, it also reinforces existing heteronormative conventions. Even if girls exposed to sexual harassment express disgust and frustration, as also shown in the present study, normalization of boys' behaviour still exists. As seen in the excerpt above, Charlotte not only describes the unpleasant feeling of receiving unsolicited pictures, but also expresses her awareness that girls take risks when they send and share body images of themselves. This has also been discussed by other researchers. Previous studies have shown not only that girls take greater risks when they share images of their bodies, but also that they are stigmatized to a greater extent and risk damaging their reputation (Salter, 2016; Temple et al., 2012). In relation to this, Charlotte also alludes to the fact that she is a respectable girl, who would never dream of sending nude images to anyone. The same girls also discuss the difficulties of confronting and questioning the person who sent the unsolicited pictures. Most girls would not dare do this and fight for their rights, instead they avoid the conflict.

Charlotte: I think I'm a little bit tougher than most girls. I'd rather take the fight than just let it be! /.../ There are many girls who choose to avoid the conflict and forget all about what has happened. I think it's because they don't have the strength to do it. They maybe tell their closest friends, but avoid the conflict! Many of my friends just avoid it, because they don't have *the strength*, or *want to* or *dare to* take the fight.

The girls in the present study perceived DPs as an unwanted sexual behaviour forced upon them. The high frequency of unwanted sexual images sent to girls can be seen as a form of systematic oppression girls need to deal with on a daily basis. They primarily describe strategies such as blocking the sender or, on a psychological level, repressing the incident and "forgetting all about what has happened". Avoiding the conflict and confronting the boy or boys who sent the unsolicited pictures could been understood in relation to feelings of shame about the image and expectations concerning a respectable girl's reactions to such pictures. Previous research has highlighted a double standard regarding boys' and girls' sexting behaviours (Ricciardelli & Adorjan, 2019; Ringrose et al., 2013). These normative perceptions can be understood in relation to how female sexuality is governed by respectability norms. At Emerald School, a girl cannot send sexual pictures without taking the risk of being gossiped about.

Interviewer: Have you heard of girls sending such pictures [refers to nude pictures]?

Josephine: No! No!
Interviewer: That it goes the other way?
Josephine: No! No!
Interviewer: Because that can happen too?
Josephine: I don't know *anyone* who has done it! I haven't heard *anything* about that! There have been no such rumours in the class. Not that anyone would have done it.
Interviewer: No rumours that girls would have sent [nude] pictures to boys?
Josephine: No, it's not something I've heard anyway!

Josephine explicitly rejects the notion that any of the girls would have sent sexual pictures. All of the interviewed girls also emphasized that they would never send such pictures. Whether or not this is true, respectability is used by the girls to avoid slut shaming and maintain their respectable reputation. Most girls do not seem to want to risk violating the boundaries of respectable femininity within the upper middle class by engaging in any kind of sexting. The girls' rejection can be understood in light of an expectation of female sexual propriety within the local context (cf. Allan, 2009).

Girls' Collective Resistance

During the period of data collection at Emerald School, the parents of one of the girls, Charlotte, had recently informed both the school officials and the other parents that their daughter had received unsolicited DPs from one of the boys in the class. The school's principal then informed the entire class about what had happened, saying it was wrong to send DPs, but this was the only action the school took regarding this matter. Louise gives her views on the situation:

Louise: She [refers to Charlotte] was really angry after that [receiving DPs] and thought: "What is this? Why does he send *that* kind of picture?!" And she is very close to her parents, so she talked to her parents and her parents raised this at school. After that he [the student who sent the DPs] was absent from school for three weeks. Then he came back, so now he's back in school again. He said he had been ill, but considering what happened just before, we don't believe he's been ill. He wrote to her saying she had destroyed his life just because she talked about what had happened. And she got really angry then! Why should *she* be blamed when *he* was the one who sent pictures to *her*?!

Louise expresses not only Charlotte's anger and disbelief, but also her own. Louise is extremely anger that the boy thinks the girl he offended is responsible for his actions. She asks rhetorically why the victim of sexual harassment is to blame. After the principal informs the class, the girls start talking to each other about what happened. It then turns out that several of the girls in the class have received unwanted DPs from the same boy.

Josephine: We talked about it, and *none of us* thought it was *okay*. It was very strange, we thought! And then we discovered that different girls had received similar pictures sent by the same person. And then we felt like: "OH MY GOD!"
Interviewer: Sent to several in class?
Josephine: YES!
Interviewer: Really?
Josephine: Yes!
Interviewer: Then the reason cannot be that he is kind of in love with that person?
Josephine: No! No, that's what's so strange, we don't understand *why*! It's just so weird.

According to Josephine, all girls strongly condemn this situation, which they perceive as sexual harassment within the class. In the interviews, Bianca describes the situation as "disgusting", Louise sees it as "unpleasant" and as a "sexual assault and abuse", and according to Sophie it is "shocking". Timmerman (2003) stresses that a high frequency of unwanted sexual behaviour and harassment increases the risk that those behaviours will be considered normative. At the same time, Timmerman (2003) uses the term normative in the sense that students are aware that it occurs regularly; sexual harassment is still a negative experience for students. Another girl, Sophie, also expresses her anger and frustration about the fact that boys even consider sending unsolicited pictures of a sexual nature to the girls in their class; she says:

Interviewer: How would you describe the peer relations in the class?
Sophie: It's a bit tense between the boys and the girls, because everyone knows what happened, that someone sent nudes and such. I think it's a very weird thing to do! I don't think it's acceptable to send it to anyone *in the class*! It's *no wonder* things gets *tense* or that there's a bad atmosphere in the class when people act like that! So I would say that it's very much so that the girls are with the girls and the boys are with the boys! /…/ Nobody should send [DPs] to anyone in the class!

Sophie emphasizes that the DP phenomenon is completely unacceptable, especially when someone is violated in this way by a classmate, explaining that such actions naturally negatively affect social relations in the class. The tense atmosphere has divided the class into two gender-segregated groups, and the girls especially have begun to hang out by themselves. According to the students, the boys and girls do not speak openly in the class about the DP situation. During the interviews, however, the boys and girls express different ideas concerning whether or not they think the boy who has become the focus of sending DPs is a perpetrator. The students' different views can be understood as the reason why the girls are united in their lack of confidence in the entire group of boys, not just in individual boys. One of the boys, Carl, gives his view on the matter:

Interviewer: This situation in your class, how do you talk about it?
Carl: No, we're *not* talking about it at all!
Interviewer: Not even with each other? Between the boys?

Carl: No! We haven't mentioned it! We teased him a bit, then everything was fine! [Laugh]. Like in the locker room when he said he didn't want to show himself naked, someone replied: "Are *you* afraid of showing yourself *naked*?!" Then he got very angry! It was a bit like that. Otherwise, *no one* thinks this is a big deal! The situation has been embarrassing for him so...
Interviewer: Yes, of course, it was embarrassing...
Carl: Yes, but I mainly think the whole situation is funny! /…/ But, not many of the girls talk to him anymore! I know he's been trying to excuse himself by saying: "I sent it by mistake". But he has done it [sent DPs] many times!

According to Carl, the boys do not talk about the situation at all; they do not think the boy has done anything wrong, nor do they understand the seriousness of this behaviour. Carl is one of the few boys in the class who has noticed that the girls have collectively distanced themselves from the boy who sent DPs to Charlotte by not talking to him; this is confirmed by Sophie, who explains:

Interviewer: Are you talking with each other about this? Do you girls talk about it?
Sophie: Yes! We talk about it a lot and that it's wrong to do this [send DPs]. It's not okay at all! The girls in our class are quite open with each other. So we talk about it quite often! /…/ Regarding the nude pictures [referring to DPs], it has become a bit stiff with that guy, because we don't want to talk to him! And he certainly knows that! /…/
Interviewer: But does it feel like *all girls* are distancing themselves from him now, after this? That you all keep your distance?
Sophie: Yes!
Interviewer: Or point a finger at it, maybe?
Sophie: Yes! I've noticed that!
Interviewer: Have you talked to each other about it, that you want to stress it, or is it just something you do?
Sophie: I don't know! I just know I haven't talked to anyone, and I haven't heard anyone talk to anyone else about it either. I just think everyone thinks this is *not acceptable*!
Interviewer: And is this a reaction to that?
Sophie: Yes, it is; everyone is stressing that this is *not okay*!
Interviewer: Yes, exactly, but it's not something you've agreed on doing?
Sophie: No.

Unlike the boys, the girls talk to each other about what has happened and define it as serious – so serious that they describe themselves as being united in a collective resistance to stress their refutation of these acts of sexual harassment. The girls are usually divided into two groups: one with high social status and one with lower social status. Sophie, in the quotation above, belongs to the group of "popular" girls and does not usually hang out with the victim, Charlotte, who belongs to the group described by the students as "a little geeky". The boy the girls regard as the wrong-doer belongs to the group of students with the highest social status in the class. Despite this, all of the girls show their support for Charlotte. In this case, it is not

social status that determines whom they feel sympathy with, it is gender. This shows that the DP phenomenon should be understood not only as something that occurs online, but also as something that affects students' gender relations in everyday life in school.

The fact that the girls stress their rejection of the behaviour can be seen as a form of power struggle against this kind of sexual harassment. However, the fact that they do this in silence and do not raise their voices can be understood in relation to notions about what kind of resistance actions are possible within a certain respectable femininity. At Emerald School, the girls explicitly talk about the importance of behaving and acting in the right way, so as to be accepted by one's peers. How they are perceived in the classroom not only affects their status as respectable girls, but also how certain social class norms are conformed with. Similarly, Allan's (2009) study addresses how respectable femininity was played out among schoolgirls in primary school: "classed and gendered discourses of respectability featured strongly in the girls' lives, as they were expected to behave like 'proper' upper-middle-class ladies" (p. 145). Upper-middle-class girls are not loud and do not shout in the classroom, on the contrary, they are composed (c.f. Allan, 2009). The fact that the girls are united in a common resistance can be understood as them collectively standing up for each other to maintain female respectability in a sensitive situation.

Facing Sexual Harassment

The students seemed to have little knowledge of the fact that an unsolicited picture of a sexual nature can be classified as sexual harassment and that sending these kinds of pictures is a crime. The students were told a DP is categorized as a sexual act that is forced on someone else against his/her will, yet they gave the following answers when confronted with the legal aspect of the behaviour:

Interviewer: Are you aware that this is a criminal offense and that it is sexual harassment?
Charlotte: No!
William: No!
Carl: No!
Lucas: No!
Rebecca: Yes, I knew.
Carl: I don't understand, *why* it is sexual harassment?!

Although the girls described an unsolicited DP as an unwanted sexual act that gives rise to shock, disbelief and distress, they did not know how to handle the violations other than blocking the sender, which they considered difficult if it was a boy they knew and had a social relationship with in the class. The girls simply did not know what to do or where to turn. Sophie explains:

Sophie: If I had received such pictures [from a classmate], I would've been pretty s*hocked!* I wouldn't have known what to do! I don't know if I would have *dared* to go to my teacher and *tell about it*! I might have been able to tell my parents. But I don't think I would have been able to tell *any* of the school officials! Or the principal!

Sophie believes that telling the school officials would be unthinkable given the delicate nature of these violations. The interviews reveal that the school staff never speak to the students about sexual violations on the Internet, even when they know such things occur in the class. Charlotte, whose parents recently informed school officials and the other parents that a classmate had sent DPs to her repeatedly, says:

Charlotte: My mum has seen the pictures he sent to me! The pictures disappear [on Snapchat], but she has been sitting next to me when I received some of them. And this has been going on since before the summer! Mum has seen everything! And she has seen what he has written to me as well. My dad has also seen what he has written. So it's not like they haven't known about it!

Charlotte reveals that her parents have been aware that she has been subjected to sexual harassment by a classmate for an extended period of time. According to Charlotte, her parents have both seen pictures and read messages the boy has sent to her. Since her parents announced these offenses, the boy has also threatened her on several occasions, and it is these threats that have now caused her to consider filing a police report.

Charlotte: Well, I would've just ignored it just like the other girls [receiving DPs]. The only reason I now think that maybe I should report him is because he will accuse *me* of spreading false rumours and destroying his life! Then I think he has *crossed the line*! And in that case, he will have to accept a police report! Because then he has *really* crossed a line! If he can no longer take responsibility for what he has done! I think *that* would be a real low point! And then I intend to report! *If I* am affected!

This quote shows a disturbing pattern among the girls: although the DP phenomenon affects their well-being to a great extent, it is not considered as crossing the line of what they feel they have to endure. It is not until the boy accuses Charlotte of having destroyed his life by telling about the pictures that she thinks he has crossed the line. Charlotte wants to report the boy to the police if his accusations adversely affect her. The problem is that her parents have a different idea about how this might adversely affect her life:

Charlotte: Mum has called the school, because the school has a duty to report, they must report, and Mum called and said that they should not say a word about this to the police! Because if they do, Mum will just say: "Oh sorry, we made a mistake, it was a boy from Stockholm, and it wasn't the guy in the class". Just because a police report would affect me so much! And we want to be able to control the situation, and we can't control it if the school files a report. Not the way we want anyway. *We want* to be able to control things when it happens!

Charlotte's story also reveals that her parents demonstrate power by forcing the school officials not to report the boy. According to Charlotte, they made this claim although they were well aware that the school is obliged to take measures. Actually, according to the Discrimination Act and the Education Act, school officials are obliged to investigate the circumstances and take measures to prevent future sexual harassment (SFS 2008:567, SFS 2010:800). The explanation for why they did this, according to Charlotte, was that they wanted to control the situation and the possibility it would affect their daughter's marks. Academic failure is not an option for these parents, not even when their daughter has been subjected to sexual harassment and describes a background of anxiety disorder and self-harm behaviour during the interview. The parents' high expectations concerning Charlotte's marks and academic prospects affect their attitude to a police report, which connects to the normative expectations linked to their social class. In this case, the overall normative expectations are associated with social class and 'good girl femininity' (cf. Walkerdine et al., 2001). As a result, online sexual harassment is handled and more or less ignored by the adults who are responsible for protecting the young students.

In addition, the students seem to have an ambivalent attitude to how they think the problems with DPs should be handled. Below, Emily refers to when the principal, along with co-workers, informed the class about the problems with DPs at school.

Emily: They told us that it happens that students send dick pics. But in *our* class you already *know that*.
Interviewer: Yes … that's quite common, I understand, among young people?
Emily: Yes, yes! But after this meeting, she [Charlotte] says that: "I can report this to the police!" *But hey*?! Does she really think she should report a 15-year-old guy to the police, instead of talking to him face to face? And say: "Damn, this was stupid of you! But let's drop this now."

Emily has a hard time accepting that Charlotte is considering reporting her classmate to the police. She does not think the offending boy should be reported to the police considering his age, and as a respectable good girl, Charlotte should rather forgive and forget. Instead, Emily continues by arguing that she thinks the school officials should talk to the boy's parents. Emily's reaction raises adequate positions to consider regarding the age of young offenders and appropriate action to take. It also shows the complex nature of sexual harassment between students who have known each other for many years and have a peer relationship at school.

Digital Sexual Harassment and Respectable Femininity

In this chapter, we have addressed students' views on and experiences of the phenomenon of DPs on the social media app Snapchat and how this influences their gendered relations in everyday life at a lower secondary school in an affluent area in Sweden. The results reveal that the DP phenomenon is common and directed at the

girls at school. The girls describe the sense of shock, distrust and shame they feel when they receive these kinds of unwanted pictures. To avoid receiving more pictures of this nature, the girls block the person from their sender list. In this way, the female teens are heavily pressured to regulate digital sexual harassment on a daily basis. If the perpetrator is a classmate, this situation is extra sensitive and problematic. One of the girls, Charlotte, who had received DPs from one of the boys in the class, got collective support from the rest of the girls in the class when this behaviour became known to everyone. The girls handled this by collectively distancing themselves and literally silently excluding the perpetrator, by ignoring and not talking to him. This collective act against this particular boy could be understood as a form of resistance performed by the girls.

The strategy of blocking the perpetrator could, on the other hand, be seen in light of the local social context and the importance of upholding the right cultural capital. In order to uphold their cultural and social capital, the girls at Emerald School need to negotiate normative notions of respectable femininity, as well as navigate in relation to maintaining respectable femininity and upholding class privileges and status (cf. Allan, 2009; Hussein, 2017). The respectability discourse seems to regulate the students' behaviour such that it is difficult for girls to find strategies to deal with sexual harassment at school. In this respect, respectable femininity can also be seen as a burden (cf. Hussein, 2017).

As suggested in previous research, receiving unsolicited DPs can be experienced as intrusive and disgusting by females (cf. Mandau, 2020). Similar to previous research, the female students in the current study expressed disgust about receiving DPs from male peers. Despite this, most of the students, despite gender, were unaware that sending unsolicited pictures can be considered a criminal act and an act of sexual harassment if the recipient feels violated by the explicit images (cf. SFS 2008:567). Perhaps this lack of knowledge among the students is not surprising, given that even adult women lack the ability to recognize and critically address the broader social structures that enable unsolicited DPs to be understood as acts of sexism (Amundsen, 2020). Discussing these matters with students is therefore crucial. Such discussions have the potential to not only highlighting the impact and consequences of such actions, but also to challenge the existing hegemonic order and hierarchical norms (cf. Ricciardelli & Adorjan, 2019). Awareness and knowledge of gendered issues are crucial to challenging the production and reproduction of heteronormative ideals among students as well as in society at large, the goal being to achieve gender equality (cf. Butler, 1990).

In the case of the student Charlotte, even though her parents knew about the DPs and had informed the principal as well as the other parents about it, they decided not to file a police report. Although the school is required to file a report when a crime is committed or if they suspect a crime has been committed, they were instructed not to do so by the parents. Instead, the parents' high expectations of their daughter's school performance were prioritized. What we can see here is how their social class, social position and their expectation that their daughter should perform 'good girl femininity' – respectable femininity – and be responsible for dealing with this matter by herself (cf. Hussein, 2017; Ricciardelli & Adorjan, 2019; Walkerdine

et al., 2001). As a result, online sexual harassment directed at teens is basically ignored by the adults who are supposed to support and protect them. In this way, the everyday sexual harassment of girls is actually accepted, and existing heteronormative conventions are reinforced (cf. Renold & Ringrose, 2011).

Preventing Sexual Harassment in School

As suggested by Henry and Powell (2015), online sexual harassment has to be viewed and critically discussed across the micro- (individual), meso- (organizational) and macro- (societal) levels. It also has to be considered in light of the #metoo movement, which has been and still is intensively debated in Sweden –not least among secondary school students in their movement #tystiklassen [#silenceintheclass]. #tystiklassen was Swedish students' reaction and response to the #metoo campaign and highlighted students' experiences of sexual harassment in Swedish lower and upper secondary schools. The students' own initiative to address gender-based violence, through a large number of testimonies about their school experience, strongly demonstrates the need to critically discuss different forms of sexual harassment in school. This should include how the students experience this behaviour – a perspective that is still lacking in educational research.

It is also important to increase school officials' knowledge and awareness of sexual harassment at school as well as to provide them with adequate training and workshops focused on these issues (cf. Edwards et al., 2017). Moreover, there is a need for teacher training programmes to address issues of sexual harassment at school and to study the contemporary research on these issues. The present study has contributed new knowledge about these issues and about students' safety and security in the school setting. We also hope that the results presented here will offer school officials new knowledge and understanding about these issues and help them identify and prevent sexual harassment in the school milieu.

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Chapter 9
Resisting Rape Culture Online and at School: The Pedagogy of Digital Defence and Feminist Activism Lessons

Jessica Ringrose, Kaitlynn Mendes, Sophie Whitehead, and Amelia Jenkinson

Introduction: What Is Rape Culture?

> What is rape culture? Where do I start? With catcalling you know it's really anything from going out into the street and getting honked at or yelled at or harassed or anything. You know not being able to go out and feel safe. And rape culture… songs like 'Blurred Lines' exist which just boggles my mind. Because everyone just makes jokes about it and… somehow people get the idea that it's OK. And you know there's no education in schools to teach anyone – not just guys but everyone – it's not okay. Not just the practical, the science like a robot… the emotional side… about consent about talking to the other person. (Chloe, 17).

As articulately and passionately discussed by one of our research participants Chloe, rape culture is a term to define a social context where "sexual violence against women is implicitly and explicitly condoned, excused, tolerated and normalised" (Powell, 2015: 575). As Buchwald et al. (2005: 11) describe it, rape culture names "a complex set of beliefs that encourage male sexual aggression and

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Y. Odenbring, T. Johansson (eds.), *Violence, Victimisation and Young People*, Young People and Learning Processes in School and Everyday Life 4,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75319-1_9

support violence against women". Sills et al. (2016: 936) offer a genealogy of the concept and its two key patterns of victim blaming and normalisation of heterosexualised masculine aggression:

> Introduced by feminists in the 1970s, the concept of rape culture provides a radical critique of conventional assumptions about rape as an aberrant act of a deviant individual. Rather, it suggests, rape is connected to and enabled by a myriad of everyday social and cultural practices (see Nicola Gavey, 2005). Two interlocking patterns are identified as creating the conditions of possibility for sexual violence: (1) victim-blaming and other discourses that minimize and excuse rape; and (2) taken-for-granted features of everyday heterosexuality that normalize and naturalize male sexual aggression and female sexual passivity (Gavey, 2005; Gavey & Senn, 2014). This "cultural scaffolding of rape" (Gavey, 2005) is widely tolerated within many societies even while rape itself is ostensibly condemned.

Critically, however, 'rape culture' takes on new forms, visibilities and capacities for spread in the era of digital social media (Rentschler, 2014; Salter, 2016). There is ample evidence of new formations of online misogyny in the broad form of Men's Rights Activism discourses, alt-right forums and spaces that condone and promote sexism, and heterosexual men's right to exert sexual coercion and violence (Ging, 2017). At the same time, as Carrie Rentschler (2014) has pointed out, social media offers a vital space for dissent and critique of rape culture for girls and women. Rentschler suggests that social media is an environment where a live struggle over the notion of rape culture is staged – where what rape culture is and how it can be defeated is being constantly navigated. Rentschlar calls this terrain of struggle a place where we can see the 'pedagogy of the concept' (2014, p. 68) being enacted – where feminists are struggling to have their stories and interpretations of rape culture be taken seriously in order to change consciousness about sexual violence.

While Sills et al. (2016) explored university students in New Zealand's views of rape culture, there has been limited empirical studies exploring the on the ground experiences of teen girls navigating the construct of rape culture (Jackson, 2018) – and even fewer positioned in school contexts which explore the complex entanglements of school life, peer groups and social media engagements. In 2014, we began a research project titled 'Documenting Digital Feminist Activism: Mapping feminist responses to new media misogyny and rape culture' which demonstrated the creative ways digital technologies have been harnessed to combat gender inequality, sexism and harassment (Mendes et al., 2019; Ringrose & Renold, 2014, 2016; Retallack et al., 2016). Across our international sample, girls universally discussed 'rape culture' as prominent in their online experiences and daily life at school. Girls (like Chloe above) pointed out that rape culture was rife for girls everywhere, but schools did not adequately address issues like consent and harassment; therefore, in effect legitimizing rape culture. This was a story we heard repeatedly throughout our field work.

UK schools are supposed to support student wellbeing associated with issues related to e-safety, digital literacy and bullying (Department for Education, 2018). Currently, government policy on this focuses predominantly on perceived harms and risks associated with social media use and does little to provide young people with the tools to gain confidence and resilience in voicing their views (such as

feminism) or to challenge inequities through supporting online political participation (Kim and Ringrose, 2018). Responding to this weakness in this chapter, we explore our data collected over the past 6 years from urban and rural secondary schools in England, looking at daily regimes of gender-based sexual violence, rape culture and lad culture in schools and online. We then discuss a collaborative intervention to better equip young people to participate online in feminist activism, and to challenge both online and school based sexual violence and rape culture.

The Normalisation of Predatory Lad Culture, Rape Culture and Sexual Violence in Schools

In this section, we explore research findings from a three-year school ethnography at North West Mixed Comprehensive Secondary in London. The school is in a middle class, affluent, leafy, highly desirable area of the city. Less advantaged children from neighbouring boroughs are bussed into the school, creating a mixed cohort of those who live nearby and those who commute there and back during the day. We started working at this school after learning about the group from a Feminist Activist Organisation in London and being invited to research the group from the man sociology teacher who supported and coordinated the group from its inception. From 2014–2017 we observed the feminist group (which expanded up to 60 members some years) 6 times and during two of these trips in 2014 and 2016 we conducted a total of 8 focus groups with 26 group members. We also observed a feminism in schools conference the group participated in. We are still in touch with the founder of the group who is now a feminist activist in her university context. The observation and interview data was supplemented with social media artefacts shared by our participants that we either reconstructed after interviews, captured through following their public social media accounts (Twitter), or screenshot capture methodologies where they shared their mobile phone screens with the researcher (Retallack et al., 2016; Jaynes, 2020).[1]

Our first overall observation about sexism, sexual harassment and sexual violence is its utter banality and normality reflected in our conversations with girls:

Ady: When it gets upsetting is when it's like… the whole rape culture thing, and sexism within lad culture.
Helen: it's just the idea of different roles for guys than it is for girls.
Diana: Also, I feel personally really uncomfortable when you're kind of surrounded by boys and they're talking about girls and giving their opinion on girls, you don't know what to say.
Ady: And, like, why are they talking about wanking while you're there. I just don't understand… Boys have done it in class before.

[1] We gained consent to use anonymized screen shots during the informed consent process of the data collection.

Carli: I think guys just talk about wanking, it's, like, normal. It isn't normal, like, what you do.
Diana: They make too many jokes about it and they do it again and again, it's like, wow, you're just so funny and unique, well done, you're hilarious.
I: Do they ever talk about girls doing it?
Diana: Yeah, they do. Well, they don't talk about girls doing it but they ask girls, and it's, like, well…
Carli: And they make you really feel uncomfortable.
Ady: Yeah, they're, like, so do you finger yourself, and then they go all giggly.
Carli: But…boys like making girls feel awkward…
Helen: Uh-hum, they love it.
Ady: …and if they can…a lot of the time…you know, not all boys, but some boys. And, you know, if that's a way of making girls feel awkward, just asking them straight up questions that society has made you feel like you can't answer without sounding either weird or prudish, you know. I don't know, it's difficult. (Focus Group 3, 2016)

Here, the girls move quickly from a question about sexism and challenges they face at school to a concrete example of boys talking about 'wanking' (masturbating) and questioning girls to make them feel uncomfortable. This is presented as entirely normal and expected by the girl telling the narrative. Interestingly, the girls do the conceptual work of linking what is transpiring to the language of lad culture and rape culture to dissect the behavioural norms that enable and legitimise these instances in school. Lad culture is specific to the British context describing the use of banter and humour to both perpetuate and legitimize masculine predatory sexual activity (Phipps et al., 2017). The girls discuss how boys use sexual 'humour' to create awkward and shaming conversations about femininity and sexuality, whilst normalising their own sexual needs in the daily rhythm of the school day, in lessons and school spaces. They also discuss the feeling that they are not able to respond critically to boys without sounding 'weird or prudish', indicating pressure to accept this banter and further harassment if they have the audacity to challenge the boys.

They quickly moved from verbal banter and abuse to discussing physical sexual harassment in the hallways:

Ady: what also happens is guys grabbing bums and…
Carli: …sticking pencils on your bum to pull out. That was a really big thing in year seven and eight, when we just came into secondary school…
Helen: I remember that, yeah.
Ady: …and it's really weird because it died down and we all kind of became 14 and 15, so it's stopped now, no one does it any more. If someone did that now, we'd definitely be, like, what, and it would be really weird.
Diana: Yeah. Boys have been excluded for slapping bums and stuff.
Carli: Yeah, boys have been excluded after that, but it was before that it was quietening now.
I: So that kind of leads on to my question of what's the school doing. So, what are the school's policies to protect you?
Ady: Not enough.

Diana: No, they have like a suspension policy on sexual harassment. So, if you sexually harass someone, they will…
Ady: Quite regularly, they say "*what was the girl doing*?" and stuff.
Carli: Sometimes *it's not enough what he's done*, *like, even if it's just making fun*…
Helen: If he's not stopping for the right reasons.
Ady: …they can just say, oh, he only had his arm around you*, it's nothing.* And if it's making you feel uncomfortable, obviously I didn't want that though, I was just trying to get to my next lesson, it's still not right. (Focus group 3, 2016)

Here, we can see the girls pointing out that despite an explicit school policy on sexual harassment, the everyday occurrences such as unwanted touching or "making fun" of girls are minimized as - "its nothing". This implicit tolerance of harassment feeds into rape culture in school. The burden is on girls to prove that something has happened to interrogate "what was the girl doing?". Here we see a direct parallel to the way sexual violence is addressed in the wider legal framework where the burden of proof is on the victims to prove something unwanted has happened and that this unwanted action is 'enough' to warrant some sort of sanction (Powell, 2015).

Sexualisation of Girls' Bodies: Dress Codes and Rape Culture

The girls also explicitly connected the sexualisation of girls bodies as leading to sexism in uniform policies and the regulation of school girls' skirts as a fundamental lynch pin in how rape culture materialised at school:

Kelly: There is a lot of hidden sexism within the school, like the whole thing with the uniform.
Dana: Completely.
Sam: School the biggest like some teachers take it like personal offence if a girl's got their skirt rolled up. They'll say oh, why do you want your legs out, why do you want people to look at you, you know, like do you want boys to touch you, do you want to distract boys from their work, things like that.
Dana: One student got called a porn star because she had her skirt rolled up.

Sam: Yeah and on non-uniform days, people were sent home for wearing short shorts and told to change.
Kelly: Awful. Like the headteacher, he's a man, he will look you up and down and decide whether its suitable or not.
Dana: You're appropriate or whether you're going to ruin the school. (Focus group 1, 2014).

Here teachers are the arbitrators of morality in the school, deeming girls' outfits 'appropriate' or not, with one girl referred to as a 'porn star' ostensibly by a member of the school staff. This discourse of appropriate attire bleeds across school culture and lends itself to a discourse where girls are judged on whether they 'respect themselves or not'; referring to a sexual double standard and slut shaming discourse where girls' sexual reputations are being inferred or read off of what they wear (a

fundamental tenet of rape culture which responsibilises women to stop men from sexualising and therefore desiring and pursuing them) (Egan, 2013).

Jules discussed learning about issues like school uniform rules and dress codes enabling rape culture, when she researched feminist activism in America:

Jules: I was looking at these rules they have and its literally ridiculous the things that girls are sent out of school for compared to boys and it's encouraging the rape culture by saying girls need to be told what they wear because boys are more horny than girls and therefore it's easy for them to rape you instead of teaching boys not to rape.(focus group 4, 2016)

This incisive analysis deconstructs the epistemology of rape culture where the focus is on girls' bodies as sexualised or inappropriate rather than boys' behaviour (or masculinity or male bodies).

Sexual Double Standards and Nudes

In the focus groups, the girls pointed out how sexual double standards were also rife online, leading to slut shaming and victim blaming. They showed us Instagram posts of male celebrities wearing no clothes being celebrated contrasting with posts of female celebrities being slut-shamed:

Ady: Yeah, like that thing that's going around Twitter at the moment, the thing with Justin Bieber…
Helen: Oh yeah.
Carli: …posting a picture of his bum.
Ady: And Demi Lovato.
Carli: …and everyone… all the comments are like, oh my God, turn around, oh my God. there's a hashtag, Turn Around Justin….And then Demi Lovato is like…
Diana: …you can see her side boob or something, can you?
Carli: Yeah.
Ady: Really not that bad. Her side boob showed…
Diana: Yeah, it's not that bad. She's wearing a small top and shorts, and all comments are, like, oh, you slag, put clothes on…
Ady: And also, if nudes of a guy gets leaked, it's like oh dear, wha-wha-wha, ha-ha-ha, funny- funny-funny. But if a woman's leaked …it's like, oh, what the hell.
Carli: She is the biggest slut!
Helen: Yeah.
Diana: And also, girls never ask for nudes, it's usually boys.
Ady: *Boys just send nudes to girls without actually asking*. It's just like why would you do that, we don't want to see your…
Carli: Yeah, like, I didn't ask for that, what are you doing, stop!
Helen: Yeah.

Diana: And also, on Tinder, if a girl is on Tinder, she's desperate. But if a guy's on Tinder, he's just like, you know.
Ady: I want to have sex.
I: How can you challenge that, because that's massive?
Ady: It's so expected with a boy, it's like "you're not God!"
Carli: Male entitlement.
Ady: I'm not going to date a hoe if she's like this, then she's a hoe. (focus group 3, 2016)

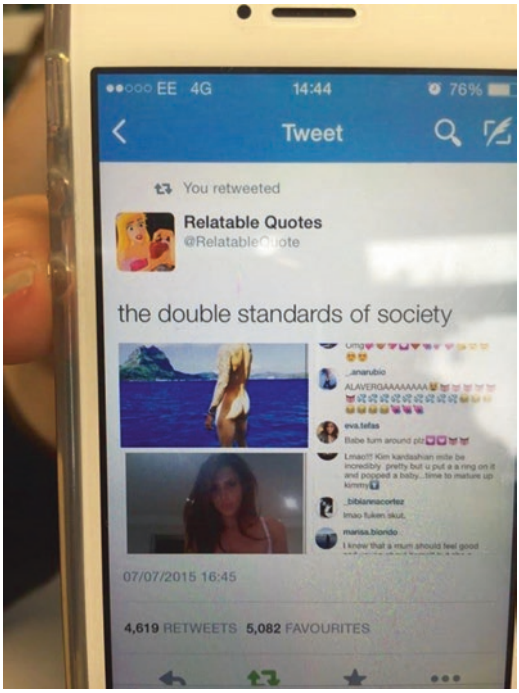


Image 1 Screen grab of @relatablequote Twitter post "the double standards of society"

In this passage, the girls discuss the sexual double standards of Demi Lovato vs. Justin Bieber from Twitter site, @relatablequotes. Lovato is slut-shamed for having the sides of her breast visible, whereas Bieber's nude buttocks are praised. They then turn to the double standards around girls' nudes and how if girls' nudes are 'leaked', they are slut-shamed. Following this, they discuss how nothing happens to boys who send unsolicited nudes (dick pics) to girls that don't want them. While this is a form of cyberflashing the girls describe how the boys feel this behaviour is "wha-wha-wha, ha-ha-ha, funny- funny-funny" a dramatic enactment of male banter around male nudity. The girls then extend their analysis into how these forms of gendered abuse continue in Tinder dating. The girls don't use dating sites but they are aware of sexual double standards in their future where girls on Tinder are

constructed as 'desperate' and boys can 'just want sex' due to male 'entitlement' whereas girls are a 'hoe' (whore). The girls again point to masculinity as the problem here, introducing the powerful phrase 'male entitlement' understood to be a core element of new formations of digital misogyny (Cockerill, 2019) The concept of male entitlement is pivotal for understanding how a fundamental imbalance empowers boys to have greater sexual freedoms than girls, and to demand sexual compliance from girls; but to also to shame the non-consensual sharing of girls nudes and justify the sending of unwanted dick pics to girls; which stem from a male 'God' complex, according to the girls. The likely source of their understanding of male entitlement logic has come from online platforms like Twitter and pedagogical accounts like @relatablequotes which showcase examples of sexism, sexual violence and rape culture. The girls dissect the lines of argument and epistemological basis of lad culture and sexual double standards in society as based in masculinity and entitlement. In the section below, we look at how girls work to tackle the internalisation of this normalised misogyny, taking to social media to report upon and challenge dynamics at school.

Documenting and Challenging Institutionalised Sexism through Social Media Activism

As we have seen, institutionalised sexism contributes to rape culture acceptance and legitimation (Alcoff, 2018) in and around schools and in peer group cultures. Salient in our findings about the experiences of teen feminists at North West Mixed Comprehensive Secondary was that they received a lot of negative comments and harassment from expressing their views when challenging sexual violence and rape culture at school (see also Ringrose & Renold, 2014, 2016).

> Today I left my lesson and walked a few meters before being tapped on the bum by a 12–13 year old boy. As any girl should I stopped, asked which one it was and explained how incredibly unacceptable it was to touch a girl's bum without her permission, and made everyone aware of what had just happened. Unsurprisingly neither boy owned up but simply laughed and blamed the other. I then had a group of young girls approach me saying things such as "Stop," "Calm down," "it's not a big deal" "it happens everyday," "don't worry." It makes me so angry upset and disappointed to think that these girls see it as OK to be inappropriately touched on a DAILY BASIS and see it as unnecessary to DO SOMETHING about it! I think it is so ironic that [the school] held a model United Nations Conference discussing the inequality women face globally only just last Saturday when they have cases of the discussions within the school. Something needs to be done. Girls and women need to know and understand that THEY should choose who and what touches THEIR bodies and that they are NOT public property for anyone to touch. Girls who laugh along or ignore these events are enabling and encouraging these boys or men to continue. Don't just stand there or move on DO SOMETHING!!! (Francesca's Facebook Post, 2015).

This post documents the experience of public institutionalised sexual harassment happening in the school hallway (the type described in above sections) as described by Francesca (age 16) through the medium of a public Facebook post which

generated 160 likes and 69 comments. In our discussion, a group of girls passionately discussed this incident, remembering the dialogue it provoked

Sam: Most of the comments were from boys saying like what's the deal? Firstly. Then comments from girls saying girl, pretty much the exact same thing happened to me and emojis... like praising her. Well done… and …showing support, be like yeah, I agree with you. (focus group 1, 2014)

This example shows how some of the peer group systematically try to deny the salience of the account as 'not a big deal'. Responding however, many of the girls resist this refusal and post positive messages of support and solidarity. Overcoming victim blaming and shaming, the connective capabilities of Facebook provided a space for these girls to "come together" to challenge rape culture amongst their peers. While it could be possible to conclude that challenging rape culture online is easy, it is often a risky and difficult practice, as toxic masculinities surface repeatedly.

In another example, the girls start to challenge posts on a peer's Facebook account. When a male schoolmate and Facebook friend posted a rape joke on another boy's Facebook wall, Robin responded with: "Are rape jokes funny? *winces.*" Another member of the feminist group, Andrea, chimes in to support this, commenting underneath Robin's post: "Yes, rape, that hilarious topic. Everyone loves a little rape," going on to suggest that the contributor think about how rape could affect girls and women in his family, such as his sister. After this comment, the boy turns violent calling Andrea "a f-ing bitch" and telling her to "shut the 'f' up" for talking about his sister.

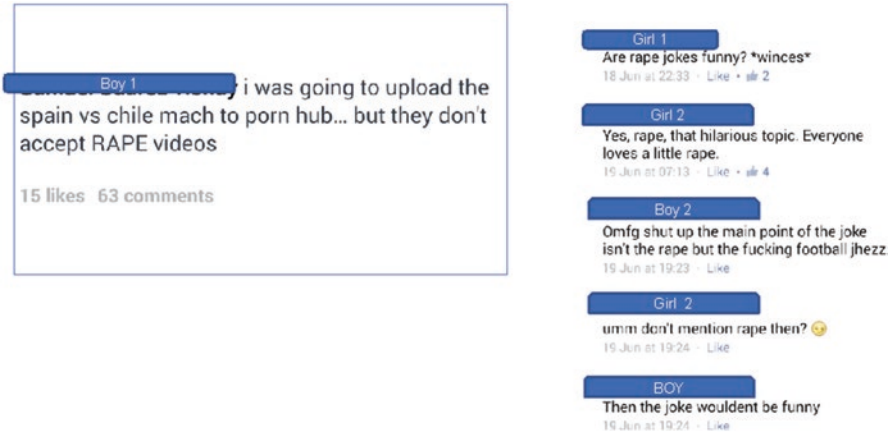


Image 2 Recreation of Rape Joke and challenge on boys Facebook Post

In yet another example, this time on Twitter, when the girls intervene in a discussion about rape culture, they are piled up on by multiple young male supporters of a local football club. They are then told by an account (claiming to be a young man) to 'go kill themselves' (See image 3):

Jane: They were just talking about rape and making it sound funny, having fun talking about child abuse, it's so funny. No one laughed.
Christy: And they were saying, like, oh, you're just Nazis, go and make me a sandwich.
Jane: Feminazi.
Christy: It's like insults from idiots, like go and make me a sandwich.
Kelly: We were told to kill ourselves actually.
Dana: It's scarier trying to challenge rape culture than it is a lot of other stuff because there's *always so many people* that are willing to defend it. So it's all banter. (Focus group 1, 2016)

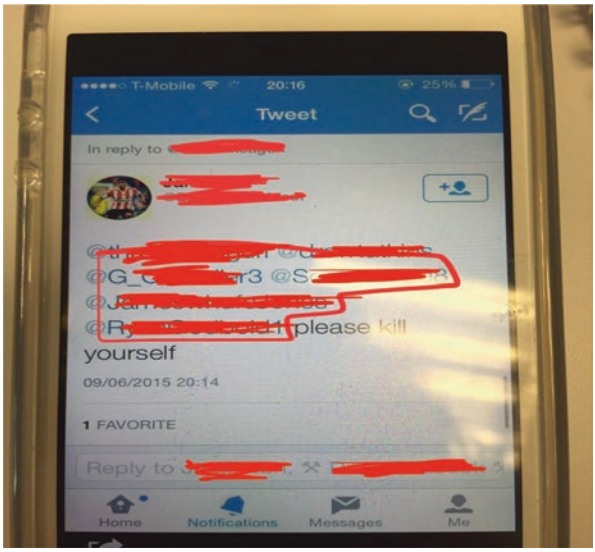


Image 3 Screen grab of tweet to tell one of the girls to "please kill yourself' after they challenge rape culture

Here, we see 'rape culture' take on new digital forms (Salter, 2016), with the memetic spread of anti-feminist tropes like 'feminazi' and 'go make me a sandwich' being used in a reactive and combative way when men are called out for trivialising rape and sexual assault. These forms of 'gendered hate' (Ging & Siapera, 2019) are spreading in what has been called new popular forms of networked misogyny (Banet-Weiser, 2018: Vickery & Everback, 2018). Girls also face minimization and denial of their personal experiences of sexism (what has been colloquially referred to as 'gaslighting') as shown powerfully in the following focus group encounter:

Carrie: It's kind of scary how ignorant some people are.
Dina: Yeah.
Carrie: I was talking about rape and stuff, I was talking about rape and FGM, and then my friend - well, not my friend - my classmate was, like, yeah, but that doesn't happen in the UK does it.
Jan: Oh no.
Dina: I feel like when you say you're a feminist or you say you're affected by sexism, loads of boys are, like, well, how does it affect you and stuff? And you say, well, I don't really appreciate being wolf whistled in the street, and stuff like that. And they're like, yeah, but that doesn't happen, and, oh, but how does that upset you, and stuff? So I think if I did a tweet, I'd want to quite shocking statistics about maybe not just stuff like wolf whistling and stuff, it would be more FGM and rape, so that they'd actually take the statistics and they would think, God, that actually is a big problem (focus group 4, 2016)

In this discussion, the girls explain that their own experiences of sexism (such as catcalling) are either denied 'that doesn't happen' or refused to be understood as upsetting by boys in their peer group. The girls lacked a sense of support around sexual harassment and sexual violence from schoolmates , and felt they should focus on 'shocking' issues like FGM, or other 'serious' issues happening to 'other' girls and in faraway places.

Indeed, we heard from multiple girls that making visible one's own experiences of harassment was the riskiest thing for girls to face. Sam (15, London) discussed tweeting about an episode of street harassment from her personal Twitter account:

> I went on a run with my friend. On the way to the park we got beeped at twice, three times. We were running around the park, people were shouting like oh, sexy blah blah, blah. And then on the way back it happened again, and I exploded. I shouted at the person who did it. I screamed at them, I was so angry... So I went home and I tweeted about it. And then this guy tweeted me back—no idea who he was, no idea how he saw my tweet but he tweeted back "oh no you didn't you fucking whore". I was like you weren't there, I was there.

Sam suggested that sharing a unique personal tweet was more dangerous than defending feminism in general: "I think you get attacked more if it's something *you've said.*" This type of gender trolling (Mantilla, 2013) on Twitter had an effect on our participants, some of whom began to disengage from tweeting personal experiences and to purposefully avoid challenging sexism in online debates.

Indeed, a combination of outside attacks, known peer group dismissal and harassment as well as institutional failure to support them made it difficult for girls to sustain their online feminist activism. Caroline (17, London) reported that she was concerned about making her Twitter account or Feminist YouTube channel known to any friends at school.

> I think that if you're a girl, it's already hard to deal with social media because there's so much negativity, but I definitely am called out a lot for being a feminist by people who think it's funny and also by people who think it's wrong to believe that, and I often experience harassment for what I say and believe.

The school's inability to tackle sexual violence and rape culture in school and online was made worse by a failure to take seriously or support the girls' activism or challenges to these issues online, as seen across several of the focus groups:

Kelly: Like if it's an issue we're fighting trying to make people aware of and trying to make it more sort of universally accepted.
Jane: Like we're meant to be naïve to like the big issues, but we're not.
I: So how could the school support your activism?
Christy: I don't think they really care. (focus group 1, 2016)
Sally: A lot of activism within feminism and everything, a lot of it does actually challenge the education system in schools. So it's hard I guess for them to promote that and say you should be activists! (Focus group 2, 2016)
Carli: It's like school doesn't want anything to do with it.
Helen: We're not allowed to be online…
Ady: They're worried about offending anyone. All schools are so worried about offending people all the time. (focus group 3, 2016)

Not only is the environment within school sexist, with sexual harassment and rape culture normalised through formal school rules and informal youth culture, but girls are actively discouraged from talking about and fighting against these issues. Despite this repressive and discouraging context, many girls were adamant that the key to transforming these issues was more education about respect and consent both within the school and in the outside world. The girls in the below focus group describe what they would like to learn about in relation to issues of rape culture both online and off:

Helen: But also, I think the school doesn't have… it's fair enough to have, oh, yeah, we'll suspend someone if they sexually harass you, like, it's okay, it's fine, but also there's no education, no one's… there's no rules set, there's no lessons about how to respect people. We never had a lesson on consent really.
Interviewer: What do you want to be taught about… or if you could design it yourself?
Carli: *A lot about consent.*
Helen: Yeah.
Ady: A lot about what's *right and what's wrong*. (focus group 3, 2016)

Social Media Activism: An Important Space for Resistance

Despite these issues, girls persisted with their feminist activisms online. Terri (17, London) remained convinced that her Twitter feed was a place where followers will be 'forced' to see her feminist views:

Terri: I share things and post things that combat oppression and patriarchy. It is not just a feminist discourse but an overall social justice discourse, but for me, they are one in the same. I do not hold back in what I share because I know that as an

> 'activist' it is my duty to 'spread the word' and make people see things that they would not see otherwise. I consider it my responsibility to spread that word because without me, maybe no one else would ever share such a message, and my followers would not ever hear about it or be forced to think about it (social justice, power systems, oppression, etc).

Social media platforms were viewed as crucial for creating 'safe' spaces in which teens could connect with others, follow and gain feminist understandings and possibly share their views. Online connections could lead to participating in activism and protest online, in school and also outside the school spaces for some. Digital technologies were therefore pedagogically important for not only *learning* about feminism, but for *changing their own life* and possibly the lives of others, despite the risk of further attack because of an explicit failure of schools to support them. As a result, we argue that schools *require* tools to understand and support this activism, as we explore in the second part of this chapter below.

Digital Defense and Activism Lessons and Workshops

In the final sections of this chapter, we explore workshops on digital feminist activism developed in partnership with School of Sexuality Education, a non-profit charity organisation providing comprehensive and inclusive sex and relationships education workshops for teenagers in the UK. Our lesson plans directly respond to schools' failure to protect students from everyday sexism, sexual violence and rape culture, as well as supporting young people's development of critical consciousness, and feminist views challenging this culture. The workshops are creative and interactive and aim to provide teens with a comprehensive digital feminist activism 'toolkit'.

We identified two key areas of support needed to combat rape culture in school. Firstly, the need to help all young people to better understand gender (particularly masculinity), sexuality and consent; secondly, the need to give them the practical tools to safely practice feminist politics – to combat and challenge abuse at school and online. It was critical to provide support on gender norms leading to sexual violence with a focus on masculinity rather than what girls have done 'wrong'. We also needed to cover the meanings of rape culture and provide the basics of consent for young people, outlining how this relates to embodied material experiences and online behaviours. We also wanted to introduce practical activities to empower gendered activisms.

The data in this section comes from sessions piloting our workshop plans designed to combat rape culture and trial feminist activism in two schools, South East London Academy and South West Comprehensive. SEL Academy is a co-educational mostly working class school with a high immigrant population in a densley populated borough of London. South West Comprehensive (SWC) is a co-educational comprehensive school in rural Devon with a predominantly white

student population. The differences in the schools is not purposeful but convenience based on school availability and willingness to participate in the pilot sessions. The teachers at both these schools were keen to create school wide resources and tackle cultural change around sexual violence and harassment in the school. In many ways, this represented a more progressive and forward-looking position around problems in the schooling environment than our earlier research school, which refused to make fundamental changes to the school uniform policy or endorse the girls' online activism.

Toxic Masculinities Shifting the Focus Onto Boys' and Men's Behaviour

At SEL Academy, we worked with a mixed gender group of 15 year nine BAME (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic) students. Lessons began by teaching about gender norms and concepts of hegemonic and toxic masculinity (Ging & Siapera, 2019), to prompt discussion about how male predatory aggression and entitlement fosters rape culture. When we introduced the term 'toxic masculinity', it led to very interesting discussions about guns and crime in their area and the boys' referred to a form of extreme pride they witnessed amongst male gang members, which was their only reference point for explicitly thinking about masculinity.

Next, during our discussion of 'rape culture', the girls suggested it was when "people think rape is OK and blame girls," this quickly turned without prompting to a discussion of how difficult it was to report sexual harassment in school and issues of failures of consent in the peer group. The girls told us of the huge difficulties they had in reporting any abuse, saying that if they ever tried to report boys sharing of girls' nudes without consent, boys could come up and say "why are you baiting me out?" They also told us that reporting to staff would have "repercussions" but not helpful ones, so that pursuing it would not be worth it since "the school wouldn't take it seriously if it was just verbal abuse." The boys in this group responded reactively to this discussion, saying a girl could "expose him for asking for an image by screenshotting it [the request] and showing it to a teacher."

In this discussion, we can see a conflict between girls feeling unable to report abuse, and boys confirming this indignantly saying they are afraid that if they ask for nudes girls will 'expose' them. Girls are accused of 'baiting' boys to teachers if they seek help. We can see how ingrained the sexism and masculine entitlement is in this peer context where girls are expected to stay in line and protect boys from the possible repercussions around their actions as they could get them in trouble. This is an interesting class and racial dynamic where girls feel they should not expose the boys in their peer group to further scrutiny or punishment, reinforcing research demonstrating that black boys are subject to much higher rates of exclusion, assumptions of criminality and racial double standards in schools (Gillborn, 2008). This acts to limit girls' potential for speaking out about sexualised violence.

Nonetheless the girls continued to discuss how sexual practices for girls and boys were unfair. Girls said "if a boy has a high body count it wouldn't make him a slut," meaning boys are praised for bragging about sexual activity. In contrast, they noted that girls are "slut shamed" or called a "sket" (slut) based on what you are wearing and they also said "some girls are attacking other girls". Our discussions showed how girls' bodies were policed around their clothing in sexualised ways that boys are not. Students also raised the problem of internalised misogyny (how girls attack and slut shame one another based on sexual morality). The girls spoke about boys being able to send nude images of their penises anonymously, meaning there is less chance of them being 'leaked' and 'exposed' than girls' nudes, and also complained about being sent such images when they were not wanted (cyberflashed) as was discussed with the earlier groups of girls above. The girls also noted a common practice where "older boys are asking younger girls to send them nudes… screenshotting them and sharing them without permission". They would try to earn the trust of a younger girl, then, after getting an image and or sexual services, would cut the girl off – "beat and delete". The boys jumped in here to point out that "girls do that all the time [send nudes]", effectively erasing the girls point that boys are pressuring girls for nudes as well as sharing images without permission.

Throughout the lesson the focus was moved repeatedly back onto the girls sexual reputation and morality around their images. The girls are responsibilised for taking risks by creating/sending nude imagery (Dobson & Ringrose, 2015). Given the strict legal definition of imagery of under 18 s being illegal, despite this criminalisation being rarely practiced in schools, such a focus makes it difficult to shift attention onto abuse – that is perpetrators who pressure girls and/or distribute images without consent. Where adults, schools and young people may be aware that images of under 18 year olds are a form of child sexual abuse, there is little to no awareness in many schools and peer groups of non-consensual image sharing as an illegal practice (McGlynn and Rackley 2017; McGlynn et al., 2019), constituting a form on online sexual harassment (see Ringrose, Mendes, Horeck, 2020).

Teaching Consent Education

Next in the lessons, we aimed to challenge these logics of sexual harassment, the fear of reporting harassment, abuse and sexual violence, slut shaming and victim blaming of girls which are all a part of rape culture narratives. To show young people about the logics of victim blaming, we explicitly discussed the legal and cultural treatment of rape and trends of misinformation and myths about 'false rape allegations'. We referred to popular culture trends of rape myths and disinformation where boys repeat claims that rape accusations ruin men's lives (Weiser, 2017). Discussing rape myths sparked important debate between the girls and boys in the group.

I: Let's discuss myths around rape, what about the idea that men cannot be raped?
Jamal: Why would a man ever turn down sex?

Kamil: And if a guy said he was raped no one would believe him.
Jamal: The woman ruined the boy's life.
Zahair: Allegations are they backed up by evidence or not?
Kamil: If he raped the person and it's not true – it did ruin their life.
Zahair: People believe the girl.

Here we can see that boys discuss men and boys as victims if they are accused of sexual violence. There is a reversal of girls as victims of sexual violence into a form of "aggrieved masculinity" (Kimmel, 2015) where men become the victims of a supposedly rigged system privileging women and girls, who make accusations of violence that ruin men's lives. The strength of this narrative and its common senseness here shows how ingrained and pervasive it is amongst young people.

To correct this false-rape myth, the lesson goes on to report key sexual violence statistics in which only a small fraction of women's rape allegations are false (Crown Prosecution Service, 2013). After outlining how rape culture creates contexts of misinformation, denial and victim blaming of women and girls, we move back to the personal context of bodily autonomy and sexual behaviour – explicitly joining up the wider political discussion to the personal and lived contexts of young people something advocated by Renold's (2019) Relationship and Sexuality Education guidance on working on 'experience near' issues so that they are relatable to young people's everyday lives.

We do this by teaching young people that it is our personal responsibility to get enthusiastic consent (in person and online) through reference to practices that they are familiar with, such as touching up at school; or the expectation that girls' bodies are a form of currency for boys to gain status online and offline. We explore how it is not the other person's job to say 'no' – that we need ongoing and explicit communication – including learning about 'soft nos' or the idea that because someone has not gotten very angry or pushed you away does not amount to consent. Through this, we can teach that simply not resisting, is not consent; or that sending a photo of a penis to someone without their enthusiastic consent is a form of cyberflashing and online sexual harassment. We introduce these new sets of terminology to young people beyond the common policy frameworks of 'sexting' and 'bullying' towards the legal facts and terminology including image based sexual abuse so that they can learn how to identify, report and protect themselves.

During the workshop at SEL Academy, the focus on consent around image sharing continued to be met with resistance from the boys, who wanted to put the focus on the girl sending the nudes and blaming the victim:

Marcus: It's girls *sending* nudes.
Reginal: Yeah certain accounts that girls send too; there are anonymous nudes.
Sakeem: Some girls are *sending their body out there*.

To combat this common preoccupation with girls doing something illegal by creating images rather than putting the emphasis on the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, we address these gendered logics by offering the steps in detail and where nudes go from consensual and ethical to abusive and criminal. Shifting away

from the problematic legal terrain which criminalises youth sexters (Dobson & Ringrose, 2015), the language used by facilitators in the classroom, and resources emphasises that it is the *showing or sharing* of a private sexual image of someone without their consent is unethical and illegal. We highlight to young people what the process of consensual image sharing might look like e.g. a photo is consensually taken and shared with agreements made between the sender and recipient about when it will be deleted.

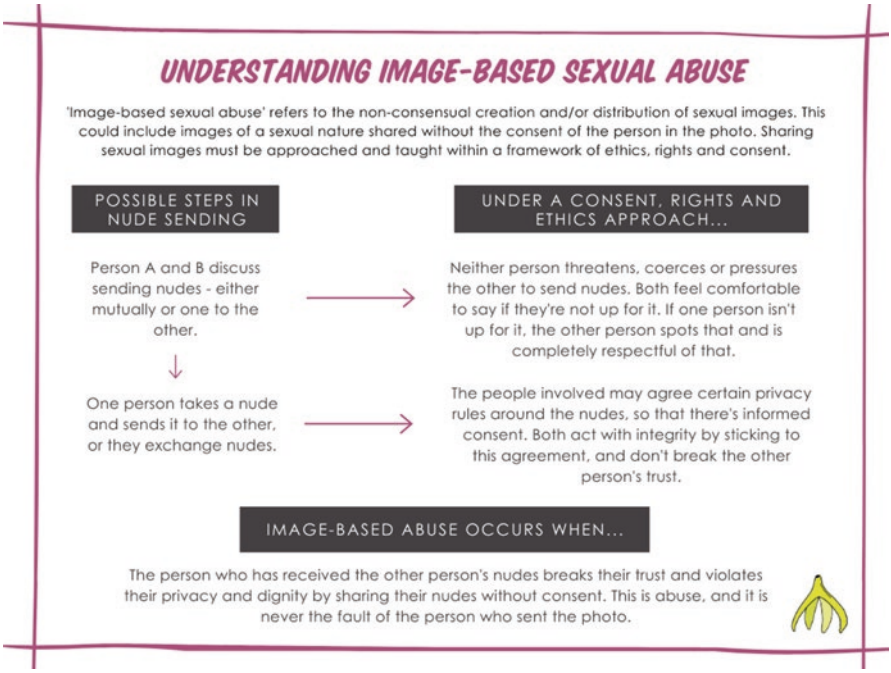


Image 4 Lesson slide on image-based sexual abuse (The School of Sexuality Education lesson plan graphics are reproduced with consent of Amelia Jenkinson CEO and further information and guidance can be found on their website: https://schoolofsexed.org)

Finally, after we introduce these key steps in digital consent, we also offer students advice which they may have never before received about how to report to an authority beyond the school or parents if they experience image based sexual abuse. We signpost platforms such as the 'Internet Watch Foundation' which can work to remove sexual images of under 18 s from the internet. This information can be a real shift for the young people depending on the context and their awareness of gender inequity. At SEL Academy, the information opened up conversation and concerns they had been unable to discuss previously. For instance, one young person wanted to know if they reported abuse did the schools or authorities have to report it to their parents? From these conversations, we can glean just how important it is for safe

and anonymous reporting for young people to empower them to be able to use tools to enact the shift to understanding and taking image based sexual abuse seriously and contending with it in contemporary youth digital sexual cultures.

Workshopping How to Be a Digital Feminist Activist

Another critical element of our lesson plans is aimed at helping young people to understand feminism and mobilise gender-based activism, through creative uses of digital media particularly in the face of anti-feminist resistance, gender trolling (Mantilla, 2013) and harassment which we outlined in the earlier sections of the chapter. Taking stock of the strategies described by the feminist girls in our research, we developed a lesson plan enabling young people to explore the idea of political voice through first sharing a range of activist work: live tweeting, hashtag campaigns, group Instagram pages, memes and artwork, vlogs and blogs. The lessons explore the merits of different activist tactics and social media spaces, and how anonymity, multiple accounts and closed group chats can help to protect personal safety and wellbeing when you speak out on a political issue and could be attacked as we saw was the case from the girls in North West Mixed Comprehensive School. We piloted these lessons over a two-day session at South West Comprehensive. The school is in a rural location, and the students were all white and aged 13–16. The teacher had selected students to attend who they thought might be particularly interested in the session; it was a mixed gender group of girls, boys and trans gender young people. Having two days to work on these issues with young people presented a unique extended period to explore feminism and the possibilities of youth activism.

At the beginning of the sessions, when we asked, "what is feminism", many initial responses centred around how "feminist" is used as an insult. One student said, "if a picture of an angry looking woman is shown in class, people will say, 'oh they're a raging feminist'". There was a sense that if you used feminism to describe yourself, people would make negative assumptions about you. One student also mentioned anti-feminism on the internet; she described videos that are staged but people might not think they are, showing "feminists doing extreme things". We asked whether they'd heard of Men's Rights Activism and a lot of people said yes. From here, we looked at a series of case studies drawn from the feminist group at North West Mixed Comprehensive Secondary, outlined above. The case studies include girls challenging rape jokes online on Facebook, girls challenging sexist uniform code through Twitter hashtagging, and experiences of anti-feminist threads and harassment and trolling online. Exploring real-life examples derived from research with young people resulted in interesting discussions of similarities and differences in their own experiences. We also offered examples of positive and affirmative activism in school settings to challenge these dynamics, including some activism on Twitter and Tumblr, such as creating signs and posters to challenge rape

culture, with sayings like “I need feminism because when I’m a slut, he’s a lad” and “I need feminism because I don’t want to ‘take it as a compliment’”.

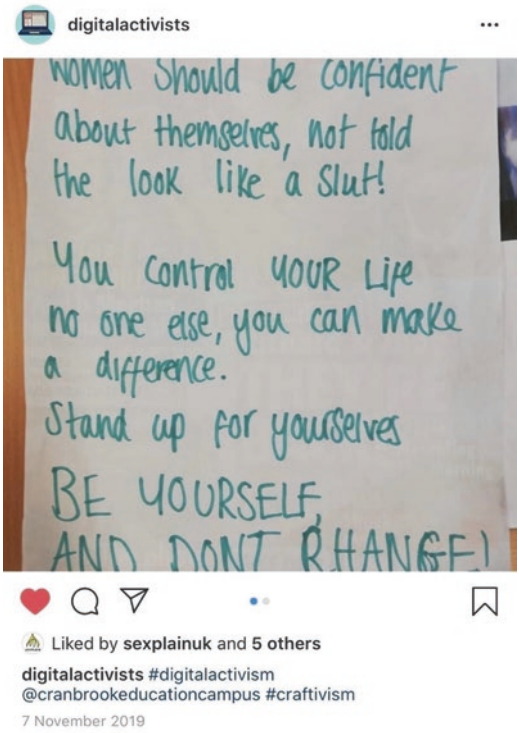
Finally, after exploring different types of digital activism, we showed them how to design memes for the image-sharing platform, Instagram. Over both days, students logged in and posted on a digital activism Instagram account (@digitalactivists) which the group jointly created through the participatory methods made for the workshops.

One student was particularly adept at making memes, noting it was something she often did in her spare time. Another girl made body positivity posts on Instagram and shared one which she had already made on the @digitalactivists Instagram account. Another group of girls started a body positivity Instagram page (linked to on the @digitalactivists account). Although this was a mixed gender group, the three boys were much quieter than the girls and broadly less engaged in the activism. Despite this, the students worked together to generate some activist memes, led by the most engaged girls within the group. What follows are a few salient examples of the range of content that they designed which creatively responds to everyday rape culture, sexual harassment, slut shaming and denials of sexual violence and toxic, entitled masculinity.

In the example above the young people are drawing attention to the everyday banality of rape culture and sexual harassment in public – referred to as street harassment. The simplicity of the statement works to underscore the validity of the claim; that in their current context a day without cat calling is ‘impossible’ to

imagine. The meme calls for an alternate imaginary of a world where this may be possible. This meme was developed by a small group of four girls within the workshop who initially discussed the issues they collectively face and the things they'd like to fight back against.

In the next example, the girls make a handmade sign, complete with typos, in order to protest being told they 'look like a slut'.



The fundamental dynamic of being sexualised and objectified and having one's appearance the subject of scrutiny rather than male behaviour is at the centre of this messaging. The girls invoke women and girls to 'stand up for themselves' 'be yourself' 'don't change'. This neoliberalising focus on the individual invokes confidence as a magical quality, with limited acknowledgement of the impact of socially unjust structures of women's lives (Ringrose, Tolman, Ragonese, 2018). Nonetheless, the girls are exploring possibilities for resistance and fighting back against unfair sexual double standards and slut shaming endemic in rape culture.

In the final meme, we can see how the young activists build on the gender theory and concepts of toxic masculinity discussed in the workshops and the prevalence of reversals of victimisation in rape culture myths such as those that promote high rates of false rape allegations, to challenge what Lingard (2003) has called in educational contexts "recuperative masculinity politics". This is where men are considered the new victims of gender shifts, such as logics around 'failing boys'. The girls use a global figure of toxic masculinity – Donald Trump – to point out the problems with the 'men as victims' paradigm which is particularly strong in Men's Rights Activism discourses online (Ging, 2017). In the image Trump is represented as 'mansplaining' men's victim status, while the Finnish president Sauli Niinistö, who represents women looks away in exasperation.

Towards the end of this lesson, we also emphasised the importance of self-care, how to spot the signs that you should take a break from your activism, and how to navigate the heavy role of being the 'spokesperson' for feminism. Through this, we hope to support teen feminists to develop personalised activist strategies that are the most manageable, efficient and impactful they can be.

A common challenge which we face in these sessions is preventing the experienced feminists in the class from doing additional emotional/activist labour during discussions. We are often conscious of the effort expended by girls to educate their (largely cis male) peers about sexism. Whilst we as facilitators can of course take on that task for them, we have to judge when they want to be the ones to do the challenging and when they don't. We also face the difficulty of having to decide when a comment or a question falls into hate speech territory (Ging & Siapera, 2019), and therefore is inappropriate to engage with as a legitimate point for discussion. Our facilitators aim to mitigate against and manage this through raising these as potential issues from the start, and clearly laying out systems that we will use to maintain a safe space for all, including expectations from participants which can be referenced back to when required.

Conclusion

This chapter has documented some of the challenges of persistent rape culture in schools and online and tracked how some young people are responding to this through reporting on our in depth ethnographic research of a London secondary school feminist group. Having isolated key rape culture discourses that materialise for girls at school, we also showed the girls developing activist feminist consciousness through their online engagements. Taking our cue from the "pedagogy of the concept" (Rentschler, 2014) – the showing of *what rape culture is and tactics of resistance* modelled by the teen feminists in our research - we next outlined

resources we developed to spiral out this resistance through pedagogical engagements in two further schools with wider groups of young people. The aim of our workshop sessions and resources is to open up debate and understandings of rape culture and sexual violence and harassment at school and online with young people through lesson plans that responded directly to the issues raised in the original research.

Given the challenging topics it addresses, our lesson plan programme is reliant on good relationships with schools and a supportive teacher or ally within the school. We face the challenge of needing to build a rapport with institutions and senior leaders to reach young people and support them given the lessons will; likely be critiquing the institutional rules and regulations (e.g. their school uniform policy, their sexting policies). It is the most conservative institutions where this intervention is most needed, We are also aware that we may inadvertently demoralise students by highlighting issues which can be difficult to immediately change or solve, such school enforced gender binary uniform policies or the focus on girls not to 'sext' given the current criminalisation of all youth sexual images ; rather than an understanding of non-consensual sharing and image based sexual abuse online. As a team we navigate this by highlighting to schools how the programme promotes children's rights, digital citizenship, equity, diversity and empowerment, notions which most institutions can get behind. We have also found that training staff in how to expand the Digital Defence classes into their whole-school approach, by aligning policies, procedures and role modelling by staff is critical.

Overall, we have shown how our digital defence and activism strategies offer some concrete tools for addressing rape culture such as engaging with debates on key topics like rape myths, slut shaming, victim blaming and toxic masculinity. We demonstrated some of the challenges of teaching this content but the need to persevere as these sessions may be the first-time young people have ever encountered an analysis of sexism, sexual double standards, sexual harassment and rape culture in society and online. We also discussed the ongoing challenges of creating and sustaining feminist gender-based activisms that challenge rape culture in schools. Through designing an in-depth programme based on teen feminists' experiences and ideas, we are aiming, however, to create contexts in schools where young people, teachers, parents and the entire community can see that calling out rape culture and empowering young feminist activisms is valued and valuable social justice work, which deserves to be taken seriously.

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Chapter 10
Heteronormative Violence in Schools: Focus on Homophobia, Transphobia and the Experiences of Trans and Non-heterosexual Youth in Finland

Jukka Lehtonen

Introduction

Young lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) youth can face various kinds of violence, such as physical, psychological or mental, verbal, sexual or religious/spiritual violence, or threats of violence in their lives. This can limit their ability to be themselves and express their gender and sexuality the way they want, in schools and elsewhere (see Blackburn, 2012; DePalma & Atkinson, 2009). In this chapter I will analyse the experiences of violence encountered by non-heterosexual and trans youth in Finland.[1] I focus particularly on their experiences of violence in schools, and I will ask how sexuality, gender and the norms around them are linked to the violence they experience.

When violence towards LGBT people is analysed, the focus is often on homo- or transphobic violence, and the rest of the violence they face is not concentrated on so much. In this chapter, I criticise this practice and also analyse the violence that cannot be clearly described as homo- or transphobic, or as violence motivated by a person's sexual orientation or gender identity or how they express gender. In my

[1] My current research focus is on a diverse group of non-heterosexual and trans youth and their experiences of education and work environments, as well as on texts, such as school books, curricula documents, media, and research reports, and how intersectional differences and normativities are constructed in them, within the project *Social and Economic Sustainability of Future Working Life: Policies, Equalities and Intersectionalities in Finland* WeAll (2015–2020), which is funded by the Academy of Finland (Strategic Research Funding number 292883). More info: weallfinland.fi. I am thankful for the valuable comments for this chapter to Jon Ingvar Kjaran, Elina Lahelma, Ylva Odenbring and Thomas Johansson.

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Y. Odenbring, T. Johansson (eds.), *Violence, Victimisation and Young People*, Young People and Learning Processes in School and Everyday Life 4,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75319-1_10

analysis, I utilise the point of view of gender and sexuality. I will also discuss the problems with using homophobia or transphobia as a concept in analysing violence towards LGBT people. The conceptualisation is meaningful, when analysing gender- and sexuality-based or related violence, while with the concepts we open and limit what we will see, and that will affect how we look at the reality and act against violence (see Hearn, 1998).

By non-heterosexual, I mean a qualitative term used to describe a person, who has sexual emotions or practices directed at their own gender, or a self-definition that refers to these emotions or practices (such as lesbian, gay, or bisexual). Trans refers to a person who challenges the gendered norms and expectations in that the gender they were designated with at birth contradicts the gender they identify with or express. In this chapter, by transmasculine is meant a person who was assigned female at birth, and with transfeminine is meant a person who was assigned male at birth, but who defined themselves later as trans or otherwise questioned their expected gender identity.

I use the concept of heteronormativity to refer to a way of thinking or reacting that refuses to see diversity in sexual orientation and gender, and that considers a certain way of expressing or experiencing gender and sexuality to be better than another (Lehtonen, 2003). This includes normative heterosexuality and gender normativity, according to which only women and men are considered to exist in the world. Men are supposed to be masculine in the "right" way and women feminine in the "right" way. According to heteronormative thinking, gender groups are internally homogeneous and each other's opposites, and hierarchical in that men and maleness are considered more valuable than women and femaleness. The heterosexual maleness of men and the heterosexual femaleness of women are emphasised and are understood to have biological origins (cisnormativity). Either the existence of other sexualities or genders is denied, or they are considered worse than the options based on heterosexuality and a dualistic gender system (see also Rossi, 2006; Martinsson & Reimers, 2008; Butler, 1990).

An undesirable, even silent place for non-heterosexuality and trans experience thus forms in a community where a person is normatively expected or hoped to be heterosexual (normative heterosexuality) and to realise behaviours that are in line with gender norms (gender normativity) (see Lehtonen, 2003). Heteronormativity is not the same around the world, but constructed differently based on time, location and culture, and it is connected to other normativities (related to race, age, class and so on). I also use the concepts of homo- and transphobia, when I specifically aim to describe the individual-level acts, such as hate speech, violence, or reactions, which are motivated by sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. I see both of them as being explainable by heteronormativity.

The data for the analysis comes from the research project "Wellbeing of rainbow youth". This was a joint project of the Finnish lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) human right organisation Seta and the Finnish Youth Research Network (Alanko, 2013; Taavetti, 2015). I was a member of the group that planned the survey questionnaire and commented on the reports, and was able to use the data for my own research. My focus is on non-heterosexual and trans youth under

30 years old (N = 1861). The non-heterosexual respondents group (N = 1374) was clearly larger than the trans respondents group (N = 487). I divided respondents among these groups based on the interpretation of gender at the time of their birth, to make it possible to analyse what gender has to do with their experiences. In these diverse groups, people have many kinds of gendered identities and express gender in various ways, but they were typically brought up according to the assumption of their gender at the time of their birth. The four groups in my analysis are: (1) non-heterosexual men (N = 380), (2) non-heterosexual women (N = 994), (3) transmasculine youth (N = 404), and (4) transfeminine youth (N = 83).

There were several open questions about violence, to which participants of the survey could respond with their stories or answers. After replying to questions about experiences of different types of violence (physical, mental, sexual and spiritual), respondents had the chance to write freely about their experiences. I use the same terms in the analysis as were used in the survey. These terms were not defined for the respondents, so they could have understood them differently. Mental violence could be translated as psychological violence as well, and many young respondents described acts of non-physical verbal violence and harassment when talking about mental violence. Spiritual violence was referred to as violence related to religion, or violence in a religious context. In the question, they were asked to tell about their experiences (if they wanted to) and of how they survived and what consequences there had been. There were altogether 502 stories or answers to questions.[2] More stories were told about physical and mental violence compared to sexual and spiritual violence. For this chapter, I selected a few of the stories in which violence in schools were discussed.

The survey was collected from all willing to take part, and it is not a statistically representative sample. It is however the largest ever survey of young non-heterosexual and trans youth in Finland, and also the largest ever survey of trans persons in the country. I used mixed methods, analysing the survey data with descriptive statistics and the stories using content analysis. I analysed how non-heterosexual and trans youth answered the survey questions on different type of violence, and whether sexual orientation and gender identity/expression had anything to do with how they replied. I analysed gendered and sexualised aspects of the stories that the participants told about school violence. I asked how heteronormative culture is linked to or expressed in their stories of violence. I analysed the data intersectionally based on age, sexual orientation, gender identity and the presumed gender at birth (see Cho et al., 2013; McCall, 2005).

First, I will discuss the concepts of homophobia, transphobia, heteronormativity and related terms, which are used in analysing violence against LGBT people. Then I will give an overview of the Finnish context in relation to violence against LGBT people, and particularly youth in the school context. Then I will explain what was discovered in the survey data. After that, I analyse young people's stories of their

[2] There were more stories by non-heterosexual respondents (N = 335) than trans respondents (N = 167). Fewer non-heterosexual men (N = 116) and transfeminine respondents (N = 18) answered these questions compared to non-heterosexual women (N = 219) and transmasculine respondents (N = 149).

experiences of violence in schools. In the conclusion, I come back to the conceptual discussion and ask how our research choices limit or open up opportunities to understand violence towards LGBT youth, and what could be done differently both in research and in the education system.

Homophobic, Transphobic and Heteronormative Violence

The term homophobia was used in the 1960s in the United States in various ways, but George Weinberg's *Society and the Healthy Homosexual* in 1972 made the concept better known (see Weinberg, 1972; Fone, 2000; Sears, 1997). Afterwards there have been many terms used in relation to violence against LGBT people: gay/faggot/queer bashing, anti-gay/lesbian violence, gay-hatred, sexual terrorism, sexual orientation victimisation, bias/hate/prejudice motivated crime/violence (Tiby, 1999; Murray, 2009). A typical homophobic incident in many studies is a case in which one or more (drunk) men beat up a gay man in public place, and often men are found to face greater homophobia than women. The violence linked to homophobia was thus constructed in a male-centred fashion. Homophobia has been used to describe violence against LGB and sometimes T (trans) people, though there has been a need to find a more specifically focused terms to analyse phobia against LBT people: and lesbophobia, biphobia and transphobia have been used (see Hutchins & Kaahumanu, 1991; Denny, 1994; Sears, 1997).[3] Even heterophobia has been used, in analysing feminist discourses in which men and heterosexuality are constructed as enemies (Patai, 1998). Often, violence against LGBT persons has been analysed using the concept *violence based on/motivated by person's sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression*. In research where this has been the case, the topic has typically been violence against LGBT people, and not against heterosexual and cis-gendered people, even if the concepts include this possibility.

The concept of homophobia has been criticised by many (see among others Sedgwick 1990; Adam, 1998; Wickberg, 2000; Lehtonen, 2002; O'Brien, 2008; Murray, 2009; Smith et al. 2012). It is seen as too individualistic, psychological and medical. The focus in defining the term lay originally in negative emotions, such as hatred and (irrational) fears, of a person or people towards (known or presumed) LGBT persons (self or others). The structural and societal problems or negative attitudes and practices that caused or created space for homophobic reactions and emotions were then neglected. Later the concept was used in many ways to define negative attitudes towards LGBT rights; discriminatory policies, institutions or even countries or continents (Africa as homophobic, see Jungar & Peltonen, 2016) have been labelled as homophobic, if these have maintained practices that are seen as problematic in relation to LGBT issues.

[3] Also intersexphobia or interphobia, but in this chapter I focus on LGBT people and not on intersex people. See Lehtonen (2017).

The many ways of using the concept of homophobia and the different connections given to the term (it has been explained by gender-based violence or sexism) have created a need to invent new expressions around the term. There is talk of homophobias, in the plural, for example when researchers seek to emphasize the various sources of fear or hate of LGBT people (Fone, 2000), or when they analyse how homophobia is constructed differently in various cultural contexts (Murray, 2009). Different levels of homophobia have been noted to exist: personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural (Blumenfeld, 1992). Hate towards trans persons has been seen to be constructed from genderism, transphobia and gender bashing (Willoughby et al., 2011).

Some people, mainly in Western liberal discourse, see homophobia as a key issue alongside racism and sexism (Wickberg, 2000). However, the other two are more societal concepts from the start, and they include the possibility of unequal attitudes in anybody, though they are also often used when underprivileged groups are targeted, such as black people and women (Kulick, 2009). Homophobia is also seen to be used in a universalistic way, so that the human subject of the story is seen as constant and unchanged regardless of the time or location (Wickberg, 2000). Thus it fails to take into account racialised, classed, gendered and other social hierarchies (Manalansan, 2009; O'Brien, 2008).

Homophobia as a research concept has been used in problematic ways without being located within larger societal contexts, which has resulted in weak research designs, and that has been one reason to use the term heterosexism instead (Smith et al., 2012). Heterosexism became a more popular concept among feminist writing in the 1970s and 1980s. Often it meant an addition to sexism, and was used to speak of the privileged position of heterosexuality or heterosexual couples, sex, or persons compared to other possibilities. Sometimes the concept also included, by definition, negative attitudes towards or fears of homosexuality, or was used to cover both normative heterosexuality and sexism. Viewing heterosexism as an aspect of a broader ideology of gender and sexuality, Gregory Herek (1990, 2004) distinguishes between cultural (worldview) and psychological (internalisation of this worldview) heterosexism. Heterosexism and its related concepts (compulsory heterosexuality, heteropatriarchy, heterosexual contract, heterosexual matrix, heterosexual hegemony, heteronormativity etc.) were developed to understand norms, ideologies, institutional practises and constructions around sexuality and gender (see Butler, 1990; Lloyd, 2013). Often these aim to describe broader societal aspects. They do not often fit well in analysis of the emotions, such as fear or hate, towards LGBT people in incidents of violence, unless the emotions are understood to be based on the cultural context and formed within heterosexist discourse (see Ahmed, 2014).

My own position on homophobia, transphobia, and other gendered and sexualised violence experienced by LGBT people is based on the acknowledgment that there are no perfect terms to fully describe every aspect of the various kinds of violence faced by non-heterosexual and trans people. In this chapter I will both critically use the concepts of homophobia and transphobia in a strict sense, relating to violence motivated by person's known or presumed sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, and enlarge the analysis on other types of violence related to

heteronormativity. I define heteronormative violence as violence that is argued with or influenced by a heteronormative understanding of gender and sexuality or that aims to maintain heteronormativity. Homo- and transphobic violence are specific aspects of heteronormative violence.

Violence Against Non-heterosexual and Trans Youth in Schools in Finland

Finland is a Nordic welfare state, with a public and free education system that emphasises equality, at least on the level of education politics and documents (Kjaran & Lehtonen, 2017). The Equality and Non-Discrimination Act was renewed in 2014 (and came into force in January 2016), to strengthen equality and non-discrimination in education, workplaces and elsewhere. Accordingly, all schools and educational institutions must have a plan to address gender equality as well as anti-discrimination (also against discrimination based on sexual orientation). The framework of this renewed legislation covers trans people well (gender identity and expression). Many educational institutions do not fully comply with the law and have not changed their relevant policies. This planning should include ideas and plans on how to support trans and non-heterosexual students, and on how to prevent bullying, harassment and unfair treatment of LGBT students. Non-violence policies and programmes exist, but LGBT youth are often not taken into account at all, or only marginally.

The national research survey on violence against children has not covered violence from the point of view of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression in Finland. Based on the survey in 2013, most crimes reported to police were acts of physical violence (75%), and in these cases most of the victims were boys (70%) (Humppi, 2008; Fagerlund et al., 2014). These were typically physical violence cases in which boys faced violence from other boys in schools or other youth settings. Sexual violence was also reported to police (20% of all reported cases), and the victims in these crimes were mostly girls (87%). The national youth crime survey did not ask for respondents' sexual orientation or gender-identity/expression, but hate crimes were analysed (Näsi, 2016). Ten percent of respondents had experienced a hate crime, and of these 9% reported that the motivation for the crime was sexual orientation. Studies covering victims' experiences of violence in general do not cover the issues of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, so there is very little information on the frequency of violence faced by LGBT people, and particularly of homo- and transphobic violence (Peura et al., 2009). The issue of violence against LGBT people is still little researched in Finland (see also Lehtonen, 2007a, b; Hiitola et al. 2005; Telakivi et al., 2019).

In 2017, the national school health survey finally began to ask respondents their sexual orientation and gender identity, and about 5% of respondents were found to be trans and about 10% non-heterosexual (out of tens of thousands of respondents

altogether).[4] It was found that non-heterosexual youth experienced violence significantly more often in upper secondary education compared to heterosexual youth (Luopa et al., 2017; Ikonen, 2019). Violence was experienced more often in vocational upper secondary education than in general upper secondary education and non-heterosexual boys experienced violence more frequently than girls. In the 2017 survey, 16% of non-heterosexual boys faced bullying at least once a week in vocational education, which is clearly more often than heterosexual boys (3%) or non-heterosexual girls (4%) in vocational education, or non-heterosexual boys (7%) in general upper secondary education. Non-heterosexual boys had experienced the threat of physical school violence in vocational (27%) slightly more often than in general upper secondary education (22%), but over 10% points more often than heterosexual boys (14% and 12%) (Luopa et al., 2017).[5] Trans respondents (N = 1140) in general upper secondary education experienced school violence clearly more often (32%) than cisgender respondents (11%); and they also experienced gender-based violence radically more often (21%) than cisgender students (2%) (Ruuska, 2019). Trans respondents had been bullied on a weekly basis in basic education (23%, N = 3552) more often than in vocational (15%, N = 706) or in general (6%, N = 1122) upper secondary education (Ikonen, 2019).[6] Trans respondents experienced this kind of violence clearly more often than non-heterosexual youth.

The issues of violence are covered in some surveys and other research projects, which have focused on LGBT issues, but in these the topic of violence has been just one aspect.[7] In the Finnish research homophobia and transphobia are not typically used as terms to define the violence faced by LGBT people, but it is analysed with more neutral terms such as violence against LGBT or violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression. In the school environment, homophobic name-calling and bullying based on gender non-conformity have been acknowledged

[4] In 2017 survey, the question on sexual orientation was directed only at students studying in upper secondary institutions, but students of basic education were also asked their gender identity (grade eight and nine); in the 2019 survey basic education students were also asked their sexual orientation.

[5] Non-heterosexual girls' figures were smaller than those of the boys (17% had experienced threats of physical violence in vocational and 10% in general upper secondary education), but greater than those of heterosexual girls (11% in vocational and 6% in general upper secondary education).

[6] In the 2019 survey, non-heterosexual respondents also experienced bullying on a weekly basis more often in basic education (15%, N = 7636) than in vocational (9%, N = 1758) or general (3%, N = 4457) upper secondary education.

[7] In the early eighties the first survey was performed to cover LGB people's experiences and social situation in Finland (Grönfors et al., 1984). It was discovered that every sixth gay or bisexual man had faced violence based on their sexual orientation. Lesbian and bisexual women had faced violence based on sexual orientation clearly less often. In the early 2000s a work environment study was produced (Lehtonen & Mustola, 2004, see also Lehtonen, 2014), in which it was found that 12% of sexual minorities and 8% of trans people had experienced bullying based on their sexual orientation or gender identity/expression at their workplaces. In an earlier interview study, it was discovered that out of the 64 men who were interviewed on issues around safer sex and HIV, 17% had faced violence based on their sexual orientation (Lehtonen, 1999).

as typical phenomena in many school cultures in several studies (Lehtonen, 2002, 2010, 2014; Lehtonen et al., 2014). Even in the research on homophobic name-calling in schools, the term homophobia was not used, but in Finnish language it is covered by a local term, "homottelu" (substantive) or "homotella" (verb) meaning to call someone a "homo" (Lehtonen, 2002).

During recent years studies have been performed by the European Union, which have also covered the experiences of Finnish respondents on violence (FRA, 2009, 2014a, b). The main survey study revealed that the majority (68%) of Finnish respondents had heard negative comments or insults at school caused by being LGBT. In the EU, every fourth LGBT person had faced violence during the last 5 years and 10% during the last year. Almost half of the Finnish respondents (48%) reported that the last incident of violence during the last 12 months had happened partially or completely because they were perceived to be LGBT. Gay men and trans people reported this more often than lesbians and bisexuals. So it seems that almost half of the violence experienced by LGBT people in Finland is hate-based. Out of Finnish LGBT respondents, 18% reported that they had faced hate-motivated harassment during the last year. Police were not informed about the hate crimes people faced: the last hate-motivated crime experienced by Finnish LGBT people was reported to police by only 1% of the respondents. Less than one in six (16%) of the most recent incidents of hate-motivated violence that had occurred to respondents in the last 12 months were brought to the attention of the police. This does not automatically lead the police to record these crimes in general, or specifically as hate-based. The "Being Trans" survey found that 4% of Finnish trans respondents had faced hate-motivated violence and 20% harassment based on their being trans (or presumed trans) during the last 12 months (FRA, 2014b).

Only three research surveys have covered experiences of violence on LGBT youth (Huotari et al., 2011; Kankkunen et al., 2011, Alanko, 2013). A survey on LGBT students' experiences in upper secondary education discovered that 63% of the respondents had observed mental violence or bullying based on belonging to sexual or gender minorities in school, and that 36% of the respondents had been bullied themselves (Huotari et al., 2011). Gender minority youth had experienced bullying more often than sexual minority youth, and it was more typical in vocational than general upper secondary education. Another report published by the Ministry of Interior Affairs discovered that over half of sexual minority youth had experienced name-calling related to sexual orientation (Kankkunen et al., 2011). A survey on LGBT youth, which is also used as data in this chapter, found out non-heterosexual youth had experienced physical, mental and sexual violence and different kinds of harassment more often than heterosexual youth, and trans youth more often than cis-gendered youth who responded to the survey (Alanko, 2013).

Violence Experienced by Non-heterosexual and Trans Youth

A majority of the young non-heterosexual and trans youth who took part in the survey have experienced some kind of negative behaviour towards them, and not only during their life in general but also during the last year. Most of them live in social and cultural settings where they are likely to meet people who act in violent or otherwise insulting ways. The settings can be of many kinds, but the violent or unjustifiable behaviour often happens at home within the family, at school, within intimate relationships, and in other settings such as on the street and in other public places, bars and night clubs, hobbies and religious groups. These are often places where young people are supposed to spent most of their time and where they should be able to feel safe.

In the survey, non-heterosexual and trans youth were asked if they had experienced physical, mental, sexual or spiritual violence. Trans respondents experienced all four forms of violence more often than non-heterosexual respondents. Non-heterosexual men and transfeminine respondents experienced physical, mental and spiritual violence more often than non-heterosexual women and transmasculine respondents, but non-heterosexual women and transmasculine respondents experienced sexual violence more often. Gender seems to be an important factor in several ways. Boys and young men, as well as those who are thought to be boys or young men (most of the transfeminine respondents over at least a certain period of their life), are more likely to face violence than girls and women. Girls and women (and the ones who were seen to be girls or women such as transmasculine respondents) experienced sexual violence more often than boys and men. So, in this sense, the pattern for non-heterosexual and trans youth is similar to those for other people in the Finnish culture. Gender non-confirming youth seem to be at greater risk of facing violence, which might explain the higher levels of experiences of violence among the trans respondents. I also argue that it is more difficult for presumed boys and men to bend the gender norms than for presumed girls and women, and that might explain the result of transfeminine respondents' higher levels of experiences of violence compared to transmasculine respondents.

The most typical form of violence was mental violence, then physical violence (see Table 10.1). Sexual and spiritual violence were not that common, but many had experiences of those as well.

Table 10.1 The experiences of different types of violence by the four respondent groups during their life (%, N)

Type of violence	Non-het. Young women	Non-het. Young men	Transmasculine youth	Transfeminine youth
Physical	40% (395)	45% (172)	45% (181)	63% (54)
Mental	69% (678)	65% (246)	77% (310)	81% (68)
Sexual	18% (177)	6% (23)	22% (90)	12% (10)
Spiritual	8% (77)	11% (41)	12% (48)	19% (16)

These figures covered the respondents' entire lifetimes, but there was also a question that asked respondents about their experiences of violent or other negative behaviour towards them during the last year (see Table 10.2).

The most typical forms of negative behaviour faced by non-heterosexual and trans youth during the last year were insulting name-calling and teasing and exclusion from groups, which might be practices typical in the school and other educational settings. A minority of the respondents reported other types of negative behaviour. Trans respondents reported negative behaviour more often than non-heterosexual respondents. There were differences and similarities between respondent groups. Non-heterosexual women and transmasculine respondents were more likely to report being left outside friendship circles compared to non-heterosexual men and transfeminine respondents. It could be that, even if boys (or presumed boys) are left outside the circles of other boys, they may find girls to befriend, while the reverse is often not the case for girls (or presumed girls) in similar situations. Most of the other negative behaviour was reported more often by non-heterosexual men and transfeminine respondents than by non-heterosexual women and transmasculine respondents. They faced insulting name-calling (non-heterosexual men) and insulting behaviour via mobiles or Internet (transfeminine respondents) clearly more often.

Even if the figures above can be analysed through gendered and sexual lenses, the experiences are not necessarily linked to the sexual orientation, gender identity or expression of the respondents. In fact, most of the violence faced by non-heterosexual and trans respondents was not reported by them to be linked to their sexual orientation, or gender identity/expression (see Table 10.3).

There were several differences in the types of violence and the respondent group in the meaning of sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression to their experiences of violence. The majority of the experiences of physical violence were not linked to these, but the majority of spiritual violence was. Non-heterosexual men

Table 10.2 The amount of experiences of different types of negative behaviour by the four respondent groups during the last year (12 months) (%, N)

Type of negative behaviour	Non-het. Young women	Non-het. Young men	Transmasculine youth	Transfeminine youth
Insulting name-calling and teasing	54% (427)	62% (232)	62% (247)	65% (54)
Left outside the group	58% (567)	48% (178)	57% (228)	51% (42)
Hit, kicked, pushed	13% (130)	13% (50)	14% (55)	18% (15)
Spread lies about the person in an insulting way	25% (247)	26% (99)	26% (102)	27% (22)
Stolen money or things or things broken	8% (81)	10% (39)	8% (33)	13% (11)
Threatened to or forced to do things	10% (99)	9% (32)	10% (41)	13% (10)
Insulted via mobile or internet	18% (180)	20% (75)	17% (67)	34% (28)

Table 10.3 Reported no linkage of sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression to the experiences of violence by four respondent groups (%, N)

Type of violence	Non-het. Young women	Non-het. Young men	Transmasculine youth	Transfeminine youth
Physical	85% (373)	60% (111)	82% (180)	66% (38)
Mental	64% (468)	42% (113)	48% (155)	41% (28)
Spiritual	39% (40)	29% (14)	45% (26)	28% (5)
Negative behaviour during the last year	76% (690)	58% (203)	60% (221)	42% (34)

and transfeminine respondents felt clearly more often than non-heterosexual women and transmasculine respondents that sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression were meaningful factors in the violence they had faced. One important difference, for example, lies in physical violence: while 40% of non-heterosexual men felt that it was linked to their sexual orientation or gender expression, only 15% out of non-heterosexual women felt so. The majority of non-heterosexual women saw no connection with these factors in all other forms of violence except the spiritual. Trans respondents felt more often than non-heterosexual respondents that these factors were meaningful in explaining the violence or negative behaviour that they had faced.

School as Context of Heteronormative Violence

In the earlier section, I demonstrated that most of the violence experienced by LGBT youth in Finland is neither homophobic nor transphobic. The results were not directly linked to the school context, but I will argue that the same point can be made in the context of school violence. It is relevant to analyse why non-heterosexual and trans youth also face violence or the threat of violence clearly more often than heterosexual and cisgender youth in the school context, even if the majority of the violence they experience is not homophobic or transphobic. (see School health survey, Luopa et al., 2017; Ikonen, 2019).

In the school context, a similar pattern exists as in the overall situation concerning violence experienced by LGBT youth. Non-heterosexual men (27%) faced physical school violence more often than non-heterosexual women (17%) in basic education. Transfeminine respondents (33%) faced physical school violence more often than transmasculine respondents (14%) in upper secondary and tertiary education (16–25 year olds). Contrary to the school health survey (Ikonen, 2019), trans youth in the data I used seemed to experience violence more typically in upper secondary education than in basic education. I explained this by the possibility that trans respondents in my survey data had come out as trans persons in their school at a later stage, in upper secondary education (Lehtonen, 2014). Presumed men are more often at risk of physical violence in schools than presumed women, particularly those who do not fit in the gendered norms (Lehtonen, 2002, 2018). Sexual

violence was also more common in the school context for non-heterosexual women (than men) and for transmasculine respondents (than transfeminine). Presumed women face sexual violence more often than presumed men. Trans youth experienced violence and other problems more often than non-heterosexual youth. They faced weekly or daily experiences of violence (7.5%) more commonly than non-heterosexual youth (5%).

A central point in understanding the violence experienced by LGBT youth is gender and the norms around it. If you do not fit into the heteronormative culture with its gender-normative and cisnormative understanding of gender and normative heterosexuality, you are likely to be excluded and left without friends and support networks, and you are likely to feel outside and not fit in with the group. I would argue that this is a key to understanding the differences of experiences of violence between non-heterosexual and heterosexual youth, between trans and cisgender youth, and between (presumed) girls and boys. Homophobic and transphobic motivations only partially explain these differences, but normative culture around sexuality and gender are still meaningful factors in explaining the rest of the differences. It is easier to choose as a victim of threat of violence, or physical and mental violence, a person who do not have friends to support them, or who does not fit into the group, or who does not seem to like the same things or value the same things the way that the perpetrator of violence thinks they should. For women and for presumed women (many transmasculine youth in school context) sexist culture makes them more likely to become victims of sexual harassment and violence by men.

These points were supported by the analysis of the stories told by non-heterosexual and trans youth in the survey. In some of the stories they expressed that the violence they experienced in school was homo- or transphobic, but often it was more complicatedly linked to norms around proper gender expression.

> *In the 7th grade, two or three 9th grade boys bullied me ruthlessly every day, and that was while I had, and still have, natural curly long hair. The teachers were either blind or somehow did not want to react. I did not dare to seek help outside while I was afraid that it would get worse if I would"rat about it" and"be unmasculine".* (transfeminine young respondent)

> *In basic education, boys did not tolerate homosexuality and it was experienced as the worst possible thing. The atmosphere was so negative that no-one could be openly gay. "Homo" was the most typical and worst word to be shouted at you. The teachers did not react, even if there was negative discussion on homosexuality in the classroom or if it was used in bullying. In high school, the bullying was not so obvious. There was not so much homo* [phobic, homottelu*] name-calling, but openly gay people like me were left out of straight men's friendship circles and contacts with gay people were avoided. Most of my friends were women and other gay men.* (non-heterosexual young man)

Homophobic (or transphobic, or heteronormative) name-calling is not directed only towards LGBTI youth but towards anybody or everything (Lehtonen, 2002, 2003, 2010): a broken machine in vocational education could be called "homo". I have analysed it as a central way to construct proper heteronormative masculinities for boys in school context. In my earlier research, I found that youth reported that "sometimes homophobic name-calling was not targeted towards known gay people while they might get insulted, and it was only used between straight boys" (see

Pascoe, 2007; Odenbring, 2019). But of course, especially for LGBTI youth, hearing negative homophobic reactions and name-calling creates an unpleasant atmosphere, even if they are not the direct targets. It might be sometimes difficult to explain using homophobia or transphobia how friendship networks are created in schools, but typically gender and shared values are clearly connected to it. Distancing yourself from openly gays or trans persons can also be a way to secure your own position in the classroom even if you don't have homophobic or transphobic feelings.

In the stories, it also came out that trans persons had often experienced homophobic reactions and non-heterosexual youth gender-based harassment and bullying in which gendered expressions were used in insulting ways (calling non-heterosexual boys "Miss" or "bitch").

> *I have been discriminated against and experienced occasional bullying by boys, while they see me as an aggressive tomboy and think right away that I am a hyper feminist truck driver lesbian, when in reality I would want to be a boy in their group.* (transmasculine young respondent)

> *In the upper secondary education one student went after me. This person spread my photos over the net in a nasty way, commented on my net diary anonymously by referring me as a "fucking lesbian" and always corrected the name I used to my official name, even if s/he* [in Finnish gender neutral pronoun hän] *knew that I hate it. Even when my name was written on the blackboard, s/he wipe it out and wrote my official name there. The constant bullying and putting down of my identity was too difficult to handle when connected to my fairly difficult depression, and I dropped out of education, even if I would have otherwise enjoyed my training and I would have wanted to finish my studies.* (transmasculine young respondent)

Striking elements in the stories of non-heterosexual and trans youth are the fact that violence and exclusion can have so many negative effects on young people's lives, and that in these stories teachers often did not react actively to prevent the violence faced by LGBT youth.

There are also other intersecting aspects than gender, sexuality and age to be taken into account in analysing violence LGBT youth experience. LGBT youth who are racialised or differently abled are more likely to be victimised by violence. I have not analysed these aspects, but in my research I found out that locality and social class are meaningful aspects (see Lehtonen, 2018). Youth living in rural areas were more likely than those living in cities to both hide their sexuality and gender from other students and their teachers at school, but they also faced negative reactions to their sexuality and gender identity more often than respondents living in cities (see also Odenbring, 2019). Respondents with working-class backgrounds faced violence more often than those with middle-class backgrounds. This was related to the fact that working-class students are more likely to choose to study in highly gender-segregated vocational education compared to the middle-class students, who were more likely to be in general upper secondary education, where there is less bullying in general. (Lehtonen, 2018).

The use of violence in schools is highly gendered, and sometimes sexualised. Men were more often actors in violence in general (controlling boys, girls and

others through physical violence and the threat of it), especially in sexual violence towards girls or presumed girls (transmasculine respondents). Homo- and transphobic violence was performed, because gendered and sexual norms were broken by LGBTI youth and others, and this was policed by violence. Respondents also told stories of how they had been controlled and policed based on their gender; this type of gendered violence was probably experienced by LGBTI youth more often than by other youth, as they were more likely to stretch these norms. LGBTI youth might be in a vulnerable position in their schools (feeling and being outside of the groups and their norms, loneliness, mental health issues related to minority stress and body dysphoria and so on); and hence they are easier targets for violence than others. LGBTI youth also face violence based on other reasons (including racism) and can be actors of violence themselves (partially linked to the unjust position they endure). Thus, even if homophobic and transphobic reactions and feelings explain only a minority of the violence experienced by LGBT youth, it is important to analyse the rest of their experiences of violence also from the perspectives of gender, heteronormativity and intersecting differences.

Conclusions and Discussion

Non-heterosexual and trans youth in Finland experience many kinds of violence. Most of the violence they have experienced in their life is neither homophobic nor transphobic, nor based on their sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. By focusing only on homo- and transphobic violence, a major part of violence towards LGBT youth is made invisible. This is particularly problematic when thinking about the experiences of violence of non-heterosexual women and transmasculine respondents who often seem to experience heteronormative but not always homo- and transphobic violence, such as the majority of sexual violence.

I discussed the usefulness and problems in using the concepts of homophobia and transphobia in analysing the stories and data on violence against trans and non-heterosexual youth in education and elsewhere. I argue that they leave out the major part of violence, and also some aspects of violence, which are linked to or based on heteronormative practises. Phobia-related concepts can also create a male-centred image of the violence experienced by LGBTI people, while they leave out of focus many parts of heteronormative violence, which is experienced especially often by girls and presumed girls. They are also psychological and medical concepts, which often focus on individual behaviour and emotions. Often, they do not take into account broader societal issues and contexts such as school culture, teachers' reactions, prevention work, and equality planning.

The focus of interest should be enlarged from homo- and transphobic violence and crimes to all sort of violence towards LGBTI people. This should be done so that the experiences of violence and survival strategies would be analysed from the point of view of heteronormativity. In Finland, as well as elsewhere, better and more efficient methods should be developed to collect data on hate crimes related to

sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, and training organised for police, lawyers, and correctional officials. There should be more research done to cover the frequency and types of violence faced by LGBTI people, and the national surveys should include questions on respondents' sexual orientations and gender identity/expression, as well as questions on LGBTI-specific issues. Intersectional aspects of this type of violence should be acknowledged; it would be vital to keep age, social class, location, cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds, and other intersecting differences in mind (Boonzaier et al., 2015). More research is also needed on the strategies and actions of LGBTI youth in facing violence or the threat of it, and on the services that should be able to help young people when they encounter violence (schools, police, families, social and health services, non-governmental organisations). It would be important to study how things can be changed for the better, and how it is possible to not only effectively help young LGBTI people in surviving experiences of violence, but also how to prevent heteronormative violence in society.

In educational institutions, starting from early childhood education and primary education through to secondary and tertiary education, safety education and violence prevention should be important aspects in how educational institutions construct their learning environments and teaching. Most educational institutions are already required to plan efforts to promote equality and non-discrimination, and many schools have some kind of violence prevention practices. In the future, educational institutions should focus more on heteronormative violence, and make concrete plans on how to tackle it as part of their equality and non-discrimination planning and violence prevention. Unless heteronormativity, homo- and transphobia, and LGBTI issues and experiences are taken care of, these policies and practices will not fully respond to the need to prevent heteronormative violence. But this is not enough: schools and teachers should also ponder how they, along with their students, could create understanding, teaching contents and practices as well as a student culture that would not re-enforce heteronormativity but question and prevent it. This would demolish the arguments and motivation behind heteronormative violence, including homo- and transphobic violence.

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Chapter 11
Epistemic Violence Towards LGBTQ Students in Icelandic High Schools: Challenges and Opportunities for Transforming Schools

Jón Ingvar Kjaran and Brynja Elísabeth Halldórsdóttir Gudjonsson

Introduction

Iceland has often been depicted as a progressive society regarding the issues of gender equality and sexual diversity. According to the latest European Values Survey (2008) and the World Value Survey (2015), the country has been ranked among the highest in Europe in its acceptance of sexuality and gender minorities. Gender equality is also ranked highly, at least according to the latest report by the World Economic Forum (2019). With regard to legal frameworks and protections for sexual and particularly gender minorities, Iceland has not been among the top 10 countries according to the latest ILGA Europe ranking (see ILGA Europe, 2019). This indicates a disjunture in terms of attitudes and social values towards sexual and gender minorities, and the actual legal protection and policy enactment for them. In the educational sphere this appears to be the reverse. Queer theory and non-heterosexuality, are included in the National curriculum guides from 2011, both for compulsory and upper secondary schools (Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture, 2011). In these policy documents the emphasis is on inclusion and that schools should accommodate different identity categories such as ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. In spite of these progressive policies, teacher education and training programs have failed to follow suit. Few courses are offered which specifically address diversity and current pedagogical approaches appear to (re)produce hegemonic values and cultural norms. Furthermore these courses are not required as part of teacher education. Progressive policy at the school level has therefore not been translated into action and enactment in schools and educational settings. Moreover, LGBTQ students and teachers are not visible in schools and educational institutions.

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Y. Odenbring, T. Johansson (eds.), *Violence, Victimisation and Young People*, Young People and Learning Processes in School and Everyday Life 4,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75319-1_11

This indicates that within the educational sphere, non-heterosexuality and gender diversity is silenced. Such silencing of particular knowledges and subjectivities is defined in this study as epistemic violence towards particular marginalized groups.

In this chapter, our aim is to discuss the concept of epistemic violence and how it can be applied when evaluating how LGBTQ students and their realities continue to be excluded within Icelandic educational spaces, specifically in the context of upper secondary schools (high schools). We pose two questions: How is epistemic violence produced and (re)produced within educational institutions, the high school? In what ways do LGBTQ students resist it by claiming a discursive counter-space? We draw on interviews with eight students – age 18–20 years old, coming from middle-class backround and being white – who identify as LGBT/queer to draw attention to how they are silenced within educational spaces, defined here as both physical (classroom and school spaces) and non-physical (classroom curriculum and textbooks), through institutionlized epistemic violence, by which institutions silence and ignore the voices of the queer Other. The interviews were taken by the first author as a part of a larger ethnographic dataset. The students stories presented in this chapter were selected as they exemplify and illustrate how epistemic violence is structured within an upper secondary school setting. After having read and re-read the narratives as they appear in the interview data, we thematized them and coded according to the type of epistemic violence (exclusion, smothering, silencing, misrecognition) described/narrated and where it took place. After that we used narrative analysis to obtain a deeper understanding of the workings of power and oppression depicted in the stories and which subject positions could be detected in the narratives (Frost & Ouellette, 2011; Squire et al., 2014). Furthermore, we draw on queer theory for our analysis, which provides a theoretical framework and perspective both for teachers and researchers in order to bring about changes and to transform education to meet all students needs. This is particularly important within educational contexts where the values of the dominant class and culture are often reproduced and forced upon the "other" (Levinas, 1989). By viewing and analyzing the data in this way, the narrative and the narrative subject within it are constituted by their subject positions which then draw on discursive resources available at the time (Foucault, 1978). The subjects' (the students) stories illustrate the complexity of the relationship between social and school policies and the impact they have on their lived experiences thereby reflecting their experiences within the dominant cultural constructs and allowing us to better understand how subjects are silenced or experience epistemic violence in a school and classroom setting (Fraser, 2004; Fraser & MacDougall, 2017).

Our chapter begins with a discussion of epistemic violence as a concept with a particular focus on how the experiences of marginalized groups, such as sexual and gender minorities, are discursively and institutionally silenced and excluded. In our findings, we provide a several concrete examples of how institutionalized epistemic violence in school and educational settings presents itself. We then discuss ways in which we can possibly encourage and enact changes to transform schools in order to make them more inclusive in terms of diversity, thereby nurturing epistemic justice instead of epistemic violence.

Epistemic Violence

Michel Foucault in his work explored the relationship between power and knowledge, which he bound together with the French term *le savoir-pouvoir* (Foucault, 1978). According to Foucault, power is based on knowledge and in fact uses knowledge to put power into practice or enhance it. Power also produces and reproduces a particular knowledge that can be understood as hegemonic or dominant. In fact, the ruling classes have both in the past and present produced and reproduced particular knowledges or epistemologies in order to convey a particular understanding of the world, which benefits them. One manifestation of this is the colonial system (both past and present) of oppression, which reproduces particular knowledges of the "colonized other" as an object of investigation. At the same time, it defines what kind of knowledge is considered legitimate and constitutive of the dominant epistemological system, which is shaped by and for the dominant classes. Everything outside of the dominant epistemological system is rendered invisible, excluded from the reality, and remains unnamed. In other words, the dominant or hegemonic knowledge of the elites i.e. the ruling classes has through the interrelationship of power-knowledge silenced the "other."

One example of this is how the language of the dominant group and the means of conveying knowledge, and communicating, excludes those that do not belong to the "in-group" and renders them on the margins of the epistemological system. The Indian literary theorist Gaytari Spivak (1994) in her seminal essay "Can the subaltern speak" raises the issue of exclusion and silencing of those in society who are marginalized and powerless, referring particularly to the "colonized other." Titling such silencing epistemic violence, Spivak argues it is inflicted on marginalized groups through the dominant knowledge or epistemological systems and (re)produced by the ruling classes. Hence, epistemic violence entails silencing or erasure of knowledges that do not fit into the dominant or the official epistemologies, which are often rooted in Western worldviews and epistemological traditions. This kind of violence is "exerted against and through knowledge" (Galván-Álvares, 2010), and is manifested in laws, educational policies and curriculum. Through this kind of violence, certain epistemological traditions and knowledges gain legitimacy and reinforce the dominance and privileges of particular groups, most often being white, heterosexual and Western. Paulo Freire (1996) refers to this form of epistemic violence as "cultural invasion," in which the dominant group imposes "… their own view of the world upon those they invade …" (p. 133).

With regards to the study presented in this chapter silencing gender and sexuality outside of the predefined norms within educational settings and in the curriculum is one aspect of epistemic violence. Kristie Dotson (2011) refers to this kind epistemic silencing as testimonial quieting and testimonial smothering. Testimonial quieting occurs when a person is not acknowledged as a knower[1] because they

[1] In the context of this article, the knower is someone who is the keeper of knowledge, understanding and experiences and can give account of such knowledge in an understandable fashion. (Dotson, 2012; Fricker, 2003).

belongs to a particular social group and/or lacks credibility as a knower. Miranda Fricker (2007) uses the term *testimonial injustice* for this kind of epistemic violence in which "… someone is wronged specifically in her capacity as a knower" (p. 20). This kind of injustice is often connected to particular identity categories, whether racial, sexual or gendered identities. As Fricker (2007) has argued this kind of epistemic injustice is a matter "credibility deficit" (p. 21) in which marginalized identities are not given the opportunity to speak about their experiences and thus participate in the knowledge production. The "credibility deficit" arises from power imbalances, which according to Fricker is "directed at a person or a group that has marginalized position in terms of power" (p. 21). Epistemic injustice based on "credibility deficit" is therefore relational as it depends on the situation and the given context. For example, some groups might be constituted as "deficit" in terms of credibility in some context (e.g. within educational settings) but not in others (e.g. in their homes or amongst their peers). What is important here and emphasized by Fricker is that epistemic injustice is connected to prejudices and should therefore be understood as systematic and institutionalized. In that sense systematic testimonial injustice reproduces social injustice based on particular identity categories.

Testimonial smothering, according to Dotson (2011), occurs when the "marginalized other" experiences lack of understanding from the targeted audience. They are not perceived as a subject of knowing and their experiences, background, and culture are perceived as irrelevant to the knowledge system or to knowledge production. Thus, in order to "fit" into the dominant epistemological system the "marginalized other" may "smother" their own testimony or embodied experiences and in that sense silence themselves (Dotson, 2011). For example, epistemic quieting and smothering occurs when queer students do not draw on their experience or can act and behave openly with regards to their gender/sexual identity, when interacting with the dominant culture or institutions, because they know that the audience will not understand their embodied experiences, due to ignorance or lack of education/training, and thus not listen to their arguments. In that sense, the queer other has censored themselves due to lack of epistemological diversity and is thus victimized through the workings of epistemic violence. In this context, they have been excluded from the knowledge community as their epistemic oppression is reproduced. Thus, epistemic exclusion and oppression are manifestations of epistemic violence, which then become institutionalized or systematic within many public institutions, as Fricker (2007) has argued, due to lack of diversity in the production of knowledge. Many LGBTQ students often lack sufficient epistemic resources, those which form the basis of the dominant epistemological system. This is true whether it pertains to the institution of heterosexuality or particular gender performances that are dominant and normalized within particular context. This limits their full participation on an equal basis in the knowledge community and further contributes to their marginalization.

Drawing on Fricker, regarding the harm inflicted by epistemic injustice and violence we argue that: Through epistemic violence the subject, the marginalized other, is undermined as a knower and thus they are perceived as less than fully human.

They are excluded from the knowledge community and depicted as "deficient" in terms of epistemic trust and credibility. These subject positions are thus reproduced discursively and become institutionalized. The "marginalized other" and the "abjected knower" often internalize the epistemic injustice inflicted upon them and starts to believe that they have no worth or value as a knower. They begin to agree with their oppressors that their knowledge is not as valid or important as the hegemonic one and they thus unwittingly participate in their own epistemic oppression. Such internalized prejudices/oppression are similar to what Fanon (1967) considers internalized racism and way that the black persons internalize the value system and attitudes of their oppressor, white Western society. In the case of LGBTQ students, iternalization of the value system and attitudes of the oppressive society, can lead to internalized homophobia/transphobia.

Education as a Site of Epistemic Violence

Education and more specifically schools are a place where "truth" and the master narratives are taught to the detriment of other groups (Gillborn, 2006; Gilroy, 2008). Institutions of education often position themselves as objective disseminators of knowledge. Since Paolo Freire (1968) penned *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* scholars such as bell hooks and Henry Giroux (to name a few), have explored how and in what ways modern education has used the language and power of normalization to label and control those who do not conform to the educational expectations. Critical theories, such as critical race theory, critical pedagogy, and queer theory, question and problematize such claims in light of the hegemonic status of what is taught and what is silenced (Ayers et al., 2008; Britzman, 1995; Gudjonsson, 2018; Noguera, 2008; Pollock, 2005). Critical education scholars argue that rather than seeing the educative space as neutral where the teachers impart knowledge to their students, teachers need to see their students for who they are and what they bring to the school setting in ways that enrich and empower all students. Giroux (1997), Kinshloe et al. (2011), Anyon (2014) among others argue that it is important to see how power and knowledge interact in the creation of the educational sphere and how these create a right way and a wrong way of knowing and thereby commit epistemic violence throughout the teaching and learning process. These theories draw attention to how schools and educational institutions transfer traditions and knowledge of the dominant class/groups within societies, which more often than not revolve around whiteness, heterosexuality, cis-gendered subjectivities, and middle-class values (Brantlinger, 2003; Francis, 2017; Greteman, 2018; Lareu, 2003).

In her seminal works *Teaching to transgress* (2013) and *Teaching community: Pedagogy of Hope*, bell hooks encourages readers to move beyond their epistimologies and understandings of what teaching, learning and education are, to understand how these systems and institutions actually affect the learning experiences. She and other encourages teachers and pedagogs to see their students as individuals

who have and maintain their own identities that need not be left behind when entering the school. In order to do this work however, teachers and school administrators must become aware of how power and certain types of knowledges are privileged within their own lives as well as with in the schools and within the educational system as a whole. Thus these theories require that teachers as agents of knowledge transmission need to be aware of their values and views in order to counter every day epistemic violence towards marginalized students. This is especially salient as they themselves are often white, heterosexual, cis-gender, and come from middle-class homes (Hagerman, 2018; Tatum, 2007). In order to bring into the discussion the silenced and minimized narratives, educational workers and researchers need to actively question what is seen as normal and mainstream, and develop students' ability to critically examine what they are taught, so they can make informed decisions both within an educational context and a more national and global context. Teachers need to draw attention to dominant narratives and how they can be deconstructed in the classroom, but also emphasize the need to nurture counter narratives, those of the silenced and marginalized (Helmer, 2016; Mirza, 1997).

Epistemic Spaces and Power at the Micro Level of Interactions

Our analysis and findings indicate that epistemic violence towards LGBTQ students is sustained and committed within different schools spaces, both physical and non-physical, formal and informal. We define these spaces as *epistemic spaces* where particular knowledges/epistemologies are (re)produced, more than often in line with the dominant *episteme* of society. Within these spaces certain knowledge and truth are constituted as legitimate and are made visible and available, while those assumed to be on the margins are silenced and othered. Through focusing on the *epistemic spaces* of the classroom, the locker room, and and the interpersonal/communicative space between the self and the other, we draw attention to the workings of power at the micro level. How power is inscribed on the bodies and actions/practices of students who do not "fit" in and they are marginalized either because of their sexuality or gender expression is illustrated within the students stories. Within these *epistemic spaces*, particular epistemologies with regards to sexuality and gender are (re)produced and sustained. In this section we begin by exploring the classroom.

The classroom

The participants' narratives illustrate clearly that the dominant epistemology within the classroom in terms of gender and sexuality is consititued within the matrix of heterosexuality. For these students the classroom was experienced as a

heteronormative space where heterosexual and cisgendered bodies are privileged and depicted as the norm. Other sexualities and gender identities are excluded and even silenced, which we interpret here as epistemic violence. As the students revealed this was evident in the curriculum and content of sex education, most textbooks, as well as how teachers interacted with their students and delivered their lessons. Dani, who identifies as a bisexual cisgender woman, shares how she experienced epistemic violence during a language class in German at her school:

> I once turned in a German assignment where we were supposed write about what we had been doing during the weekend. I wrote that I had gone on a date with a girl. I used some girl's name for her and female pronouns. However, when I got the assignment back, my German teacher had changed all of this into a male form. I went to her after the class and told her that these had not been mistakes. She realized quite quickly that she had unwittingly expressed some prejudice.

In Dani's story the German teacher clearly draws on the dominant epistemology of heterosexuality in her assumption that Dani is heterosexual. By correcting the gender pronouns in the story of her weekend date with a girl, the teacher denies Dani recognition, which is, as the philosopher Charles Taylor (1994) notes, a "vital human need" (p. 26). Dani's experience and sexual identity are silenced or "grammatically corrected", and she is excluded from the dominant knowledge community of the classroom. She is unvalued as a subject of knowledge, because of her marginal sexual status. This kind of misrecognition and assumption on the part of the teacher that all or most students are heterosexual is a form of epistemic violence and injustice, which reproduces and sustains "compulsory heterosexuality" and "heteronormativity" within the classroom (e.g. Epstein and Johnson, 1998; Rich, 1980).

Dani refuses to be silenced, and rather than smothering herself she confronts her teacher by pointing out that she did not make "grammatical" mistakes, but that the words were deliberate choices based on her sexuality. Through this Dani expands the grid of intelligibility in regard to her sexuality within the classroom.[2] Her protest is an act of resistance against the heteronormative discourse and compulsory heterosexuality of the classroom. Although Dani identifies as bisexual, and therefore outside of the heteronorm, she speaks from a privileged position, as she comes from a white middle class family. She is quite active in the queer movement in Iceland and has received training on how to respond to homophobic bullying and heterosexist views. This knowledge and these resources made it easier for her to resist and allow her to confront her teacher by pointing out the epistemic violence and injustice she experienced. The teacher admits that she had unwittingly expressed some prejudices after confronted by Dani which draws attention to the possibilities of resistance. However, not all students have the courage or the epistemic resources to resist

[2] Grid of intelligibility was coined by Michel Foucault in relation to power and social relations. In terms of sexuality and gender, to be an intelligible sexual or gendered subject is to fit within the range of existing norms about sex, gender and sexuality. Thus, to fall outside the grid of sexual/gendered intelligibility is to be classified as alternative, abnormal, and in some cases a social threat.

the dominant discourse by which epistemic violence is sustained without being challenged. This can be identitfied in our next story.

Tom, who identifiifes as a gay cisgender man, also experienced epistemic violence and injustice during classroom lessons. Unlike Dani in the previous story, he does not have the tools to counter it:

> I get quite angry when other people say this word, *hommi* [fag, homo]. Once, one of my teachers said this word when we were talking about the HIV [human immunodeficiency] virus. She was talking about how HIV is more likely to be transmitted through anal sex, and she then used the word *hommi*, to give example of that kind of sexual practices. It hurt my feelings. I should have said something but I did not. I just did not have the courage to do it.

The application of the word hommi usually does not connotate a negative meaning in Iceland and in the beginning of the 1980s gay men claimed this word as their own. Queer and gay activists have since then retooled and used hommi as a means to disrupt and/or expand the grid of intelligibility for constituting sexual minorities. However, during the past decade, hommi has also been used derogtatively, especially amongst young men to shame and police the gender performances and practices of their peers. Tom, as he revealed in the interview, had previously experienced this kind of bullying, being called hommi in the past, because he was somehow thought to be different. Thus, when he hears the word hommi being used by his teachers and in connection to a rather sensitive topic, the negative experience of the past comes to haunt him. In that sense, Tom's story indicates that the use of the ambivalent word hommi and by whom and in what circumstances still depends on the epistemic context. Furthermore, the topic of HIV/AIDS remains rather sensitive for those belonging to sexuality or gender minorities, as it is still used to stigmatize and marginalize, ever since the pandemic broke out. Using the word hommi instead of the more neutral and official word samkynhneigður in connection to this particular topic., Tom felt stigmatized, having what Eva Hoffman (2004) defines as indirect knowledge, about the high fatality of the early years of the pandemic. Tom inherited this indirect knowledge through intergenerational narratives which circulate within the gay community and are also conveyed in the media and films. This knowledge affects his responses and feelings when the teacher associates the words hommi, often used negatively to shame and discipline, and HIV/AIDS.

The teacher, as Tom explained, was unaware of his sexuality, however with her choice of the word hommi in discussing the pandemic, she invoked some negative feelings. At the same time, by using gay men as an example of a high risk group and more likely to contract the virus in contemporary Western societies, she was unwittingly drawing on the past pandemic discourse which depicted HIV/AIDS as "gay disease. At the same time other groups that have been affected by the HIV pandemic were silenced, particularly heterosexual women in the global south. Thus, this lesson left Tom feeling further marginalized and excluded, both reminding him of past experiences of homophobic bullying but also because of how the teacher conveyed what can be understood as *sensitive knowledge* about the HIV/AIDS pandemic, silencing some affected groups while marginalizing others. His first reaction was to complain about this behavior to the school authorities, but he never did, saying that

he did not have the "courage" to do so. As a result, he neither spoke up in class nor confronted his teacher with his discomfort and her misinformation on these issues. He clearly does not feel he has the same resources as Dani. Perhaps, Tom thought that if he did complain, no action would taken by the school authorities. However regardless of his reasons for not confronting his teacher and standing by and saying nothing, he smothered his feelings and *inherited knowledge* about the pandemic. He assumed, that it would not matter or change anything. For him the epistemic space of the classroom was exclusionary as it failed to include other epistemologies outside of the heterosexual grid. Such marginalization, exclusion, and epistemic violence, was also a topic addressed by other participants in our study.

Several students provided examples of how they experienced the classroom space, different subjects and lessons at their school as spaces of heteronormativity and the marginalization of queer experiences across curriculum content areas:

> Once in sociology my friend told me that our teacher had spoken negatively about trans people when the topic was about "deviation" and he used a rather bad word to describe them, using *kynskiptingur*, instead of more neutral word *trans.* [Vala, transgender girl, bisexual]

> It is interesting because in history we always talk about heterosexuality but I know that there is more to it than that. The Romans and the Greeks, during that time same-sex sexuality was not seen as something bad. [Gabirel, gay, cisgender man]

> If we talk about sexuality in class we most often focus on heterosexuality, for example in sociology or history. I think there should be an equal discussion, talk about queer issues as well. [Hreinn, gay, cisgender man]

These exerpts demonstrate how the dominant epistemology of heteronormativity is produced and sustained within the epistemic space of the classroom, and across the curruiculum in for example during sex education, sociology and history classes. Sex education is a good example of how heterosexuality is constructed as the norm, and thus given more epistemic space during lessons and in the learning material. Sex educagtion is most often incorporated into life skills classes (lessons) which are obligatory for all first year upper secondary school students in Iceland. As Gunnar, who identifies as a gay cisgender man, recounts, the dominance of heterosexual epistemology during sex education lessons has the effects of marginalizing other sexualities, which are then only referred to in connection to some "deviant behavior" (as in some sociology textbooks) or when discussing diseases such as HIV/AIDS. "My feeling is that because non-heterosexual sex is not talked about in sex education then it somehow becomes strange and unatural, even for some disgusting". Thus, it is somehow assumed that "badness" and unhappy existence are inherent in the lives of the sexual other, producing an image of the "sick" and "abnormal" subject. As Gunnar mentions, this particularly comes to the surface during sex education, whereas heterosexual sex practices are discussed and depicted as normal while non-heterosexual sex is silenced, not talked about, as it does not exist. "In sex education we mostly talk about sex between man and woman. If they mention something about gay sex it is in connection to HIV and that we [meaning the gays]

should use condom" [Gunnar]. Gunnar furthermore, assumes that the exclusion of any discussion of non-heterosexual sex makes it "disgusting" for some.

Sara Ahmed (2004) has pointed out, that disgust "is clearly dependent upon contact" and "involves a relationship of touch and proximity between the surfaces of bodies and objects" (p. 85). Accordingly, students need to be exposed to an object of disgust to become disgusted, and some objects or actions are constructed as more disgusting than others. Thus, by incorporating a discussion about disgust in regards to gender/sexuality into their classroom curriculum, gives teachers opportunity to deconstruct "disgust" and discuss different way of doing and enjoying sex. However, this kind of approach or perspective is not encouraged, as the current Icelandic sex education curriculum, focuses on protective or preventive measures which silence any discussion of non-heterosexual sexual practices, through assuming that particular aspects of human sexuality should not come into close contact with the surfaces of the heterosexual and normal bodies of the students. Through the erasure of the others bodies, epistemic violence is committed, not only towards LGBTQ students, but in fact all students irrespective of their sexuality or gender identity, as they are denied knowledge and understanding, because it does not fit into the dominant classroom epistemology. This is also the case in other subjects (lessons), such as history and sociology. During lessons and in the learning material LGBTQ students are unable or prohibited from drawing on their background and personal experiences. Students often feel excluded as there are no references to sexual or gender diversity in the curriculum (or textbooks). These gaps or exclusions emphasize that the dominant heterosexual epistemology becomes institutionalized even if it is most often not wittingly or purposefully pursued by individual teachers. However, there are exceptions as Vala mentioned, where some teachers overtly demonstrate transphobia and hateful speech about trans people or those who do not fit into the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990).

The Locker Room

Locker rooms and restrooms are found to be the most heteronormative and heterosexist spaces within schools (Atkinson and Kehler, 2010; Ingrey, 2012, 2013; Messner and Sabo, 1994). Within these epistemic spaces, hegemonic heterosexual masculinity/femininity is played out and institutionalized, not only in the practices and individual performances but also in the organization of these spaces (Kehler and Martino, 2007). These spaces are regulated and constructed on the basis of gender binaries and, as such, inscribe disciplinary power on gendered bodies that do not conform to the hegemonic gender regime. For trans/transgender students and other gender-non-conforming students, these spaces are experienced as hostile and problematic (Beemyn, 2003, 2005). "Locker rooms are always strange … I feel a bit awkward being there because I feel a bit as a woman in the men's locker room. I feel as if people are watching me" (Gabriel, gay cisgender man). In Icelandic secondary schools, locker rooms are generally gender-segregated, and as reported by LGBTQ

students in our study, can be a difficult place to navigate, because of the dominant heteronormative epistemology produced and sustained within that particular space. But what does that epistemology entail?

> When I am in the locker room I am always well aware of myself and others, and I try to look up into the ceiling or just down on the floor. I am always trying to not look directly at anybody because I don't want anyone to think I am looking at them. [Þorbjörg [Thorbjorg], a bisexual cisgender woman]

In the students' narratives some of the most common epistemic themes regarding the locker room are invoked. Firstly as Þorbjörg's story illustrated a locker room is a de-sexualized space but at the same time has the potential of becoming sexualized or eroticized. In fact, this is the inherent paradox of this particular space, and can make it difficult for bodies that identify and/or are read as queer to navigate at ease within it. They are seen as sexual predators entering this "de-sexualized" space, which they transform with their embodiment and presence the space into a *kjöthlaðborð* ("meat buffet"):

> For me the locker room is not some kind of *kjöthlaðborð*.[3] I do not feel at all better than someone else who is with me there. It is about nudity and taking shower and I just try to get it over with as quick as I can. [Dani, a bisexual cisgender woman]

Within this epistemic space of the locker room the cultural narrative of the "gaze" is enacted, cited and materialized; it becomes a buffet item. Naked bodies navigate this space trying to avoid any physical contact, keeping a distance, and avoiding direct eye contact, or looking, by either looking down or up, or simply not looking at all. The gaze and being an object of a gaze intersect with the feelings of shame at being naked, of exposing your bare body to others. The "gaze" is also at odds with the dominant epistemology of the locker room and should therefore be avoided.

Our participants stories indicate that they have genuinely internalized the cultural narrative of the "gaze" and tried to render themselves "invisible" to minimize any discomfort that their fellow students might feel. They describe feeling a bit awkward at being in the locker room, and expressed that they somehow did not belong there. Being naked and read as queer within the public space of the locker room made them vulnerable, as they became both objects and subjects of the gaze. Most of the student participants tried to minimize their queer bodies and/or censor their ways of being, when entering the locker room space in order to make their fellow students feel more comfortable. Thus, the epistemic space of the locker room (re)surfaced their bodies and made them smother themselves (Dotson, 2011). Their own existence and embodiment within that particular space became unintelligible. They felt the pressure to "fit" into the dominant epistemoglogy of the locker room, which values heterosexual and cis-gendered bodies.

Bodies that do not "fit" into the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990) are rendered unintelligible in terms of gender and sexuality, and perceived as not belonging within

[3] Literally translated as "meat buffet" which has can mean a selection of bodies to admire and desire.

the epistemic space (i.e. in the context the locker room). These unintelligible bodies evoke affective responses of disgust and fear. These feelings arise from the dominant epistemology of the locker room and how queer bodies are (mis)understood and (mis)perceived within the epistemic space. This epistemology draws attention to the privileges accorded to white heterosexual cisgender abled bodies, thereby rendering the marginal other unintellegible within some epistemic spaces. Such reactions can lead to hate speech and overt manifestations of violence, both epistemic and interpersonal, such as homophobic bullying, as Tom so poignantly discusses:

> I went into the locker room and took a shower. I always go some minutes before the class finishes because I know that the guys don't feel fully comfortable having me around in this particular space. But this time, the class finished some minutes earlier and all the guys came into the locker room when I was coming out of the shower. I walked towards my clothes at the other end of the locker room and when I then turned around all the guys had left and I could see some running out of the locker room. I found a bit hurtful and degrading, but this is only ignorance, I know that, but still it was hurtful (Tom, a gay cisgender man).

Here, Tom draws attention to how he was excluded and bullied by his homophobic fellow male students, when they left the locker room after having seen him there half-naked. In leaving the other students indicate that this particular space was not his to occupy. For them, his presence was somehow a threat to the heterosexual/cisgender epistemology of the locker room. Tom's narrative also draws attention to how disciplinary power operates within such a epistemic space and how bodies that are on the margins are rendered unintelligible in terms of gender and sexuality. Tom makes this evident when he mentions how he self-censored his body and behavior, adapting to the space of the locker room by leaving class earlier for a shower in order not to disturb his fellow students with his queer presence. Through his and his fellow students actions, Tom becomes victim of epistemic violence, both by smothering and silencing his own epistemic existence as a gay identifying male, but also by not being recognized and acknowledged as subject within that particular epistemic space. At the same time, Tom excuses the bullying and homophobic behavior of his fellow male students, blaming it on ignorance, which is deeply embedded in the dominant epistemology of heteronormativity. Fine (2011) has argued that in order to cope and protect their selves, LGBTQ students sometimes minimize the effects of homophobic remarks and violence have on them, which is a strategy they use to adapt to heterosexist and/or hostile school environment. They often work to reduce their queer visibility as Tom did within the space of the locker room/PE class and do not openly confront homophobia or heterosexism.

Interpersonal Communication

The interpersonal or communicative space between the self and the other can be defined as an informal space within schools, consisting of social activities and interactions between students outside of the classroom. Within these spaces dominant

epistemologies in terms of gender and sexuality are sustained and (re)produced, and any "deviation" from the established norm can raise questions about the epistemology of the self:

> At first everybody thought I was gay, maybe because I behaved a bit girly. I felt bad about that and started to get more isolated and stayed more at home playing computer games. ... [After I came out as a trans-woman], I sometimes still hear that people at school are calling me gay behind my back. One guy for example asked my girlfriend why I could not just admit that I was gay, just like ordinary people! (Vala, a bisexual transgender woman).

Vala's narrative of the representation of her "new" gender identity, at least within the social context of her school, shows how it (her gender identity) did not fit into the grid of intelligibility. Her gender identity was not acknowledged by her fellow students, and in that sense her knowledge of the self was undermined.[4] She was not recognized by others as being a woman, which for her is important and part of her self-knowledge. "I find it very important that people see me as a woman, and I get hurt if people do not think of me as a woman. For me it really matters to be addressed as a woman. I find it so offensive if someone addresses me as a male." Thus through misrecognition and being undervalued as a subject of her own knowledge, she experienced epistemic violence in her interactions with fellow students. Within that epistemic space, and in line with the dominant cisgender epistemology sustained there, the category of a woman should fit the inherent gender logic where there is a complete match between biological sex and gender identity. Bodies that do not adhere to the strict gender regime are assumed to be outside of the norm, and disturb the logic of binary gender/sex categories even within informal spaces. In order to put Vala on the axes of gender binaries, her fellow students read her as gay male. The gay category was for some students seen as more "normal"—or at least less destabilizing than the transgender category, which fellow students had difficulty grasping. This led to her experience, even after she formally came out as a transgender woman, being addressed as male and thought of as being gay. To begin with this made her sad and she isolated herself. This isolation symbolized withdrawal of herself as a knowledgable subject and was an act of smothering her knowledge of the self, and censoring herself and her body in the presence of others.

Smothering was a common theme in the students narratives. Gunnar recounts how he had to smother himself as a subject of knowledge in terms of his sexuality: "What I found very difficult was the pressure, this underlying pressure. This pressure about talking openly about your sex life, it was not put forward directly by the kids; it was more underneath." Gunnar describes how he is excluded from the epistemic space where students interact and talk "openly about their sex life" because his self-knowledge does not fit into the epistemology of heterosexuality. "The kids at school talk very openly about their sex life [of heterosexual students] and of others and it was expected that I did the same. I couldn't do this, I couldn't participate

[4] Self-knowledge refers to knowledge of my own thoughts, beliefs, body, sensations etc.

in this kind of discussion, and I felt therefore somehow different, like I was less valued as a man" [Gunnar, a gay cisgender man]. He does not feel comfortable hearing the stories of his peers, about their imagined or real sexual practices or how their relationships with the opposite sex were developing.

This kind of knowledge makes him sad as he is constantly reminded that he is somehow different from his classmates, "less valued as a man". He cannot express his feelings or tell his fellow students about who he is, as he was still in the closet (he was not out to his school mates). He could not draw on his background and self-knowledge in his interactions with fellow students when sharing and expressing their feelings and thoughts regarding their sexual practices. Gunnar's final point that his felt "less valued as a man" is quite telling. It draws attention to how some knowledge or knowledgable subjects are more valued than others. As in the case of Gunnar, those who are not considered to be part of the dominant epistemologies, here in terms of sexuality, are made to feel that they are less valued as individuals. They are excluded and their self-knowledge is not valued or recognized within that particular epistemic space. This kind of exclusion becomes then even more obvious through homophobic remarks, made by some students in their interaction, as Dani illustrates:

> I sometimes hear some guys in my school say: ´You damn/fucking fag´[In Icelandic: helvítis hommi], to their friends, just as a joke. They think it's okey but they do not realize that maybe someone that is gay or lesbian might hear it too, maybe just walking past them or being closeby. Once I was walking past two girls talking and I heard them say that a girl is such a lesbian. I stop and said to them: 'Hey this is not right and you can hurt someone talking like this'. I don't like people using these words when they are used in this way. I mean it's okey to say that I am dyke or whatever to describe my sexuality but not to use these words to offend each other.

Dani describes here what C. J. Pascoe (2007) has called the *fag discourse* within educational settings. By drawing on that discourse in their interactions students are, wittingly or unwittingly, committing epistemic violence towards those who identify as LGBTQ. In using the signifier *fag* or *dyke* as an offensive words, with the intention of teasing someone or shaming them for some silly act, the speaker creates hierarchies and boundaries between those who are straight and "normal" and the ones that identify as queer/non-heterosexual. Through semantic extension, the *fag/dyke* comes to symbolizes something "bad" or even "silly". This "new meaning" (knowledge), which is constructed by the dominant group, draws attention to the power dynamics inherent in the process of knowledge construction and production. Those who are in the position of power and have the right resources or capital, whether cultural or social, produce knowledge in line with their interests. Dani draws attention to these power dynamics of the extended meaning of the words *fag* and *dyke* and how she feels violated hearing them used by her peers in a pejorative fashion. She goes on to explain that those who use the words *fag/dyke* are "stealing" (appropriating) her identity to offend others. By doing so they are neither respecting nor recognizing her as a knowledgable subject, and use their dominant position to construct new knowledge based on already marginalized identity categories.

Transforming Schools Through Pedagogy of Hope and Epistemic Justice

Through the use of power and knowledge the student experiences in this chapter indicate that discourse both in the more public spaces such as classroom and informal hallway settings as well as in the more private sphere of the locker room are exclusionary for LGBTQ students. These students experience epistemic violence at the hands of their peers and internalize the normative school and social expectations for behavior and self idenitification. For many students their school experiences are negated during a period of development that marks the most experimentation, yet LGBTQ students receive regular reminders that their bodies, desires and selves are unwelcome within the school context. They are expected to conform to the normative structures of the heterosexual cisgender binary that characterizes secondary school spaces. Many students are unequipped to respond to the demeaning, hateful homophobic discourse or gestures that they encounter, as Gunnar and Tom's stories clearly indicate, instead they retreat into themselves, accommodate other "normal"students needs and expectations. They make themselves less, sublimate their identities and experiences in order to not interrupt the heteronormative discourse of the schools. As a result they not only experience the epistemic violence of silencing at the hands of their peers and teachers, but they also learn to smother their own knowledge and sense of being in order to not stand out or become the victims of bullying or further exclusion. Other students, such as Dani, who had been active in the LGBTQ youth organization, showed more resistance and had the epistemic resources (vocabulary and activist training) to confront heteronormative discourse and violence. However, it needs to be emphasized, that by focusing on epistemic violence and how it is produced and experienced in different educational contexts, has some limitations. This kind of analytical focus can for example reinforce ´otherness'of particular subjects (Aboim, 2020) by reproducing and sustaining the dicsoure on victimhood. We are fully aware of that and in this chapter we both discuss and draw attention to how some LGBTQ students in Iceland experience and narrate about what is here defined as epistemic violence, but at the same time we give some examples of resistance and how it possible to counter this kind of violence. In that sense, we emphasize the importance of emancipatory pedaogy and anti-oppressive education (see Kumashiro, 2002), in order to make schools more inclusive and just as we will now elaborate upon.

In his work in the *Pedagogy of Hope*, and other works Paulo Freire discusses the concept of critical consciousness (conscientization, or *conscientização).* This concept requires that individuals reflect critically on their experiences to develop a critical understanding of the world and take a stand against oppressive language, behavoir or regimes. In the context of LGBTQ students in upper secondary schools this means engaging in resistance similar to that which Dani displays when she confronts her teacher regarding the use of "correct" pronouns. She also confronts her peers when she points out to them that they are (mis)using terms and

denigrating others by using terms that they have no right to use and which are demeaning. Dani of all the students in this study was able to do this because she had experiences and had received tutelage and support through a queer organization that helped empower her to speak up. However, in the school setting where the power resides with the dominant groups, i.e. the cisgender heterosexual students and the teachers, it is important to create this critical consciousness within the group so as to allow deeper exploration of gender, sexuality and the lived realities of all students.

Schools are places of power and deeply embedded epistemologies where certain knowledges are privileged over others. Yet schools are intended to be safe spaces of learning for all students. So the question remains how we can transform schools in order to counter epistemic violence and othering of marginalized groups? Franz Fanon (1967) provides us with ways to identify how epistemic violence, as we have discussed in this chapter, works within schools and how they problematize the "minoritized", and their "inability" to adapt to the dominant culture of schools, through the process of pathologization and medicalization (Sefa Dei & Simmons, 2010). Thus, in order to counter this view, teachers and researchers need to draw attention to the fact that it is not the minoritized, racialized or non-heterosexual individual or/and community who are pathologized or pathological, rather it is the system, the institution which needs to change. Thus the schools and the educational systems themselves constitute the problem and thereby commit and sustain epistemic violence (Sefa Dei & Simmons, 2010; Valencia, 2010).

As bell hooks (2013, 2014) argues, teachers and school staff must critically engage with their own epistemologies in order to dismantle their deeply held beliefs and understanding of both learning and the students with whom they engage on a daily basis. When this is done then lessons such as the one where the teacher describes HIV/AIDS incorrectly, as predominantly affecting homosexuals and silencing the historical struggle and the discourse of gay men, and women in the global south, would not have occurred. It is therefore important to show respect for the students' identity and personal lives which creates an understanding and accepting learning environment where they feel empowered to practice and develop based on their own experiences and drawing on their own knowledges. It is the role of an educator to help their students to develop as full fleged ethical beings, and while Iceland is quite forward in their acknowledgement of gender equity and supportive of sexual diversity, Icelandic upper secondary schools do not appear to be as supportive of all of their students as they can be. Regular training and open discussion among the staff as well as information for students is a critical tool to developing the critical consciousness that schools need in order to dismantle the hegemonic gender/sexuality discourse that continues to shape queer and LGBTQ students experiences. In other words, in order to transform education into an inclusive space for all students, we need focus on changing the institutions that reproduce and sustain the epistemology of the dominant culture.

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Part III
Everyday Racism, Segregation and Schooling

Chapter 12
‘Go Home to Your Country!’ – Everyday Racism in a Rural Lower Secondary School

Ylva Odenbring and Thomas Johansson

This chapter explores ninth grade students’ experiences and understanding of everyday racism in a rural lower secondary school in Sweden. Focus of our analysis is the narratives and situations that revolve around incidents when students are exposed to racist comments and positioned as *the Other*. The results indicate that immigrant students, regardless of gender, were exposed to racist and degrading comments due to their immigrant background or the colour of their skin. Boys with immigrant background were also exposed to physical violence. According to the students it is a particular group of male students at the investigated school that exposes immigrant students to different forms of degrading and racist comments. The microaggressions expressed by the racist comments and also the physical violence directed to the immigrant students had a great impact on their well-being in school.

Introduction

> Structures of racism do not exist external to agents – they are made by agents – but specific practices are by definition racist only when they activate existing structural inequality in the system. (Essed, 2002, p. 181)

This quotation from the Dutch researcher Philomena Essed has been chosen to introduce this chapter it highlights the essence of everyday systemic racism. In the current chapter we will explore how racism is expressed in the everyday life of a Swedish rural school.

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Y. Odenbring, T. Johansson (eds.), *Violence, Victimisation and Young People*, Young People and Learning Processes in School and Everyday Life 4,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75319-1_12

Children's and young people's discussions about differences between different groups are not taking place in isolation. Rather, their discussions have to be understood in the light of existing social discourses and social structures within the dominant culture as well as within minority cultures (Miller, 2015). Existing social structures in the society create a foundation for children's and young people's identity, as well as images of other children and young people and how they are positioned. Children's and young people's identity constructions, social experiences and negotiations at the micro level are part of a wider context where history – through, for example, white people's colonialism of different parts of the world – still has vital importance in terms of how the different faces of racism are expressed in people's everyday lives (Hällgren, 2005; Miller, 2015; Isik-Ercan, 2015).

Looking at contemporary studies in the field of education, research indicates that white privilege still dominates in schools. Myers and Bhopal's (2017) study conducted in two primary schools in rural England indicates that racist behaviour was not considered to be a problem within the schools. Although everyday racism was understood as a priority on the public and political agendas, this issue became irrelevant and even ignored by school officials, Myers and Bhopal conclude. Also, studies conducted in urban areas, which dominate the research field, indicate that white privilege is prevalent in schools. Contemporary Norwegian educational research indicates that Muslim girls often face different stereotypical notions about their choice of lifestyle (Jacobsen, 2011; Roth & Stuedahl, 2017). Quite often these notions are related to the idea that Muslim girls have less freedom, and have fewer opportunities in life, compared to girls with a majority background.

The construction of the Other has also been revealed in contemporary Swedish research. The findings of Odenbring and Johansson's (2019b) study conducted in a lower secondary school in rural Sweden indicates how students with immigrant background were positioned as the Other and exposed to everyday racism by the students with majority background. The findings reveal that Muslim girls were a particularly vulnerable group, especially girls wearing a veil. Muslim girls expressed how they were exposed to degrading comments due to their religion and choice of clothing, which had a great impact on their well-being in school. The construction of the Other was also expressed through degrading comments to the effect that immigrant students smelled bad and had strange eating habits. At the investigated school, everyday racism was most present and clearly a part of the local school culture among the majority students. Similarly, boys with Muslim background are also often positioned as the Other. Contemporary research describes how Muslim boys are positioned as the Other by professionals in schools as well as by the public opinion due to their religious background (cf. Hopkins, 2014; Jaffe-Walter, 2019; Lundberg, 2015; Welply, 2018). In many European countries, immigrant boys, and particularly Muslim boys, have come to be synonymous with the rowdy, violent and dangerous boys in school and in the society (Haywood & Mac an Ghaill, 2013; Kryger, 2015; Milani & Jonsson, 2012).

Welply's (2018) study of a culturally diverse primary school in England reveals how students with Muslim background were positioned as the 'bad Other'. The Muslim students were not only passive recipients of degrading comments and

Islamophobia, they demonstrated what Welply refers to as 'discursive agency' by displaying resistance and creating more positive representations of Otherness. The discrimination of Muslim students, Welply argues, raises several questions about multiculturalism in schools and how to create and work towards a more tolerant, inclusive and understanding school environment. As Welply argues, 'At a time where "the Other" in Britain is being defined through discourses of islamophobia, assimilation and securitisation, it becomes urgent to help teachers and children develop the tools to re-frame discussions around Otherness in more critical ways' (p. 386).

Even schools that are supposed to be working for a more inclusive school environment tend to reproduce normative understandings of the 'ideal' citizen and the 'ideal' pupil. Jaffe-Walter's (2019) ethnographic case study of a progressive Danish lower secondary school indicates how the teachers at the investigated school, despite the school's vision of 'openness', inclusion, respect and individualism, created and established a colour-blind discourse of non-racism in their teaching. The results indicate that the vision of openness did not include Muslim students and their attachment to their religious and cultural identity.

Similar findings have been recognized in studies conducted in pre-primary education. Hellman and Odenbring's (2017) ethnographic case study of a progressive preschool in a culturally diverse area of a small town in Sweden describes how the preschool's vision of inclusive education and pedagogy instead led to everyday racism towards Muslim boys. The study shows that the head of the preschool as well as the preschool teachers referred to the boys with Muslim background as problematic and rowdy. Bilingual children were also told not to speak their mother tongue in the preschool due to the preschool teachers' belief that the children [the boys] were talking about inappropriate things. Also, the parents of Muslim children were referred to as problematic and were discussed as being backward and lacking in their understanding of gender equality. The professionals expressed that it was important to teach the parents about Swedish values and traditions. Similar tendencies and developments can also be recognized on a wider societal level in several Western countries. For instance, contemporary Dutch research indicates how Muslims are referred to in political discussions as illiterate, backward, patriarchal and unemancipated (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2014). Contemporary research suggests that, after 9/11, cultural violence based on gendered and racially inscribed imaginings about Muslims and veiled women has become an everyday phenomenon and one of the most visible forms of racism in most European countries (Essed & Hoving, 2014). There are also researchers who suggest that racism against people of African descent in Europe is currently taking even more open and blunt forms (Essed, 2013).

The number of educational studies conducted in Swedish rural areas is still limited, and hopefully this study can help to fill this gap (cf. Beach et al., 2019; Odenbring, 2019; Odenbring & Johansson, 2019a, b). In this chapter, we will address students' views and experiences of everyday racism in a rural lower secondary school (grades 7–9) in Sweden. Drawing on interviews with students in the ninth grade, this chapter aims to explore students' experiences of everyday racism

and how the students exposed to this form of harassment understand these situations. Everyday racism is a quite subtle and difficult object to study. Given this, we have chosen to focus on the narratives and situations that revolve around incidents when students are exposed to racist comments and positioned as *the Other*. It is the narrative and discursive construction of *the Other* that will be the focus of this chapter (cf. van Dijk, 1992, 1999; Essed, 2013).

The chapter draws from interviews with ninth-grade students at a lower secondary school named Amber School [Bärnstensskolan in Swedish], conducted in February 2019. All interviews have been conducted and analysed by the first author of this chapter. Focus group interviews were conducted during the initial phase of the study, and interviews were later conducted with pairs and individuals selected from the focus groups. During the interviews, it was important to enable students to tell their stories and to express their experiences of different aspects of cultural diversity and everyday racism at school (cf. Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). All interviews have been audio recorded and fully transcribed. To ensure confidentiality, the names of all the participants as well as the name of the school in this chapter have been anonymized (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017). This work was supported by the Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare (grant number 2017–00071).

Everyday and Entitlement Racism

During the second half of the last century racism became more subtle (i.e. 'less in your face') in Western societies (Essed & Hoving, 2014, p. 9). However, biological notions of 'race' never disappeared; it was and still is most present in the society. Today, in the twenty-first century, we can see that offensive representations of the Other are bluntly expressed across Europe. Throughout Europe, racism and extremism have increased considerably, with cases of antisemitism, xenophobia, Islamophobia and violence targeting people of African descent being reported in the news on a daily basis. Also, national groups and national political parties have become more visible and are also receiving more support from the public throughout Europe. As a result, open racism has become acceptable again (Essed & Hoving, 2014). Today it is not uncommon to hear someone say, 'I do not want to be racist, but'… (Essed, 2013, p. 62). According to Essed, the 'war on terror' post 9/11, in Europe and the US, started the backlash against anti-racism. This backlash has fed a boldness and legitimized racist comments where 'telling the truth' and 'speaking your mind' have become more or less normalized. Essed (2013) refers to the phenomenon of the majority's claimed right to offend ethnic minorities as *entitlement racism*:

> Entitlement racism is a sign of the times we live in, where it is believed that you should be able to express yourself publicly in whichever way you feel like. Freedom of expression, though an individual right, is quintessentially a relational phenomenon. The expresser wants his or her opinion to be heard or seen. Followers, those who applaud, and even those

> whose silence is read as approval, can become involved in the enactment of entitlement racism. Freedom of expression as a form of racism evolves easily into the idea that one has the right to *offend and to humiliate* [Italics in original quote by Essed]. (Essed, 2013, p. 62)

Everyday racism integrates macro- and micro-sociological dimensions of racism (Essed, 1991, 2002; Rocco et al., 2014; Walton et al., 2013). It also transcends the distinction between institutional and individual racism. To maintain racism, it is necessary to cultivate ideologies that support the idea of innate group differences. This inevitably leads to the construction of 'us' and 'them'. Everyday racism is often expressed through perceptions of cultural differences (Essed, 1991, 2002). This means that language, clothes, style, taste and other cultural attributes can be used to categorize people into different 'races'. Essed (2013) refers to this in the following way: 'At the core of racism is the humiliation of the 'other' in order to elevate the self. But the very humiliation of the other compromises the dignity of the perpetrator' (p. 74). Similarly, Kohli and Solórzano (2012) argue that everyday systemic racism is used to keep those at the racial margins in their place, and that everyday systemic racism could include: (1) subtle verbal and non-verbal insults directed to people in the minority position; (2) insults/assaults, based on, for instance, a person's race and immigration status and (3) cumulative insults/assaults. The effects of such repeated racial micro-aggressions can be profound. Kohli and Solórzano (2012) continue by arguing that 'If a child goes to school and reads textbooks that do not reference her culture /…/, and perhaps does not hear her home language, the mispronunciation of her name is an additional example for that student that who they are and where they come from is not important' (p. 445).

Everyday life takes place in the individual's immediate environment, but also through mediated experiences. Everyday racism cannot be reduced to incidents or specific events. Instead, it is discernible through multiple acts, situations and relations in everyday life (Levine-Rasky, 2013). Following Essed (1991), everyday racism is heterogeneous in its manifestations, but also structured into uniformity. It operates through complex class and gender relations, producing 'race'. This form of racism also varies depending on, for example, national and local differences. Although there are similar patterns, there are also variations in how racism is enacted in, for example, different geographical areas. If we agree on the definition of everyday racism, then we can reformulate the problem of racism as an everyday problem. Racism is thus integrated into the very mechanisms, routines and fabric of everyday life. Everyday racism must, therefore, be analysed carefully, using detailed accounts of attitudes and behaviour in everyday life. We need to focus on routinized and repeated expressions of difference, related to the power enacted by certain dominant and often 'white' groups. Whiteness and the construction of a privileged position is produced, regulated, and conveyed through repetition, parodic statements, corporeal enactments and labelling processes (Levine-Rasky, 2013). As for the present study, we use the concept of *everyday racism* to analyse how racism is shaped in the everyday life in school as described in the interviewed students' narratives (cf. Essed, 2002, 2013; Rocco et al., 2014; Walton et al., 2013).

Everyday Racism in a Rural Swedish School

Before we present the results, we will first present the school and the community in which the interviews have been conducted. Thereafter we will present the analysis of the data and how it is organized and presented. Amber school is located in the rural community of Granberget, which has approximately 3000 inhabitants. Amber School enrols approximately 400 students and is the only lower secondary school in Granberget municipality. The catchment area of the school covers the entire municipality, which includes Granberget village as well as the surrounding smaller villages. Granberget and Granberget municipality have a long tradition of small-scale businesses, predominately manufacturing industries, and there are good railway connections to other parts of the region and other parts of the country. Similar to other rural areas in Sweden, the education level in Granberget is lower than the national average. Also, the proportion of inhabitants born abroad is lower than the national average of 20%; approximately 10% of the inhabitants of Granberget are born abroad (Statistikmyndigheten SCB, 2019).

The data presented in the current chapter is based on thematic data analysis. By reading the transcripts multiple times we have been able to identify recurrent patterns in the data material and define and name the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013). During this analytic process three broad themes were discerned, and the results section will be organized and presented according to these main themes: (1) Being a newcomer, (2) Not feeling welcome and (3) Fighting back. We will first unpack the scope of how students at the school discuss and reflect on being a newcomer at the school. In the next two sections, we will unpack the results of how students with immigrant background experience everyday life in school and how everyday racism is expressed. In the concluding section we will highlight the main results of this chapter, and in the final section we will discuss how schools can find ways to work proactively to prevent everyday racism in schools.

Being a Newcomer

During the interviews the students' narratives revealed that newcomers and students in the minority position were in a particularly vulnerable situation in the school. A recurring theme in the students' responses was their description of a particular group of students who were seen as troublemakers; they were referred to as the 'pack group'. This group of students consisted mainly of boys who recurrently victimized minority students, mocking different students during the school day. This was something that a group of boys, with both majority and immigrant backgrounds, discussed during one of the focus group interviews.

> Hugo: These people hate everything and everyone. They just want to make trouble.
> Interviewer: Okay, so there is a certain group of students who want trouble?

Hilding: Yes.
Hugo: Yes, they hate everything and everyone /…/.
Omed: They were mocking me and stuff like that.
Interviewer: Did they beat you, or what?
Omed: They didn’t beat me, but we were fighting with each other. That happened all the time in seventh and eighth grade. /…/.
Interviewer: What do they do to create trouble? Do they come up to you and mock you?
Hugo: They do whatever they want, they yell at people in the school corridors. (Focus group interview)

According to the students, the pack group is a group of students who are responsible for most of the trouble that occurs within the school. Also, the general opinion among the students interviewed in this study was that this group of students is rowdy and that they misbehave and litter. The difficulties of being a newcomer and the challenges newcomers have to face were also raised by a group of girls, all with majority background, during one of the focus group interviews.

Interviewer: What do you think it is like to move here from another country?
Tora: I think it is really hard, because you not only have to learn a new language, but people might also laugh at you when you try to communicate with other students. Your parents might be dead and then other students say ‘go home to your home country’.
Matilda: That is so disrespectful.
Tora: I think they feel really bad when they get comments like that. I think they are really grateful that they got the opportunity to come here [to Sweden].
Interviewer: How do you react when you hear students shout ‘go home to your home country’?
Matilda: I am disgusted.
Tora: Yes, me too.
Matilda: If someone crosses the line, I talk to a teacher or our school host. (Focus group interview)

Regardless of their ethnic background, the students talk about the vulnerability that immigrant students are exposed to by the pack group. Students in the majority position also express their concern about the immigrant students’ position and the harassment they are exposed to. In the next two sections we will focus on the narratives of immigrant students and how they experience everyday life in school.

Not Feeling Welcomed

Students with immigrant background at the school revealed that they are recurrently exposed to everyday racism in school. Several of these students indicated that they were subjected to comments about not being wanted in Sweden. One of the students was Omed, who came to Sweden with his family from Kurdistan[1] when he was in the sixth grade. His story reveals that he has experienced degrading and racist comments from the so-called pack group more or less from day one at school.

[1] We use Omed’s self-definition of his home country, i.e. Kurdistan. The area of Kurdistan covers parts of Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey.

Omed: They call me immigrant /…/ They call me gay and stuff like that, although I'm not, they call me negro and things like that, and when they say bad words, I get really angry. /…/ They say bad things about my family.
Interviewer: Okay, what kinds of things do they say then?
Omed: Like 'I'm gonna fuck your mom' ['jag ska knulla din mamma' in Swedish[2]] and things like that. Fuck, then I get really angry. (Focus group interview)

Also, when reflecting upon previous years in school, Omed's story is filled with racist comments and it also reveals how students with majority background recurrently try to provoke him.

Omed: In the eighth grade it was the same thing; at that time it was also students in the ninth grade who were mocking me. When they were mocking me they called for other people and stuff like that.
Interviewer: So, there were several people who were mocking you? What did they call you?
Omed: Immigrant, go home to your country, your fucking country. (Individual interview)

Hussein, who is of Syrian origin, has similar experiences. At the time of the interviews he had been living in Sweden for 3 years. He and his family fled Syria and came to Sweden in 2015, when approximately 50.000 Syrian refugees were seeking asylum in Sweden (Statistikmyndigheten SCB, 2016). Due to his immigrant background he been exposed to racist comments, threats and physical violence both in school and in the youth centre that is located in the school building.

Hussein: I was at the entrance outside the youth centre and then two guys came up to me, and I asked the tall one if he had seen my bicycle. Then the other guy shouted fucking gay, fucking Negro, fucking Arab, I'm going to beat you so bad, I'm going to kill you! I just smiled back at him, and like I don't see you, and when I walked away he hit me in the back of my head so I got red bruises /…/ He is so hate-filled and it is the same thing with his parents. A teacher told me that the school had talked to his parents and they have similar views, like racism, racist thinking, you know.
Interviewer: Okay?
Hussein: He is so hate-filled, you know.
Interviewer: With views like that, yes. So, did they talk to his parents?
Hussein: Yes, I think they managed to get in touch with his parents and the supervisor of the youth centre called the police and filed a report. After that the guy wasn't allowed to come to school for two months, I think.
Interviewer: Okay, so he was expelled from school?
Hussein: Yes. (Individual interview)

The boys' stories are framed by racist comments and physical violence, but their stories also reveal homophobic name-calling by being called 'gay'. This form of name-calling could be understood in the light of opposition and position the boys as marginalized (cf. Kimmel, 2001; Pascoe, 2013). Following Kimmel (2001), boys and men take part in different forms of homosocial enactments to maintain the status of manhood (see also Chap. 5, this volume). One way to maintain this status is by insulting groups positioned as minorities, for instance, racial minorities, or by directing insults to women or sexual minorities. Following Pascoe (2013),

[2] This form of insult is not meant literally, but the insult has a strong symbolic meaning. Compared to most cultures around the world, verbal insults connected to someone's mother are not traditionally part of the Swedish language. This form insult has been influenced by other cultures.

homophobic insults are also used by boys to police other boys to ensure that they behave in ‘the right way’ and to maintain heterosexual masculinity.

Girls with immigrant background also reveal that they have been exposed to everyday racism in school. Similar to Omed and Hussein, Ubah, a girl with Somali background, talked about the different forms of racist comments that she has been exposed to in school. At the time of the interview Ubah had been living in Sweden for 5 years. When she came to Sweden with her family in the fifth grade, and when she began school, she was illiterate.

> Interviewer: What was it like to come to Sweden and to attend school?
> Ubah: At first it was quite good. The first year in school I attended the introduction class to learn Swedish so there were no Swedish students in that class. A year later I began an ordinary class with Swedish students and then the bullying began. The other students bullied me because I was from another country and because my Swedish was poor.
> Interviewer: Did they bully you because you are wearing a veil?
> Ubah: No, not because of that, but they bullied me because of the colour of my skin. They called me the N-word. (Individual interview)

Currently in lower secondary school, Ubah expresses that she likes school much better, her Swedish has improved and she has several friends that she hangs out with. Despite this, her story reveals that the racist comments continued for some time. Also, in Ubah’s case, it is the so-called pack group that has been exposing her to different racist comments.

> Interviewer: Are there still students who make degrading comments to you?
> Ubah: Yes, a matter of fact there are.
> Interviewer: Who are those people?
> Ubah: There is this group, called the pack group, which call me the N-word and say ‘go home to your home country’. Sometimes I just ignore them, but sometimes I get angry and respond. /…/. (Individual interview)

The immigrant students are positioned as *the Other* by their exposure to degrading and racist comments by the pack group. Everyday racism at the school is manifested through comments about the immigrant students’ national origin and the colour of their skin (cf. Essed, 1991). These specific practices performed by the pack group create structural inequalities both at an individual level, by being directed to specific students, and at an institutional level because they have become part of the everyday life in school for certain students (cf. Essed, 2002).

Fighting Back

The stories of Omed, Hussein and Ubah reveal that the racist comments they are exposed to have a great impact on their everyday life in school. When reflecting upon his situation in school, Omed expresses frustration, not only because he gets upset and angry about the degrading comments but also because it has resulted in continuing fights with the students who are mocking him and his friends.

Interviewer: What was it like to move from a big city in Kurdistan to the small village of Granberget?

Omed: It was hell. It was really hard because of all the fights. When you are young you don't know how to handle things and I ended up having problems with the social services and the police.

Interviewer: Did you have problems when there were people mocking you?

Omed: Yes, a lot. /…/ You know, there were several people who came up to us and started to fight, but when the police arrived, we ended up having problems, not the Swedish guys.

Interviewer: Okay, so it was you and your friends who ended up having problems with these guys?

Omed: Yes.

Interviewer: So, were there fights between your gangs or what?

Omed: Yes, there were always fights, yes, every time. /…/ Well, we're not a gang we're only three people [Omed, his brother Barzan and his friend Hussein]. (Individual interview)

When Omed continues to reflect upon the whole situation he says that fighting back has only caused problems for him, not only with the pack group, but also with the social services and the police. Being able to come to school without ending up in fights, and being able to concentrate on his school work and plan for a better future are things that he considers important.

Omed: There are a lot of people who want to fight with me. Sometimes I feel safe [in school], but sometimes not because of this. I do not want to fight in the ninth grade, because it now is the time when I have the chance to change my future [to continue to upper secondary school] /…/ Like last time, it was a week ago actually. The racists came up to me when I was sitting outside in the corridor and I was playing a game on my mobile phone and a guy just came up to me and hit me. That made me so angry because I hadn't done anything. When stuff like that happens now in the ninth grade I don't want to come to school, because I don't want to cause problems. I was stupid to get involved in trouble and that made the trouble come back and that was no good.

Interviewer: So, now you want peace and quiet, to feel safe in school and be able to concentrate on your school work so you will have the opportunity to continue to upper secondary school and you don't wish to have any more problems with the social services and police?

Omed: Exactly. (Individual interview)

Similar to Omed's, Hussein's story also reveals frustration about the tensions between the three immigrant boys and the pack group who repeatedly provoke them. The student who was expelled for a while eventually came back to school and, according to Hussein, he continues to mock the three boys.

Hussein: A few days ago, he wanted to cause problems again.

Interviewer: Again?

Hussein: Yes.

Interviewer: The same guy?

Hussein: Yes. He came up to my friend, he is Kurdish. He looked at my friend and he was just like 'Why are you looking at me'?

Interviewer: Do you mean Omed?

Hussein: No, his brother Barzan, but he looked at Omed too, he looked at them, 'bitch gazing' [bitchblick in Swedish] you know. And he asked, 'What do you want?' 'Nothing, I can look if I want to.' And he was just like, 'Why are you looking then?' And he just replied, 'I can look whenever I want.' He says, 'Don't look at me,' but why is he looking at me like that? /…/ Don't look at me then. And he said, 'Do you want to fight or what?' He was just, 'Hit me then' and then other students got really angry and I just stopped it.

He wants to make us hit him so he will have a reason to call all his older friends. They’ll come here after school, and we really hate that, because they are like 16 people jumping on one person, can you believe that? Would anyone manage that by themselves? /…/ They are really cowards until they call for their older friends who are over 18 years.
Interviewer: Are you scared?
Hussein: No, not anymore. Well I was never scared because I was beaten by that guy, but I was upset.
Interviewer: Right, you were upset. What makes you feel unsafe in school?
Hussein: Well, there are still people who don’t accept me as just as an ordinary guy.
Interviewer: Because you are from Syria?
Hussein: Yes. (Individual interview)

Also, Hussein’s story is framed from the continuing tension between the pack group and the immigrant boys. Hussein also expresses awareness about the existing structural inequalities in school (cf. Essed, 2002). Due to his immigrant background, some of the students do not accept him the way he is – ‘as just as an ordinary guy’. As a result, according to Hussein, he and his friends are positioned as *the Other* and exposed to racist name-calling by the pack group.

Positioned as the Other

In this chapter we have addressed everyday systemic racism in a Swedish rural lower secondary school. As highlighted in the introduction of this chapter, everyday racism within an educational setting is not only a micro-phenomenon, but rather acts that have to be understood in close relation to what is going on in society at large. Looking at previous educational research, we can see that studies on everyday racism in Swedish rural schools are more or less absent in educational research (cf. Odenbring & Johansson, 2019a, b). Given this, the current study provides new insights into how students with various immigrant backgrounds experience everyday racism in school and being positioned as *the Other*. Also, importantly, this study gives this group of students a voice.

The students’ narratives reveal that it is a particular group of students at the investigated school, referred to as ‘the pack group’, that exposes immigrant students to different forms of degrading and racist comments. This so-called pack group mainly consists of boys. Compared to what has been recognized in previous research (Odenbring & Johansson, 2019b), the everyday racism at Amber School has not become normalized and part of the local school culture among the students with majority background. At Amber School, several of the students with majority background expressed that they opposed the racist comments expressed by the pack group. They also expressed their sympathy and support towards the immigrant students.

The results indicate that immigrant students, regardless of gender, were exposed to racist and degrading comments due to their immigrant background or the colour of their skin. During the interviews, the narratives of the immigrant boys also revealed that the everyday racism was expressed through physical violence.

According to the boys, the pack group provoked them in different ways to start fights. For one of the boys in particular, Omed, this has caused a lot of problems because he has ended up in many fights. Looking back and reflecting upon his situation, Omed expresses frustration because he wants to change this pattern and to be able to focus on his school work and on his future. The boys' narratives also intersect with masculinity and reveal what could be categorized as a double exposure: (1) the pack group is causing them problems they want to avoid and (2) they want to be accepted just the way they are.

One aspect of performing masculinity and constructing a certain form of masculinity is expressed through the physical violence the boys are exposed to or the fights that they are involved in. They have to physically fight back when the pack group is mocking them. Another dimension is the homophobic name-calling and being called 'gay'. This form of verbal insult could be understood in the light of positioning the immigrant boys as less 'manly', but also a way for the pack group to keep the immigrant boys 'in their place' so to speak (cf. Essed, 2013; Kimmel, 2001; Kohli & Solórzano, 2012; Pascoe, 2013). The micro-aggressions expressed by the racist comments and also the physical violence directed to the immigrant students had a great impact on their well-being in school.

Preventing Everyday Racism in Schools

In the Swedish curriculum of the compulsory school, democratic values, understanding and compassion for others are stated as fundamental values on which the Swedish educational system is to be based. Any forms of discrimination – such as discrimination on the grounds of ethnic affiliation, religion or other belief system – should be actively combated by school professionals (Skolverket, 2018). In the curriculum it is also recognized that Sweden is a multicultural country and a place with inhabitants from various places around the world.

> The internationalisation of Swedish society and increasing cross-border mobility place high demands on the ability of people to live with and appreciate the values inherent in cultural diversity. Awareness of one's own cultural origins and sharing in a common cultural heritage provides a secure identity which it is important to develop, together with the ability to understand and empathise with the values and conditions of others. The school is a social and cultural meeting place with both the opportunity and the responsibility to strengthen this ability among all who work there. (Skolverket, 2018, p. 5)

Yet, looking at both the results of the current and previous studies, racial micro-aggressions take many forms. For the individual person, this may have a great impact on their everyday life and well-being, as Kohli and Solórzano (2012) argue: 'The impact of racism does not end once the experience is over' (p. 447). Similarly, Essed (2013) argues that 'The insistence on the right to offend in the name of freedom, regardless of its impact on others, nurtures disgraceful behavior' (p. 74). This, we argue, raises several questions around how school professionals can proactively prevent racial micro-aggressions and everyday systemic racism. Discussing these

issues with students and making them aware of the impact such words may have on the person who is exposed to this might be one way of approaching this matter. Also, developing methods and models to validate different cultures could be another way of highlighting multicultural education, preventing racism and creating awareness (cf. Kohli & Solórzano, 2012). Looking at everyday racism and entitlement racism from a wider and a global perspective, it is important to take racism and the constant struggle against racism seriously (cf. Apple, 2009). In the age of the internet, the voice of entitlement racism becomes borderless due to its accessibility through social media 24/7 (Essed, 2013). This means that confronting racism has to take place on many frontiers.

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Chapter 13
"I'll Have Security, I'll Go to School, I'll Live My Life" – Unaccompanied Minors on School, Education and Racism

Marcus Herz and Philip Lalander

> [T]he education's really good. Looking at it that way, you're really good here […] Opportunities in terms of school and education. Otherwise, there's nothing. I promise, there's nothing, nothing except for education, nothing at all. No love, there's nothing, nothing. I'm losing myself over the Swedes' I swear, I lose myself. […] When I first got to Europe, I thought that I'll have security, I'll go to school, I'll live my life. (Interview with Javad)
>
> A Facebook clip shows Hama's classmates in Sweden. The setting is Hama's old classroom. The friends (about 15 of them, both boys and girls) say how much they miss him and form their hands into hearts. Hama looks sad, but also emotionally touched as he shows it to us. He hasn't met his friends face-to-face for half a year. (Observation note with Hama, autumn 2019)

Going to school and getting an education can both be important and tenuous for young people who, because they are refugees, are experiencing a precarious and fragile life. As Javad puts it, going to school and getting his education are what keeps him going. It is the only thing that has been good for him in Sweden. He is 20 years old, born in Afghanistan, and arrived as an unaccompanied minor to Sweden from Pakistan. Javad was affected by the Dublin rules, stating that you need to search for asylum in the first EU country you arrive in, or more exactly, where the authorities first take your fingerprints. For Javad, this meant he was not allowed to stay in Sweden, but had to return to Germany. However, he chose to stay and hide from the authorities. Before turning 18, he once again applied for a permit to stay, and this time he got it. He was then finally able to attend high school and feel safe. This does not, however, apply to everyone. Another participant, Hama, is 18 years old and lives as an irregular migrant in a small Italian city. His time in the Swedish

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Y. Odenbring, T. Johansson (eds.), *Violence, Victimisation and Young People*, Young People and Learning Processes in School and Everyday Life 4,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75319-1_13

school was brutally disrupted when he, after more than 3 years in Sweden, received his final decision from the Swedish Board of Migration, stating that the Swedish state had decided not to give him permission to stay. He told us he really "loves" his school, teachers and friends in his class; he is depressed that he can no longer be there.

Javad and Hama are only two examples of young people arriving to Sweden unaccompanied, that is, without parents or legal guardians. Between 2011 and 2015, approximately 50,000 unaccompanied minors arrived in Sweden. For those young individuals, a period of navigation begins, a period that often includes going to school, learning Swedish and getting an education. This chapter is based on two ethnographic research projects focusing on these young people. The first project focuses on minors who arrived in Sweden before 2015, when it was easier to obtain a residence permit because the migration policy was more generous. The second project includes young people who came in the autumn of 2015 and afterwards, and who had to confront a tougher migration policy.[1] The participants, all between 15 and 22 years old, represent to general patterns of migration to Sweden at the time. People originating from Afghanistan and Somalia were nationally overrepresented, but some participants came from Ethiopia, Pakistan, Iran, and Syria. In terms of gender, three girls participated, which corresponds to the proportion of girls arriving as "unaccompanied minor" to Sweden at the time our projects started.

In total, 20 young people participated between 2015 and 2017 in the first project and 56 asylum seekers between 2018 and 2020 in the second project. The material consists of interviews, informal talks, and observations, including interactions and reflections of interacting with family members, friends, authorities, and schools. The observations made it possible to consider aspects of everyday life otherwise unmentioned by the young people, possible to return to in later talks and interviews. The material was then analyzed thematically (Silverman, 2015), focusing on what the young people themselves brought about as important, in this case different aspects of going to school and getting an education.

Going to school and getting an education is often argued to be of special importance to refugee children and young people. It is considered an effective catalyst both for integration and for future success in life (Lahdenperä & Sundgren, 2017) and as a possible safe haven for the young people during a troubled time characterized by great uncertainty and unrest (Ascher et al., 2010). At the same time, schooling and education aimed at newly arrived refugee children and young people are rife with challenges. For instance, Nihad Bunar (2010) emphasizes the fact that these young people have recently immigrated to Sweden and are as such beginners in the Swedish school system. They have also not arrived in a socio-cultural vacuum, as also pointed out by Bunar, but rather in an institution that is historically and socially rooted in its own dynamics, frequently far from political and ideological proclamations of equivalence (Eklund, 2003). It has also been stated that the educational

[1] The first project was supported by the Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare [grant number 2013-0155], the second by the Swedish Research Council [2017-01562].

system in Sweden has had structural issues with integrating immigrant students (Sawyer & Kamali, 2006), one example being how the focus of schools seems to be on language barriers and issues perceived to be related to the students' cultural background rather than on their abilities and knowledges (Bunar, 2010; Eklund et al., 2013). Johanna Sixtensson (2018) shows the tension between the school environment being important to safety and identification among the young foreign-born women in her study, on the one hand, and many of them being sent to schools constructed as intended for "foreign students," on the other. The school is being adapted to this constructed homogenic group of people, creating a social stratification between "Swedish schools" and "foreign schools." These constructions seem to affect school results as well (cf. Bunar, 2010).

How the young people act in, react to, and reflect on their education and schools are also greatly affected by how young immigrants are perceived and treated by society at large. Being categorized as an unaccompanied minor or youth means being in the public eye. For many, this means being under the constant scrutiny of society, media, people and politics. Being exposed to such 'a situation of questioning' forces people to provide answers or defend themselves (Wernesjö, 2014). Another aspect affecting these young people is how they, as young migrants arriving without parents or a legal guardian, also enter a categorization process that involves becoming an "unaccompanied minor" (Herz & Lalander, 2017). Although sometimes providing the young people with specific rights connected with children, these processes also tend to function in a dehumanizing manner, and many of the young people we have met themselves question these acts of categorization (Herz & Lalander, 2019). Finally, it is also a question of whether or not they will be allowed to stay in Sweden and how tenuous their situation in school is. These young people tend to live in a state of deportability, that is, they constantly risk being expelled from or not being accepted as part of Sweden.

Being labelled, questioned and rejected can be considered elements of *administrative violence*. Administrative violence is based on institutionalized barriers, which can be upheld by categorization and questioning, but also by using legal tools to create differences between those considered worthy of help or support and those deemed not worthy enough (Rousseau et al., 2001; Tørrisplass, 2020). This type of violence is not officially recognized as such, instead it appears in the form of objective, neutral facts and procedures. Administrative violence can include both symbolic violence – how meaning is created or what concepts are used – and systemic violence – politics, policies, economy and other structural systems affecting people's lives (Žižek, 2008). This can be evident in how concepts such as migrant, immigrant, and unaccompanied, and the use of, for instance, "preparatory" classes in schools are affecting the lives of young people with a migratory background, but also through migration politics and policies in Sweden and Europe, such as the above-mentioned Dublin regulation, stating that you must apply for asylum in the first European country you set your foot in upon entering the European Union (European Commission, 2020). In practice, this has created a situation in which young people might be pulled out of their everyday life and safety or in which some young people keep bouncing back and forth between countries (cf. Djampour, 2018).

Another related form of violence affecting these young people is racist violence, both physical violence and the possible violence expressed through institutions, such as schools and the Swedish Migration Board. Stuart Hall (1980) defined racism as the different economic, political and ideological practices through which dominant groups exercise hegemony over subordinated groups. Philomena Essed (1991) further defined it as a process, as politics and ideology cannot exist beyond the everyday actions through which they are constructed and reconstructed. In its simplified form, racism requires, constructs and maintains the idea of differences between collectives of people based on biology, religion, culture, gender, ethnicity, and physical appearance, among other things. If racism is embedded in the logic of institutions, such as schools, it may be difficult to put up resistance.

In this chapter, we will use ethnographic data to investigate how young unaccompanied people talk about school and school life in relation to racism and administrative violence. Like Philippe Bourgois (1995/2003), we argue that ethnography is suitable to studying how oppressive structures penetrate people's everyday life, including their emotional life. We will first address how the young people themselves talk about the value of school and education. Going to school, however, is affected by specific terms and conditions, creating obstacles related to their position as unaccompanied young students. This is first discussed in general terms, before we delve into four themes related to such obstacles and challenges: family, religion, racism, as well as expectations and adaptations. The chapter ends with a summary discussion of what we consider precarious schooling.

"You Feel Safe in School"

Being able to go to school after having fled from war, poverty and violence can provide feelings of safety and a meaningful social context. Amir is one example; he was born in Afghanistan but fled Iran where he was working. For him, being able to go to school and to finally feel safe are connected to his image of Sweden.

> Amir: I go to school, get money from the social services and the Swedish National Board of Student Aid (CSN). It's quite good; it's a great country Sweden. You can be free. You can go to school and you feel safe in school… yes, it's good. I like Sweden a lot.

For some of the young people, the opportunity to go to school has been limited due to their previous living conditions and their flight through Europe. Like most other people, these young people present different life plans – plans that are adapted over time (Herz & Lalander, 2019). What these plans often seems to have in common is the goal of getting an education, getting a job, and finally being able to feel safe and secure one's future.

> I believe I finally have what I want now. So, I'm really happy about that. I'm going to school, the school's good, good classmates […] it's really good, I am satisfied.

Saleh is also from Afghanistan. He struggled during his first year in Sweden, but then moved to a foster family that he now considers his own. The move was a huge change for him, and he has since been able to focus on getting an education and a job.

Both Amir and Saleh seem to have taken an *end-of-the-line* approach to their education, which has allowed them to finally feel able to focus on their education as well as their present and possible future. This approach, however, seldom appears during the young people's first encounter with the Swedish educational system. Some started off in special introduction classes or language classes, others attended school despite lacking the right to stay in Sweden. Yousuf is one example; he was undocumented and attended school:

> A lot of things were different from now. You were kind of, you felt like an outsider somehow. Like the food card. You had no picture on the food card, since you were not registered as a student. So, there were a lot of things that differed between them and us kind of, like you were afraid, worried and ashamed […]

These precarious situations seem to create a duality. On the one hand, it is possible to understand Yousuf's time as an undocumented student as a chance to keep up with his educational level and have somewhere he could go and feel welcome. On the other hand, this welcoming seems to create its own limits. Yousuf is only a student to a certain degree, and being at school is a situation in which he is afraid of being exposed. The symbolic value of being photographed for the food card symbolizes a difference between other students and Yousuf – between the insiders and the outsiders.

As an undocumented migrant, you can attend elementary school, and if you have attended high school before turning 18, you can keep studying at that level as well. However, as with Yousuf above, this does not mean that your time in school is equal to that of peers born in Sweden or those who were lucky enough to receive a permit to stay in Sweden. Getting grades and other feedback is one problem schools try to solve in different ways by creating challenges for young students living without a permit (Skolverket, 2015). Another challenge occurs when the student is hiding from the authorities but still attending school. Javad is one example of this.

> When I first arrived in Sweden everything was good. At first, I wanted to fight, then as time passed things happened. I became undocumented and I was afraid all the time. That was the reality, I was afraid all the time. So, I didn't go to school as much, I skipped school, was careless. I used to sleep a lot, be asocial. And as a result, I became depressed. When you become [depressed] you can't do anything. In my class, my ex-class, when I was there, everybody used to say, "You're really good, why don't you study more", and I showed them. They told me all the time "If you want, we can help you, study together and stuff, because you are really good. You waste your talent". […] No one knew I was hidden, except for [name] who also was hidden. We knew about each other (laughs).

His emotional status, one of constant fear, had a major effect on his ability to succeed in school. It is also obvious how his tenuous position in Sweden as an irregular refugee makes him feel different. Both Yousuf's and Javad's school experiences are greatly affected by their legal and social status, placing them in a precarious everyday life where their position as students/pupils can be described as *an exception within the school*. Their everyday life, including at school, is greatly

affected by their tenuous position in Sweden, by the fear of being taken into custody and being expelled from the country. One young man affected by this is Hama.

We met Hama in November 2019 in a small Italian city. He had fled from Sweden 3 months earlier after receiving the third and final refusal of his application for a residence permit. He fled because he was afraid of being placed in custody and later deported. He had just finished his second year of high school. He tells us how much he liked his school and his schoolmates, although he felt his life differed from theirs because he was considered deportable (Sager, 2011). When he received the final negative decision, he had been waiting for almost 4 years. Still, even when in Italy, he talks warmly about his classmates who continued their third and final years in high school, while he had to live in a limbo of waiting for decisions from the Italian migration office. He still hopes he will someday be able to finish his third year of high school. The destiny of Hama tells us about the application of tougher Swedish migration legislation and the severe consequences this has had for many young people. This is a particularly brutal example of merciless administrative violence, but unfortunately, it is far from uncommon. In the wake of the large number of migrants who sought asylum in Sweden 2015–16, and the forcefully applied migration legislation, people like Yousuf, Javad and Hama suffered, but still considered school an important institution to be in, to develop in, to make friends in. They have experienced and navigated through what we like to call *precarious schooling*, due to their insecure position as young unaccompanied refugees.

Terms and Conditions May Apply

For young unaccompanied refugees, their education and time in school are surrounded by specific targeted rules, terms and conditions affecting their experiences of going to school. Some terms are set by the teachers, the school, or the education system, others by the specific conditions of having migrant experiences. In this section, we will focus in particular on the terms and conditions at school that are related to the young people's experiences of going to school. We will do this, first, in general terms related to going to school and getting an education, before we specifically discuss four themes the young people have talked to us about that also seem to affect their time at school and their education: family, religion, racism, as well as expectations and adaptations.

> I don't think it's that good, we have no teacher in Swedish or math, we study together with the oldies and they've lived in Sweden for 5-6 years. They know a lot of Swedish. They have a book in social studies that they've read almost all of. I can't read as [well as] them, I've read half the book […]

Adel lived in a small municipality, and the class he attended was mixed in terms of both age and how long the students had lived in Sweden, regardless of their mastery of the Swedish language. This became challenging for Adel, who could not keep up with the class. He tried to change schools, but although this was an option,

it would have forced him to move from his home to another part of southern Sweden. Because he did not want to move, he had to stay in the class.

Another example is Halid, who attends a high school level vocational class aimed at newly arrived immigrants. His school has a shortage of teachers and too many students. As a result, the school has chosen to introduce self-education at home.

> Halid: We're 35 students and only two teachers. They can't keep up. That's why we have two days in school. Now we have two days theoretical classes we attend. It's not mandatory to be in school […] self-education they call it. You can be at home. […]

The conditions at school affect both Halid's education and his own patience for learning. Instead of providing an education as promised, the school choses to introduce self-education at home, and because there is a shortage of teachers on site when the students are at school, teacher-student interactions are also insufficient. Halid explains that this situation caused everyone who had grown tired of running after the teacher to stop doing it. "When no one's there and you think about something, you forget about it," as Halid puts it.

Halid and Adel exemplify how specific terms and conditions at school affect their opportunities and ability to learn. We want to point to two things here in particular: First, how education and schools can add to *a feeling of distance* by not being able to respond to the students' ambitions, requirements, and knowledge. This is the case for Adel. Second, *the schools risk (re-)creating borders* by using specific rules or organizations targeting newly arrived immigrants or "unaccompanied minors." Sara Ahmed (2006) talks about *being stopped*, both when certain bodies are hindered from crossing borders and when the same bodies are directed somewhere else. Placing Adel in a class with people with different knowledge of Swedish and different abilities to learn stops him from getting an education and attending a school that is tailored to his needs. Similarly, when the school cannot provide enough teachers, Halid is being stopped from getting the help he needs, and he finally "choses" not to ask for any help at all.

Family and Reunification

What happens inside schools is not the only thing affecting these young people's learning and approach to school, as for all of us, this is also affected by their own life situation, experiences and needs. For these young people, such experiences can be closely related to their migration experiences and the fact that they have had to leave their family and friends.

One clear example is if, and when, families can reunite after a time apart and the effect of reunion (or no reunion) on school. Let us return to Adel, who after some time in Sweden was able to reunite with his family, forcing him to shift his focus away from school.

> Adel: [School's] alright, sometimes. No, it's honestly not that good. My teacher, I had a meeting with my teacher, my guardian, and counselor, they all told me I'm not as good at

> Swedish as I used to be. They told me I can't go to high school, for maybe two years. But it's hard to concentrate on school, you know I have a lot to do. I have no time to study. I didn't answer when you called or texted because I have no time. I always need to fix things, at the tax agency, at the social services office, at the pre-school and for my mother and father's municipal adult education. It's not easy, no one's helping me.

All the meetings with different authorities take time and energy. With his family arriving, this intensifies to the point that he can no longer focus on learning Swedish and staying in school. All of his available time is spent dealing with other authorities. The period during and after a family reunification is often when the young people need more support, but instead they tend to lose support (Tørrisplass, 2020). The entire apparatus of authorities involved in family reunifications, and the young people often being the only one in the family with some knowledge of the language and system, can result in them assuming responsibility for the process and becoming their family members' "mediators" (de Block & Buckingham, 2007; Orellana, 2001). As such, school can be difficult to focus on.

For those not able to reunite, families can still affect their ability to learn and go to school. Some tell us how they constantly worry about the family they left behind. For instance, Andy told us how he, upon hearing about bombings in Afghanistan, hoped his parents and siblings were not among the victims. Bella, another participant, told us how she had lost contact with her mother, the person she saw as most valuable in her life, saying she thought constantly about finding her mother. The precarious situation of the family left behind can have a major effect on people's emotional situation in Sweden and, thus, on their ability to focus on school.

This precariousness needs to be linked to national and international politics. As Maja Sager (2011, p. 128f) puts it, "[P]olitical right also link labour market policies, migration policies and asylum rights […] The restrictions of family reunification […] are an example of this development." To qualify for the right to reunite with your family, you must have employment, sufficient funds and adequate accommodations (Sager, 2011). On a global scale, the bordering of Europe can be mentioned, as it creates challenges and obstacles to people's ability to get to Europe in the first place (Andersson, 2014), sometimes requiring that families have the funds and ability to travel to an embassy (Tørrisplass, 2020).

If you want to apply for family reunification, you must deal not only with school and your own everyday life, but with a massive bureaucracy and demands that tend to put these young people in a precarious position, in that they are forced to quickly come up with money, work and accommodations. As Tørrisplass (2020) points out, these young people are being pulled between two different political logics. For children, the best interest of the child, which is based on international conventions, is activated; this includes getting an education and being able to reunite with your parents. For immigrants, the increasingly restrictive European immigration policies are instead activated, focusing on limiting the flow of migrants entering Europe. As a consequence, the young people themselves must navigate different political logics and policies, at the same time trying to plan for their own future.

Religion and Faith

Another theme evident among some of the young people is related to religious faith and practice at school. This is not, as we shall see, always related to a present and individual faith; it can also be related to the young people having lost their faith or to religion at the societal level. Saleh is one example. He grew up a Muslim, but has since lost his faith. During a movie screening at school, his own history and life changes caught up with him.

> We went to the cinema and watched a movie [with the class]. There was a religious family with four or five daughters. They were not religious, they had relationships with boys. Then they got exposed to stuff, got locked up, they thought of honor and stuff. Stuff that religious people sometimes think of. You shouldn't do that, be in contact with guys and stuff like that. This is quite common, especially within Islam and such. I tell you, it was awful, I can't, I couldn't take it, so I just left. My mentor followed, I felt sick for a week. […] I've been through stuff like this, I've seen this with my own eyes. Then I didn't think about it because it was common, there wasn't anything wrong. But when I see someone get forced like that, it's awful. Then someone shot herself, it was awful.

Saleh's own experiences make it impossible to sit through the movie screening with his class. He felt sick and could not stay; he felt he had to leave. His school had no preparedness for what the movie had triggered. Saleh feels bad for a week, and when he talks about it with us, after some time has passed, it still makes him feel bad.

Others still adhere to their religious beliefs and practices and must combine these with going to school. Adel, for instance, has no place to pray at school. As a result, he goes back to his living accommodations to pray during his school days. This is similar to Yousuf, who talks about how he can no longer follow "the rules" completely:

> Yousuf: I follow the prophet, God. What's in the Koran. But not 100%, since I'm young and live in Sweden. […] But what should you do? Think about school, should you pray in the classroom? There might be places to pray in, but then you're in class. Should I leave for five-ten minutes, I can't claim to have been to the toilet.

The Swedish schools are not always adapted to these young people's need to pray, nor are they responsive to the possible tensions felt by young people who feel they need to pray. Both Yousuf and Adel bear witness to how their faith and the organization of the Swedish schools create tensions that they themselves must resolve.

However, what happens inside the school is of course related to ongoing societal and political changes. As argued by Stuart Hall (2012), specific structures of transformation, displacement and condensation delineate new diasporic spaces. From this perspective, it is not strange to see a greater focus on Islamic faith and on being a Muslim among the young people themselves during this time and at this place. There is an anti-immigrant rhetoric evident in most of Europe, especially focusing on Islam and Muslims (Farris, 2017; Herz, 2019; Shain, 2011). Inscribed in this anti-Muslim discourse is the idea of an 'assumed social separateness, cultural fixity and boundedness of religious […] difference' among Muslims (Mac an Ghaill &

Haywood, 2015, p. 98). These homogenic ideas and the pressure from society on especially young Muslim people, but also non-Muslims arriving from countries where Islam is the dominant religion, are clear among the young unaccompanied people we have met. They cause tension in their everyday life and in school (see also Odenbring & Johansson, 2019).

Adar from Syria thinks a lot about his own chances related to being a Muslim in Sweden, but even more, he thinks about his sister. His sister has also come to Sweden as an unaccompanied minor. She is doing very well in school, but she wears a veil, and recent public debates regarding the veil have caused Adar to worry about his sister.

> Adar: [I] don't want her to feel nervous about this. She's doing so well in school. I think about this, she studies for years, for her life, and then she can't get a job. I think that's the biggest bullshit.

Adar worries about his sister's chances and possibilities, and this affects his emotional status. The recent focus on young Muslim people in Europe positions them at the center of the public debate. It is hard to disregard this. Going to school, and fighting for "her life," might all be for nothing if his sister has little chance of getting a job.

What these young people must do is to navigate between a number of things: their own religious beliefs, their ability to exercise their religion, the schools' ability to pick up on their individual needs, and society's approach to faith and believers. On the one hand, we see examples of finding solutions that get around obstacles, for instance going home to pray and then returning to school. On the other hand, this creates a situation in which the young people may need to navigate processes of othering.

Being the Other – Racism in School

> When Farid attended [a course in] Swedish, he temporarily joined a 'regular' high school class for 'domestic science.' The teacher then told the class how different things were in other cultures. That in some cultures, the father ate first, then the mother and finally the children. This made an impression on Farid. Why didn't he protest, he asks himself? 'Maybe people walk around believing this. What mother would let her child starve?' he asks me rhetorically. 'I've seen my mother give us the meat and later herself gnaw on the leftovers, for us children to have food' (Observation note).

When Farid joins the class, the teacher reproduces imaginative conceptions of immigrant families, that of a patriarchal family where the father's wellbeing supposedly comes first. For Farid, this means that he is exposed to a situation of being questioned (Wernesjö, 2014). His mere presence in the class elicits the teacher's story, making him an involuntary recipient. When we met with Farid and he talked about this incident, he was still affected by it and angry, not only at the teacher, but also at himself for not speaking out.

This incident can be understood as his presence affecting the classroom, urging the teacher to speak up. Farid entering this space disturbs the otherwise easy passing of white, Swedish bodies (Ahmed, 2007; Djampour, 2018). Ahmed (2007) describes it as a situation where whiteness creates a comfortable space for white bodies; they are not being questioned. This is not the case for a body that cannot pass as white, instead creating an uncertainty in which the body itself is stressed by the challenge to what it can do. This is what happens to Farid; his ability to move and speak is caused by the teacher's sudden focus on "other cultures." He keeps asking himself why he did not speak up, but at the time he felt it was impossible. When encountering racism in institutional contexts, the racialized subject might "go along with [it]" as a form of institutional *passing*, as Ahmed (2012) puts it. By not opposing the teacher, Farid maintains the status quo, he becomes "the 'right kind' of minority, and as such he can protect himself from becoming the "sore point" (p. 157).

Another example is Javad, who says that when he tries to approach other students, "they walk away." Javad believes they get information stating that "immigrants are dangerous." Both Javad's encounters with his peers and Farid's with his class can be interpreted as examples of *silent racism*, as opposed to explicit racism (Trepagnier, 2001), or of *everyday racism,* as Philomena Essed (1991) writes. These are everyday actions that go unquestioned by the dominant group of people, but that reproduce institutional racism. It is through these repetitive norms of othering that the borders and fixity of the social world are reproduced (Butler, 1993).

Sometimes, however, these repetitions become even more explicit. Javad tells us how one of his teachers at one point told him point blank that she "hates you [people]". Javad continues:

> The thing is, she's a teacher. They, as teachers, are supposed to give young people encouragement. They're supposed to make the world brighter. But if they think like that, how are you supposed to complain to others who don't get it, who never lived like this, if the leader talks like that?

Javad means that the teachers are the ones who set the tone, who are able to create an environment of encouragement. But when the teachers themselves spread racism, this makes it difficult to argue against the racism spread by other students.

Both Javad and Farid find themselves out of place in school. This can be manifested through having racist slurs thrown at you from school personnel, being ignored or only by being physically in place. As Beverly Skeggs (1997) argued, racialized bodies carry unequal value based on their position in space and time. Because Javad and Farid have been put in a social context where they are racialized, they are constantly considered, and themselves feel, out of place.

Thus, being categorized as an unaccompanied minor not only means having had to flee without parents or other adult caregivers, it also means being drawn into processes of labelling, othering, and racism. It means being drawn into violent actions. For the young people themselves, this often entails being put in a "situation of questioning" (Wernesjö, 2014), that is, being under the constant scrutiny of the people around you as well as the scrutiny of society, politicians, and the media. This forces people to be ready to provide answers, to defend themselves, and to pass as a "good enough" immigrant or classmate.

Passing as a "Good Migrant" or as Just Another Classmate – Expectations and Adaptations

In this section, we will focus on expectations, on becoming passable and adaptations to such expectations in relation to education and schooling. This has different manifestations, including being expected to adapt to the "right" version of a young immigrant or the "right" student, as well as the young people's ways of dealing with such demands. What the manifestations have in common is that they, in different ways, force the young people into a situation of being questioned. They are either being questioned or at risk of being questioned, and as such, they are at risk of not passing (see Goffman, 1963/1990) as a "tolerable" migrant or classmate.

One manifestation of a migrant who is considered passable is *the working migrant*. This is related both to the now dominant neo-liberal view on integration in the West and to history, particularly slavery and colonialism, where black and indigenous bodies were punished and disciplined to become future workers for the white state (cf. Parsons, 2012). The "modern" neo-liberal incarnation of this manifestation is dependent on the "immigrant" being able to find paid work at all costs. Research suggests that these demands have created a situation where certain groups of immigrants constitute the core of a European precariat with low wages and poor working conditions (Anthias et al., 2013; Farris, 2017; Mulinari, 2018). This is comparable to how the young migrants in our research are being treated in school regarding their future career.

> Javad: So, I talked to [the student counselor] and told her I would like to keep studying in the municipal adult education program to be able to finish school […] She asked me first where I came from. "Afghanistan". Then she said: "Why don't you apply for vocational training?" […] I told her "I want to get an education", and she looked at me strangely.

It is rather common for the young people to talk about their dream job or education, but then to report how they have been encouraged to choose something else. What these suggested jobs tend to have in common is their precariousness; they are either physically or mentally taxing or are associated with poor working conditions. However, this "choice" is not always related to the school, but, as in Javad's case, it may also be the effect of living a totally precarious life.

Chuhan, for instance, talked about the importance of getting a good education and staying in school, until he suddenly located his mother. Because of her health, Chuhan wanted her to come to Sweden. This meant that Chuhan had to pay for her trip, hospital bills and be able to provide for her when she arrived in Sweden. As a result, he started working in a store and was not able to stay in school.

> I was supposed to study this year, but I can't since I must bring my mother. She's completely alone, and you know the rules from the Migration office. You must have an income, after tax, it must be 18,000 kronor [approx. 1800 Euro]. And it's difficult to get a job in this city, so I've chosen to work in this store. It's shit time but also fun.

Chuhan worked 7 days a week to be able to save up money, which affected his health. He felt, however, that he was not able to turn work down because there was

tough competition for these kinds of precarious jobs among people with a low education who needed money. He had no choice. He must prove to the Swedish authorities that he is a "good migrant" who can pay and care for his mother, as a result he is pushed out of school and into a highly precarious life. It can be argued that both Javad and Chuhan are being pushed into precarious work – Javad by his school counsellor and Chuhan because of the tougher migration laws in Sweden. Both risk losing the education they need and want, all because of what is expected of them as "good migrants."

Another manifestation is the *"good classmate."* Early in 2016, the local media focused on a case of manslaughter committed by a young person with an Afghan background. Andy, himself from Afghanistan, told us that this was a tough time for him at school, even though he himself would never harm anyone. Andy described how he thought his schoolmates were thinking: "They're angry, why would a migrant we help do such a thing towards Swedes, Swedish citizens." He also says he felt labeled. Andy is one of only a few students with a migrant background at his school. Only a few in his class know about his background and that he is an "unaccompanied refugee minor". We ask him why:

> [The classmates] are very nice, the whole class. They believe that I'm still one of them, that's, I'm one of them, it feels a bit like that. But if I said I'm an unaccompanied minor they'd think sort of: "Aha, but wait, you're from another group, have had a tougher background." So, they'll treat you differently sort of.

Thus, in Andy's view, being considered an unaccompanied minor could mean his classmates seeing him as not belonging to the in-group of classmates. Andy wants to be one of them, not to be seen as strange or somebody with a tough background. Therefore, he tries not to act like an unaccompanied "refugee," but instead tries to pass as a "good classmate."

Precarious Schooling – A Violent Act

Most of the young people we have met seem to enjoy going to school and many dream of getting an education and a good job. Sometimes the school can represent the end of the line after a long time without safety and security. However, once they can attend school on similar terms as other students, their precariousness does not seem to end, rather the opposite. It is a continuum of precarious schooling and the young people must find strategies that allow them to overcome, to pass in or to learn to live with the situation.

In this chapter, we have pointed out a couple themes that the young people themselves have talked about and that in some way or another have affected or have had the potential to affect their time in school and getting an education.

First, the school system risks, due to administrative violence (Žižek, 2008), *creating new borders* for these young people to cross. When specific rules or schools aimed at newly arrived immigrants or "unaccompanied minors" are created, new

challenges occur, especially when the young people are approached as a homogeneous group of people with the same needs and dreams (cf. Rousseau et al., 2001; Tørrisplass, 2020). Moreover, those who are deemed deportable experience precarious schooling and the feeling of being separate from other pupils.

Second, everyday life itself can be *precarious,* given how the young people are being treated and approached in society at large, both on a local, regional, and global scale. For instance, being able to reunite with your family may be extremely important to some, but instead of making it easier to combine school with bringing your family to Sweden, this is treated harshly (Sager, 2011), in this case forcing the young people out of the schoolroom and into precarious work.

Third, experiences of *racism and racialization* are common, both at school and in everyday life. The young people are drawn into processes of othering, based either on their origin, gender, race or religion. Religion, in general, and Islam, in particular, have lately been the center of attention in Europe (Farris, 2017), forcing these young people to find strategies to pass both as a student among other students, and as a "good immigrant" and "classmate" in particular.

What these themes have in common is how they create a precarious time in school, which can end up becoming *a violent education*. We have seen the direct violence targeting some, such as the teacher's racist hate towards Javad, as well as administrative violence, such as forcing someone to move to another part of Sweden to get age-adapted education. We have seen symbolic violence in the form of categorization, homogenization and being questioned, and finally, systemic violence through policies that create and uphold impermeable borders.

We argue that the school system needs to adapt to these young people's own wishes, experiences, and challenges in the context of their everyday life, without homogenizing and reproducing inequalities and violence aimed at them. Further, racism needs to be addressed and fought methodically, both on the policy level and on the local level within the schools. It is evident that some of the young people have been affected by racist violence perpetrated by peers as well as teachers, but almost all of them have been affected by the violence of the implicit, silent everyday racism that is reproduced through policies, politics, and practices.

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Chapter 14
'We're the Bosses Here': Schooling, Segregation and Brotherhood

Thomas Johansson and Ylva Odenbring

Introduction

> Interviewer: Are you ever afraid at school or in this neighbourhood?
> Mohammed: No, we're not afraid, because we've lived here our entire lives, so we're used to this place (Focus group interview with boys).

In this interview excerpt, one of the students in the current study presents his view of his school and neighbourhood. Based on his lived experiences of the place where he has grown up – which is one of Sweden's most socially deprived urban areas – the student expresses a strong sense of belonging to the local neighbourhood. This kind of strong connection and loyalty to the local environment and neighbourhood is quite common among young people; they certainly view their local neighbourhood and community with eyes that do not belong to outsiders. This emotionally charged way of looking at places and social spaces will be explored in the present chapter. In particular, we will look more closely at how young people talk about violence and the teacher's role in preventing violence at school.

In Sweden, residential segregation has contributed to increasing the differences between schools (Bunar & Sernhede, 2013). The majority of children growing up in urban areas live in the so-called Million Homes Programme areas [Miljonprogramsområden] – neighbourhoods that are often situated in the outskirts of major cities and that have become the most socially deprived areas in the country (Beach & Sernhede, 2012). They are characterized by a high proportion of people living on social welfare, many residents living in overcrowded apartments and higher risks of poor physical and mental health, and the children in these areas show lower academic achievement compared to other students. There is also an increased

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Y. Odenbring, T. Johansson (eds.), *Violence, Victimisation and Young People*, Young People and Learning Processes in School and Everyday Life 4,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75319-1_14

risk of school drop-out for this group of children (Barnombudsmannen, 2018; Sernhede, 2011). Residential segregation has also led to a situation in which immigrant groups are concentrated to the same areas and schools, often seen and informally labelled as 'immigrant schools' (Bunar & Sernhede, 2013; Sernhede, 2011). A similar pattern has also been observed in other countries across Europe (Demintseva, 2018; Gitz-Johansen, 2003; Jaffe-Walter, 2019). This segregation is also reinforced by parents who choose to place their children in other schools located in neighbourhoods with better reputations (Demintseva, 2018).

Social exclusion often takes spatial forms. Neighbourhoods vary considerably in terms of safety, availability of services, community spaces and public facilities. This ongoing stigmatization of certain groups of people is further fuelled by media images of socially deprived urban areas (Lacoe, 2015; Leonard, 2006). Some of these areas have even been portrayed as 'no-go zones' in Swedish as well as international media and as immigrant-dense neighbourhoods that are dangerous and violent (Gudmundson, 2014, Meotti, 2018). Among the most remarkable headlines probably came from when, during a campaign rally, the American president Donald Trump suggested that something really terrible had occurred in Sweden: "You look what is happening /…/ you look what's happening last night in Sweden. Sweden who would believe this?" (Chan, 2017). In Sweden, representatives of the Government as well as the political opposition reacted with confusion to this remark. The epithet 'no-go zones' has also been heavily criticized by several Swedish newspapers. According to Lindberg (2017), calling these areas 'no-go zones' is misleading as well as untrue. This one-sided debate, it has been argued, also tends to ignore what is at the heart of the problems seen in the socially deprived neighbourhoods, i.e., the existing inequalities and segregation in society (Al-Dewany, 2018; Lindberg, 2017).

Contrary to this dark image of the socially deprived neighbourhoods, many of the people, especially the young people, living in these areas have a positive image of and relation to their local community. Young people living in these areas are aware of the negative representations of the neighbourhood, but they tend to defend their school and neighbourhood, thus counteracting these pathologizing discourses (Odenbring et al., 2017; Öhrn, 2012). Contemporary research has also shown how students in schools located in these neighbourhoods offer resistance to negative images of their school and neighbourhood. They do this by presenting a positive, alternative image of their school, in this way strongly opposing how other people view their neighbourhood (Welply, 2018).

Harassment and Violence in Schools

Research on violence in schools has revealed that, among both victims and offenders, there is overrepresentation of children growing up in socio-economically disadvantaged circumstances and neighbourhoods (Estrada et al., 2012; Gottfredson & DiPietro, 2011). Contemporary research has also suggested that school

professionals working in socially deprived areas have a closer collaboration with the police and tend to more frequently file police reports, compared to school officials working in middle-class areas (Lunneblad et al., 2017, 2019). As the above authors have argued, there is a risk that this will affect how school officials working in socially deprived neighbourhoods handle various kinds of issues. This also tends to reproduce already existing structures regarding crime rates, where young people with immigrant backgrounds growing up in socially deprived areas are at greater risk of being reported and prosecuted for crimes compared to their white, middle-class peers.

Currently, there is a lack of research on how students in socially deprived areas experience their own situation, and how they talk about harassment and safety in schools. Given this picture, the current chapter will address how teenage students in a lower secondary school located in a socially deprived urban neighbourhood in Sweden perceive and talk about safety and risks at school and in the surrounding neighbourhood. We will also look at where the students turn to get support and to talk about and address their problems with harassment and violence at school. By analysing the students' narratives, we hope to understand more about their everyday lives at school. If we are to understand the stories told, we must also properly situate the school in its urban and sociocultural context.

This chapter draws from empirical material consisting of focus group interviews, interviews in pairs, and individual interviews with students in the ninth year of lower secondary school. All interviews were conducted during November 2017. The selected school, called Shipowner School in the study, was selected due to its location in one of Sweden's most socially deprived areas. In this neighbourhood, 90% of residents have an immigrant background. The majority of residents, as well as students at Shipowner School, originate from Middle Eastern countries such as Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey and Palestine, and a quite large number of the residents and students originate from Somalia (see also, Odenbring & Johansson, 2019a, b). As for the investigated school class, all students in the class had an immigrant background or parents with an immigrant background.

The interviews were semi-structured, and a strategic approach was used to ensure that we covered specific themes, such as experiences of different forms of violence, trust and distrust at school, in the neighbourhood and in peer and family relations. The personal narratives were gathered as carefully as possible, leaving room for the students to construct and tell 'their' story as well as to provide different angles on their own story. On the recommendation of the main teacher, the interviews were organized into gender-separate groups. The reason for this separation was the idea that, in gender-mixed groups, the boys would silence the girls. In addition, we divided responsibility for the interviews in accordance with the gender of the researcher; that is, the male researcher conducted all the interviews with the boys, and the female researcher all the interviews with the girls. After all interviews were conducted and transcribed, we jointly read, discussed, processed and coded the data into themes (cf. Nowell et al., 2017). Confidentiality has been ensured by anonymizing the name of the school, as well as the names of all the participants. This

work was supported by The Swedish Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority (grant number 02794/2017).

In the next section, we will present some of the theoretical concepts used in the chapter. Thereafter, we will take a closer look at the empirical material and analyse how the young informants deal with and discuss violence and safety in their school.

Territorial Stigmatization and Trust

Urban poverty and advanced marginality have increasingly been located to certain areas in the big cities of Europe and the US. These areas are typically populated either by immigrants who have been living in Sweden larger parts of their lives or by new immigrant and refugee groups. The younger generation has often grown up in Sweden, and they are also Swedish citizens. These areas are often characterized by high unemployment rates, low incomes, and a high density of social services and police presence. Using a concept from Wacquant (2008), these urban areas are often subject to *territorial stigmatization* and, consequently, seen as poor, problematic and no-go areas.

> Not only because it is arguably the single most protrusive feature of the lived experience of those entrapped in these sulphurous zones, but also because this stigma helps explain certain similarities in their strategies of coping and escape, and thereby many of the surface cross-national commonalities that have given plausibility to the thesis of a transatlantic convergence between the 'poverty regimes' of Europe and the United States (Wacquant, 2008, p. 169).

First, the stigma imposed on certain areas leads to a sense of personal indignity and of being marginal, an outcast. Second, areas considered to be dumpsters for the poor tend to be avoided by other people. Finally, in the worst cases, community building and collective action are discouraged. However, it is also important to point out that these analyses of socially deprived areas are very general, and in practice there is naturally great variation between countries, local communities and areas. For this reason, these descriptions must be understood and used carefully when analysing concrete case studies of urban poverty and schooling. In addition, as we have already discussed, young people living in these areas often oppose and criticize negative images of their neighbourhood. Young people living in these areas are often aware of the negative images circulating in the media and in the urban city at large, but they often defend the area. Belonging to a specific community can fuel a strong sense of identity and affinity, causing young people to develop a feeling of solidarity with the neighbourhood (Johansson & Herz, 2019).

In the present study, we are interested in the connection between territorial stigmatization and students' trust in the school system, teachers, and society at large. Trust can be defined as a feeling of *ontological security*. This feeling is organized in relation to significant others and can be defined as *basic trust*. This basic trust is gradually generalized into trust in more abstract institutions and systems, for

example the school and the social services. There is a discrepancy between basic trust in significant others and trust in abstract systems, or as Giddens puts it:

> Abstract systems depend on trust, yet they provide none of the moral rewards which can be obtained from personalised trust, or were often available in traditional settings from the moral frameworks within which everyday life was undertaken (Giddens 1991, p. 136).

To construct and develop a viable narrative of the self, people are dependent on their capacity to integrate and use daily interaction in the day-to-day world, as well as their ability to relate to the external and abstract world. The concept of trust can be seen as a bridging concept, connecting the ongoing narrative of the young students, in this case, and their relation to, for example, Swedish society or school officials. In the same vein, distrust indicates difficulties in creating a bridge between the students' everyday life narratives and their relation to the system. Distrust signals a gap between generations, and a sense of being left alone with different kinds of adolescent 'problems'. Our aim is to investigate the dynamic relation between trust and distrust in the everyday life of a number of Swedish students living in a socially deprived urban area.

Safety, Brotherhood and Distrust in the System

In this part of the chapter, we will present the empirical material, using a number of interview excerpts to capture more general and typical patterns in the material. During the analytic process, three main broad themes connected to safety and risks at school and in the surrounding neighbourhood have been discerned, and the results will be organized and presented according to these three main themes (Nowell et al., 2017): (1) 'Swedish' and 'immigrant' schools, (2) Distrust and (3) Trust in the brotherhood. Initially, we will look more closely at how the students talk about safety at school and in the urban area where they are living. Thereafter, we will zoom in on their feeling of trust/distrust in adults and teachers when they are in need of help. Finally, we will focus on the relational networks and social communities that are important in building trust in everyday life.

'Swedish' and 'Immigrant' Schools

When asked about safety at school and in the urban area where most of the students lived, the answers were initially quite coherent and similar. Later on, we discovered more nuances. In general, most of the students reported feeling safe at school and in the area, but they also talked about harassment and violence at school. The students also tended to trivialize much of the violence occurring in their everyday school life. When talking to the students in the current study about the local neighbourhood, the boys in particular strongly defended their neighbourhood. Quite aware of the

stigmatizing media images of their area, they presented a positive image of solidarity and a strong sense of belonging to the community. When we as interviewers tried to find out more about this, a polarized image of Swedish people and immigrants emerged in the stories told about the area.

Interviewer: How do you view safety in your school and neighbourhood?
Abdullah: There are many immigrants here, which feels safe.
Interviewer: Why does it feel safe?
Amir: You know many people here, immigrants, if you are Swedish then you live in a Swedish area and you feel safe there, right? Here you feel a connection to the immigrants.
Interviewer: But there are some Swedes here too, right?
Some yes.
Interviewer: Do you feel safe at this school?
All students: Yes, yes.
Mohammed: Because we are the bosses here (Focus group interview with boys).

The feeling of community and trust is built on perceived similarity. The boys also make a very clear and distinct statement regarding the differences between Swedish areas and people versus immigrant areas and people. Immigrants are, of course, not a homogenous group. Instead, we must seek an explanation for the making and construction of this *imaginary community* in the experience of growing up under similar circumstances and socio-material conditions. The feeling of having a bond and a strong sense of trust was also described in terms of "everyone knows each other", as expressed by a group of girls during a focus group interview:

Mona: You are close. Everyone knows each other here.
Interviewer: Do you mean that you have a strong bond?
All girls: Yes.
Interviewer: Does it feel safe to know each other?
All girls: Yes.
Sonya: Well, the school isn't that big, so everyone knows each other. /…/ There are many siblings and cousins who attend this school as well.
Interviewer: Is that a good thing?
All girls: Yes.
Interviewer: Does that make you feel safe?
All girls: Yes (Focus group interview with girls).

Talking with the students, both the girls and the boys, the strong kinship relations – as well as knowing people living in the neighbourhood – seem to create a bond of trust and a feeling of informal social control. At the same time, the distinct and marked relation between Swedes and immigrants emerging from the narratives also indicates and suggests the presence of a feeling of not being at home in the larger society. Defining their school as something different from the Swedish territories and schools, they also in a certain sense strengthen the feeling of being the other, which is often defined as something different from belonging to the majority society (cf. Wacquant, 2008).

Making a clear distinction between 'Swedish' and 'immigrant' schools, the boys erect a boundary between different categories of people. In this connection, feelings of belonging and trust are fundamentally anchored in a perception of similarities being something good, and differences being something bad.

Ali: This is a good school, because they’re used to immigrants here! They’re used to immigrants here! This isn’t like the Swedish schools!
Interviewer: What do you mean by Swedish schools?
Abdullah: The English school, for example, if you talk Swedish at the break you’ll be shut off.
Interviewer: Aren’t all schools in this city Swedish?
Ali: Yes, yes, this is a Swedish school, but the teachers here are used to immigrants. They’ve been here for such a long time, so they’ve almost become immigrants. For example, our teacher Hans, he supports immigrants more than Swedes, right?
Interviewer: But this is a Swedish school!
All students: Yes, no, yes.
Ali: Now I’m getting angry! (Focus group interview with boys).

The teachers working in the neighbourhood are defined to a certain extent as immigrants, or as “almost immigrants”. This also closely follows the rule of keeping things apart, differentiating between us and them. When we take a closer look at the relation between the students and teachers, it is important to keep this ‘almost’ in mind. As we will see, the degree of trust in the teachers and the system is limited. The territorial stigmatization of the neighbourhood and the school clearly affects how the students talk about as well as try to defend their school. This kind of stigmatization is internalized, but it does not automatically lead to negative self-images. On the contrary, the students defend their local territory and make sharp distinctions between immigrant schools (something positive) and Swedish schools (something negative). In this way, we can trace a resistance to labelling certain schools and areas as something “bad”.

Distrust

The students’ strong views about living in a parallel sub-society, defined as something different from Swedish society, have a great impact on their help-seeking patterns. Although many of the students interviewed felt safe at their school and in the neighbourhood, they also talked about violence, harassment and the lack of a calm school environment for studying. These patterns were mostly communicated in the individual interviews. In the focus group interviews, especially in the interviews with the boys, we discerned a *silence culture*, that is, a strong tendency to keep quiet, and not to talk, about certain situations and actions. Consequently, turning to the teachers for guidance and help seemed to be quite difficult.

Interviewer: Who do you talk with?
Ali: I talk with myself!
Interviewer: So, how about you others, do you turn to him too?
All students: Yes, Yes, Yes.
Interviewer: How about the teachers then?
Abdullah: No, not the teachers. You turn to your buddies instead, they raise you.
Ali: The teachers would not be able to do something about it, and the problems would just linger on then.
Interviewer: The student welfare team then?

Ali: No!!
Ali: We trust our teacher Hans, but not the other teachers, they can't do anything.
Interviewer: Adults then? Do you not turn to adults?
Ali: The small ones solve their problems with the small ones, and the big ones with the big ones (Focus group interview with boys).

In general, we discovered distrust in the system, that is, in the teachers, the principal and the student welfare team. The students did not see any point in contacting teachers, or even talking with their parents. Rather, when worried or exposed to violence or harassment, they turned to other students, especially to older brothers and siblings. There is a general feeling of distrust in the adult generation, especially in representatives of Swedish society.

The feelings of distrust and of being misunderstood are clearly articulated when talking about the police and social services in the urban area. The young boys feel they are often misjudged and treated unfairly. They admit to having done things, such as shoplifting, but they also feel they have been stigmatized and pushed into the position of being a criminal.

Amir: That was someone else, not living here, and they've snitched on me, I really can't understand what happened here?
Interviewer: You talk a lot about people snitching, it seems important
Amir: When I came to the social services, they told me it was a mistake
Interviewer: Did they visit you at home?
Amir: No, we got a letter, so I had to go there
Interviewer: So, they make mistakes?
Amir: Yes, I've been at the social services several times, if they see someone with a hoodie, then I'm to blame.
Ali: He is well known there
Amir: I have done things, yes, shoplifted, but as soon as they see someone with a hood, then it's me!
Ali: This is how it works in society. If you've done something, the police will always have you under observation (Focus group interview with boys).

The young boys describe how they are monitored and controlled by the social services. The stigmatization process concerns not only the area, but also the individuals living there. In this sense, there is a lack of trust in the system; the system only tends to produce stereotypical images of the young people, and to not offer any support or comfort.

Snitching is a central word. The culture of silence makes it difficult to talk to representatives of Swedish society. This also spills over into the interview situation, where it is quite difficult to get interviewees to provide thick information on problematic issues, such as violence, harassment and sexual harassment. Particularly the girls reported having been exposed to sexual harassment at school, which was not always an easy issue to deal with. As one of the girls, Sonya, put it: "When the teacher calls your parents about it, the boys at school walk over to that girl and say: why are you telling the teacher? You're a fucking snitch, and things like that. They stop calling her slut, but they call her a snitch instead". During the individual interviews, as well as during the interview in pairs, several of the girls expressed frustration about the verbal harassment at school. At the same time, it is also important to not show weakness and 'lose face', because in similar situations the girls said they

have to be tough and strong, and that they have to “put up with it”, as Sonya put it (see also Odenbring & Johansson, 2019a, b).

It was the girls, in particular, who shared their experiences of the harsh school climate. This image of being tough and hard could also be linked to the existing distrust among the students. During the individual interviews with the girls, this issue was something they specifically highlighted. According to the girls, if they turned to another student about any issue, the whole school would soon know about it, which created great distrust in one’s peers among the students. In the girls’ narratives, their mothers were mentioned as one of the few people, if not the only person, in their lives they could turn to and actually trust.

> Fatima: It feels like you can’t trust your friends at all.
> Interviewer: Never?
> Fatima: Well, you can’t really expect that from your friends. /…/ If you fight with one of the girls, you can’t say “I want to tell you something, but please don’t tell anyone”, you know what I mean? If someone is angry with you, they’ll tell your secret and embarrass you in front of everyone. Your mom would never do that, you see? Because she’s your mother.
> Interviewer: So, if you tell your mom you know she won’t tell anyone.
> Fatima: Yes, because she would never do such a thing. That would be weird (Individual interview with a girl).

One of the other girls, Mona, had experiences similar to Fatima’s. She was even more explicit about the issue of trust at school and in the local neighbourhood.

> Mona: Almost everyone here is phony. It’s crazy. There aren’t many people who keep their mouths shut. I don’t trust that many people actually.
> Interviewer: You mean there’s a lot of gossip?
> Mona: Yes, if I tell something big or private, everyone knows about it the next day (Individual interview with a girl).

The students’ narratives were not only strongly framed in terms of distrust in society and school officials, but also by the ever-present risk of being called and labelled ‘a snitch’, i.e. a gossiper, which created distrust in and among students. The prevailing *silence culture* in the student group was also strongly surrounded by what could be characterized and interpreted as *social control*; this can be understood in light of the local social control prevailing at school as well as in the local neighbourhood. The students’ distrust in society and the teachers can be understood as an effect of their feelings of not being part of Swedish society. What we call a silence culture is an emotional and protective shield, used to create barriers to “some people” – in this case teachers, social workers, the police and other officials – in order to signal collective affiliation with other people. In this sense, this is a social psychological mechanism that also serves to keep us, the researchers, outside the “circle of trust”.

Trust in the Brotherhood

Listening to the young students, it is obvious that if we lift the lid off the *silence culture*, we discover everyday harassment and violence. There are strong tendencies toward trivializing and downplaying different forms of exposure to violence. Similar findings have been recognized in previous studies, which suggest that everyday harassment and violence have become trivialized and normalized among young people (Henriksen & Bengtsson, 2016; Zaykowski, 2016). This also includes being street smart and being able to manage the situation without involving other people or adults (Zaykowski, 2016). Particularly for young boys, this is also a means of avoiding being labelled as a victim or as helpless (Henriksen & Bengtsson, 2016; Zaykowski, 2016).

Talking about incidents with teachers, or even worse with the social services or police, can easily be seen as snitching and betraying the group. These codes of honour make it difficult to seek help or support, and they create a gap between representatives of the school/society and students in need. Although some of the young students can talk with their parents, they mostly turn to their siblings, particularly to their brothers, to seek protection and help.

> Interviewer: You don't feel any particular trust in the adult generation? Do you talk with your parents?
> Amir: Yes, but mostly we talk with our brothers, they understand more, because they've also been brought up in Sweden. Our parents are living more in accordance with old traditions, long time ago.
> Mohammed: My mum will scream at the teachers, if I'm innocent.
> Sasha: Yes, I also got to know about one teacher who discredited me, someone had heard about this in the staff room, and he told me (Focus group interview with boys).

Many of the narratives are filled with similar experiences, pointing to a general problem of legitimacy at school. The lack of trust between the generations, and between students and school officials, undermines the function of the social security and safety mechanisms that should kick in. Instead, students in need of help turn to their older brothers or other relatives, who tend to intervene when necessary. When an incident occurs at school, news of it will always reach outside the school, because most people in the local neighbourhood know each other; but it will not reach the relevant people, such as the school nurse or the counsellor, inside the school.

> Sonya: I have cousins, I have many cousins at school, so you have always someone you can turn to.
> Interviewer: Okay, there is always someone you can turn to.
> Sonya: It's not only that the older students deal with the matter. The families kind of know each other too (Interview in pairs with girls).

It is sometimes enough to use the potential for violence, assumed to exist among the students' brothers, to stabilize the situation at school. One of the girls in the study, Mona, who was also part of the girls' group, sometimes threatened to call her older brother, who she referred to as "a loser who hasn't done anything good in his life", to help stabilized different hostile situations.

Mona: They threatened to get some older people to beat me up outside the school. Then I just threatened back and told them who my brother was. Many know my brother and most people are afraid of him, so then they don’t do anything.
Interviewer: Why are they afraid of your brother?
Mona: I don’t know. He is scary, apparently. I don’t know, many know who he is and he has done things, maybe, I don’t know, he is scary apparently. I don’t ask, and I don’t want to know (Individual interview with a girl).

However, sometimes the older brothers or relatives have to intervene more directly. One of the things the students mentioned was the tensions that have emerged, from time to time, between residents in the different socially deprived neighbourhoods. Students from a neighbouring school sometimes travel to Shipowner School to attend language classes and, according to students at Shipowner School, visits from other students have led to tensions and fights between the different student groups. These conflicts have also been solved within the family and the local community.

Sonya: They come here to for language classes [for instance, Spanish, French and German]. On one occasion, the kids at Wood Hill School had stolen from my cousins’ store, the fruit and vegetable store, you know. They said that it was the kids from Wood Hill who had stolen things from my cousins’ store and my cousins were like: “what the fuck, have you stolen from our store?” Then there was a fight, but not here. My cousins went to Wood Hill and beat them up there (Individual interview with a girl).

The existing culture of silence creates a kind of ‘private legal system’ in which the students and residents from the neighbourhood solve problems between the students, within and between families, and within the local communities and neighbourhoods.

Concluding Discussion

In this chapter, we have addressed how students in a lower secondary school located in one of Sweden’s most socially deprived areas experience their own situation at school and in the local neighbourhood, and how they talk about harassment and safety in their everyday life at school. We have also highlighted what kind of support the students want and try to get from significant persons, when they face hostile and difficult situations. Another important contribution to the research field is that the study draws on minority students’ experiences and views regarding these issues. However, we also noticed while conducting the study that there were considerable difficulties in gaining access to and creating the trust that would allow us to go behind the culture of silence.

Following the theory of territorial stigmatization, our analysis reveals that the students are aware that the area and school are situated in a ‘problematic area’, but nonetheless refuse to let this colour how they perceive of and depict the area (c.f. Gudmundson, 2014; Meotti, 2018; Wacquant, 2008). Instead, they defend their neighbourhood and paint a bright picture of solidarity and sameness. In this context,

sameness refers to being an immigrant or having an immigrant background. There are also clear distinctions made between immigrants and Swedes, as well as between immigrant schools and Swedish schools. In the students' worldview, trust is based on sameness and on living in the same area. It is also evident that there is a gap in trust between the students and adults at the school. This gap makes it difficult for students to talk with adults about their everyday life and problems. The results also reveal that daily life at the school and in the local community is strongly framed by a *culture of silence*, as well as by distrust in adults and ultimately in the Swedish system, here represented by the teachers, principals, police and social workers in the area.

Several levels of distrust emerged in our analysis of the students' narratives: lack of trust in school officials, lack of trust in Swedish society at large, as well as distrust between students. Instead of talking with teachers and adults, the students often tried to solve their own problems, without involving any adults. Many times, this spilled over into social control of each other, that is, by spreading rumours and gossiping about certain students. To finally stop these processes, the students sometimes involved siblings, most often their brothers. The potential for violence and threats attributed to the brothers could sometimes be effective in putting an end to gossip and harassment. At the same time, it also meant that the students had to develop their own systems of handling conflicts and problems at school, without involving the school and adults.

The present results indicate that there is a strong prevailing local culture of 'solving' different problems at school. Even if the students referred to a support system that was built up around their brothers, family and local community, it is important to consider what this means for students' general welfare and the loneliness and precariousness that the existing distrust among students may cause. The construction of strong parallel systems – where representatives of Swedish society (in this case teachers in particular, but also the police and social workers) are not trusted by adolescent students, leading to the creation of other emergent local systems and methods of solving 'problems' – must be considered a serious consequence of the territorial stigmatization and increasing segregation taking place in Swedish society, as well as in other European countries. As suggested by Allweis et al. (2015), students and schools in socially deprived areas are often portrayed in relation to discourses of failures and low achievement.

Methodologically, it also worth mentioning the students' views on the researchers. During the interviews, it became clear that we as researchers were understood as 'guests in their reality', not only by the students expressing their views on the school and the local neighbourhood, but also by the students positioning the researchers as outsiders (cf. Archer & Hollingworth, 2010; Beach et al., 2013; Odenbring et al., 2017). Although most of the students are second generation immigrants and have Swedish citizenship, they referred to themselves as 'immigrants', whereas the researchers and the population with a Swedish background were referred to as 'Swedish'.

Moreover, particularly during the interviews with the boys, it became clear that there was a very strong culture of silence among the boys. This may have forced

them to keep quiet and not reveal sensitive information about their everyday life at school. One of the boys in particular controlled what was said during the interviews, using his body language and gaze (See also, Odenbring & Johansson, 2019b). At times this made it quite challenging for the male researcher to conduct the interviews with the boys, and to manage to deepen specific themes in the manner intended. The interviews with the girls also required some extra effort on the part of the female researcher, but during the interview process, the girls eventually opened up about their current school situation.

Given this, we wish to underline the importance of reflexivity. As a researcher, it is important to reflect on your own position when conducting research (cf. Thorne, 2005; Wilson, 2017). Thorne (2005) pinpoints this most distinctly: “academics studying the urban poor, when adults research children, they “study down”, seeking understanding across lines of difference and inequality” (p. 12). Reflecting on our own position as researchers, as the authors of this chapter, we are both white and could therefore be positioned as representatives of the majority Swedish population. Moreover, our upper-middle-class position also matters here, considering our roles as senior researchers at one of Sweden’s most prestigious universities. From the students’ perspective, this obviously positioned us as the ‘outsiders’ and ‘the Other’ in their neighbourhood – outsiders who were in addition conducting interviews at their school. One cannot ignore that our position as white, upper-middle-class adults has also had an impact on how we have interpreted different situations and how we have interpreted the students’ narratives. Still, interviewing students about their everyday life at school is vital if we wish to give different students a voice. By taking their point of view seriously, it is possible to create a dialogue and hopefully to find ways of decreasing the sense of distrust the students expressed while participating in the present study. This, we argue, underlines the importance of conducting more research on students’ different views in the future. Longitudinal studies could be an option, because they give researchers better opportunities to follow students during a longer period of time, thus creating possibilities to get ‘closer’ and build mutual trust.

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